

# Building Community Resilience through Effective Partnerships between Faith-Based and Community Organizations and Emergency Management Agencies

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## 1. Project Purpose

To expand contribution of diverse local organizations (faith-based and community organizations, FBCOs) in helping communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and other emergencies.



## 2. Policy Context

### Hurricane Katrina FBCO Response

- FBCOs had high visibility
- GAO highlighted capacity limitations of larger FBCOs (e.g., American Red Cross, ARC)
- GAO recognized contribution of smaller FBCOs

### Motivated Revisions to National Response Framework

- ARC and VOAD\* assigned specific roles in mass care, public health, and long-term recovery
- Local NGOs and private sector joined response efforts
- No guidance on implementation

\*VOAD= Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

## 3. Research Questions

- What types of FBCOs participate in emergency preparedness and response activities (EPR)?
- What are FBCOs' service capacities to engage in EPR?
- What are FBCO networks and coordination activities with EPR agencies?
- What is the overall quality of the research literature, and what are the recommendations for improvements and future directions?

## 4. Research Methods

- Systematic review of the literature
- 1992–2012
- Consistent search terms: FBCO x EPR
- Inclusion criteria: clear empirical methods
- Sources for search:
  - Gray literature (web based; think tanks)
  - Consultation with experts (FEMA, HHS, academics)
  - 7 EPR journals
  - Academic search engines (e.g., PubMed)

## 5. Summary of Empirical Studies

- How many:** 21
- Where published:** 8 peer reviewed; 13 policy research
- Which disasters:** Mostly Hurricane Katrina (also 9/11 and Florida hurricanes)
- Methods:** 6 quantitative (survey, social network analysis), 7 qualitative (interviews and case studies), and 8 mixed methods (survey and interviews)

## 6. Types of FBCOs in EPR

- Research and policy literatures do not have standardized definition of types of organizations considered to be local FBCOs.
- Literature suggests types of faith-based or secular community organizations that participate in EPR:
  - Social services agencies
  - Child care centers/schools
  - Hospitals, community health centers, nursing homes
  - Churches

## 7. FBCO Pre-Disaster Service Capacity

Comprehensive survey using random sample of urban and rural FBCOs (Allard, 2008) found that FBOs

- primarily provide emergency services such as food, shelter, or cash assistance;
- have lower resources, funding, and staff than CBOs (both primarily serve low-income populations); and
- generally are located near low-income areas (two-thirds located less than 3 miles away).

## 8. FBCO Capacity: Hurricane Katrina

Five studies showed FBCO capacity to serve basic human needs surged in response efforts:

- FBCOs quickly developed ad hoc responses to meet unmet service needs.
- Two-thirds of FBCOs surveyed had not participated in response effort prior to the hurricane.
- FBCOs collaborated with one another and EPR agencies.
- FBCO service capacity limited in disaster response and longer term recovery efforts (including ARC).

## 9. FBCO Collaboration with EPR

- One social network analysis found low network interaction of local NGOs pre-disaster, especially for religious organizations.
- Urban Institute survey found both affiliated and unaffiliated FBCOs collaborated with at least one organization during disaster response. Half reported new collaboration.
- Qualitative interviews highlighted that collaborative response was mostly unplanned and based on personal ties to other organizations.

## 10. School District Collaboration with EPR

Two surveys of large school districts found that

- Schools with sources of funding for preparedness were likely to have wider network of interagency coordination.
- Most school districts partner with police, fire, and other first-responder organizations (69%). Almost as many (59%) partner with local community and religious organizations.
- Schools that reported only one partner favor police, fire, and first-responder organizations by an overwhelming majority.
- Larger school districts and those whose superintendents reported a greater likelihood of facing a disaster were significantly more likely to report intention to consult with emergency planning specialist.

## 11. Summary of Research Literature

- Empirical literature is still in early stages of development and has methodological limitations.
- Few empirical studies of FBCOs done prior to Hurricane Katrina.
- Most study populations drawn from small and nonrandom samples.
- Growing number of larger surveys of FBCO capacity, collaboration, and networks.

## 12. Recommendations for Future Research

- Conduct comprehensive, in-depth community assessments and social network analysis of FBCO capacity and networks.
- Rigorously design survey research using random sampling.
- Develop, evaluate, and roll out evidence-based programs that develop the capacity of FBCOs.

More rigorous research studies will enhance efforts to develop more evidence-based practices that may better engage, coordinate, and support FBCO efforts to serve vulnerable populations in EPR situations.

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## More Information

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