

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

1. What types of FBCOs participate in emergency preparedness and response activities (EPR)?
2. What are FBCOs' service capacities to engage in EPR?
3. What are FBCO networks and coordination activities with EPR agencies?
4. 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:
 1. Social services agencies
 2. Child care centers/schools
 3. Hospitals, community health centers, nursing homes
 4. 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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