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DISASTER RESISTANT COMMUNITIES
INITIATIVE: ASSESSMENT OF THE PILOT
PHASE - YEAR 3

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DISASTER RESISTANT COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE: ASSESSMENT OF THE PILOT PHASE—YEAR 3

YEAR 3 PILOT COMMUNITIES REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The findings discussed here are based on the Disaster Research Center's third-year follow-up study on the seven Project Impact pilot communities. Data for this report were collected during the summer of 2000. The report is based on in-depth interviews that were conducted with officials who had primary responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Project Impact initiative in their communities, analyses of documentary materials, and comparisons with data that were collected in earlier phases of this study. Topics addressed in this report include: the current status of Project Impact activities in the seven pilot communities; the status of Project Impact partnership-building efforts; partnering strategies; strategies for sustaining program momentum; variations in Project Impact management structures; perceived benefits and challenges associated with participation in Project Impact; and views on the future of the initiative in the seven pilot communities.

Data were collected on progress made with respect to four types of Project Impact activities: risk and hazard assessments, mitigation projects, partnership development efforts, and public education and information activities. One hundred-eighteen separate activities were ongoing in these four areas in the seven pilot sites during 2000, and an additional 28 had already been completed. The most common activities were those focusing on public education and information, followed by mitigation projects, hazard assessments, and partnership-building efforts.

At the time data were collected for this study, pilot communities were undertaking a diverse set of activities in all four Project Impact program areas. In the area of risk assessment and planning, activities included vulnerability analyses, inventory development, and capability assessments. Mitigation activities ranged from land-use measures to structural and non-structural retrofit programs. Communities were engaged in a range of public education activities and informational campaigns, many of which were tied to partnership-building activities and training efforts.

A range of activities were documented in the area of partnership development. All pilot communities were actively engaged in reaching out to a variety of private sector, government, and non-profit groups. The number of partnerships increased in 2000 across the seven pilot sites, but not as significantly as it had increased between 1998 and 1999. With respect to the composition of partnership networks, more than a dozen different types of Project Impact partners were identified, including federal, state, county, and city partners; community-based businesses and local branches of national chains; local media; trade and industry organizations; non-profit and social-service organizations; schools and institutions of higher education; hospital and health-care organizations; religious institutions; and local boards, commissions, and coalitions. The most common participants in partnership networks were community-based

business partners, partners representing local branches of national chains, and federal government partners. Business partners account for roughly half of all partnerships in the seven pilot communities—an indication that Project Impact has been successful in engaging the private sector. Although local initiatives were not as active in outreach to organizations representing vulnerable populations, such as elderly persons, low-income groups, and people with disabilities, movement in that direction was evident in all seven pilot sites. One notable trend was that participation by county and city government partners saw a steady increase between 1998 and 2000.

Informants contacted for this study indicated that various strategies have proven successful for maintaining existing partnerships, attracting new partners, and sustaining program momentum. Interviewees pointed to the benefits of holding regular meetings with partners, effectively managing projects so as to recruit appropriate partners and maintain their interest, recognizing partner contributions, and capitalizing on recent disaster experience to strengthen partnership ties. Strategies for recruiting new partners included typical outreach approaches, such as utilizing existing business organization networks and making presentations on Project Impact at meetings and conferences.

Pilot communities used a variety of strategies to build and sustain project momentum at the community level. Community education projects such as disaster fairs and expos and the promotion of Project Impact goals through the mass media were two such approaches. Assistance from FEMA and other federal agencies, as well as state agencies, was also seen as very important for maintaining momentum. Additionally, community informants stressed the importance of organized community-to-community mentoring programs for sustaining the Project Impact initiative. Such relationships were seen as valuable both for mentored communities and for mentors. As with many other aspects of Project Impact activities, the active involvement of the Project Impact Coordinator and continuity in the coordinator position helped to sustain momentum.

Study participants found their community's involvement in Project Impact to be beneficial in many ways. According to their own reports, the initiative helps pilot communities understand their risks and plan accordingly. It also provides a means for enabling communities to leverage resources from a range of sources and gives additional impetus to community education and outreach efforts. One pilot community that had recently experienced a disaster found that Project Impact had helped reduce losses in that event. The mitigation measures that were in place at the time of the disaster would not have been undertaken without the input, organization, and resources Project Impact had provided.

This study finds that communities are undertaking new loss-reduction activities, laying the groundwork for future mitigation efforts, and capitalizing on the synergy created by Project Impact to increase their disaster resistance. Communities also face significant challenges in their efforts to achieve that goal. Communities must, for example, find ways of sustaining program activities when there is turnover among partners, local elected and appointed officials, and Project Impact Coordinators. Ongoing efforts are needed to keep political officials engaged. Communities also need to strike a balance between encouraging partner activity and

overburdening partners. Finally and perhaps most important, finding long-term funding sources for loss-reduction activities is an increasingly pressing challenge for these communities.

DISASTER RESISTANT COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE: ASSESSMENT OF THE PILOT PHASE: YEAR 3

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: The Development and Goals of Project Impact

In 1995, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) unveiled a new national effort to encourage state and local adoption of mitigation policies and programs in an attempt to reduce escalating disaster relief and recovery costs. This effort, known as the "National Mitigation Strategy," was developed in response to growing catastrophic losses from natural disaster events during the past decade, including the Loma Prieta Earthquake and Hurricane Hugo in 1989, Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the Midwest Floods of 1993, and the Northridge Earthquake in 1994. In addition to these major events, burgeoning economic losses from other natural disasters generated concerns that disaster events were proving too costly for the nation, particularly in terms of response and recovery expenditures and losses to households, businesses, the building stock, and the civil infrastructure

In 1996, then FEMA Director James Lee Witt convened a set of roundtable discussions to consider different approaches to encouraging local-level adoption of mitigation programs. In addition to local and state emergency managers, representatives from local government, the insurance industry, the business community, and other key constituencies were invited to participate in the discussions. These meetings led to the development of a new program, originally known as the Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative, which was later renamed Project Impact.

Project Impact was designed to be different from other federal mitigation initiatives in several important ways. First, prior to the initiation of Project Impact, the federal government had provided mitigation funding to local communities through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which is tied to Stafford Act post-disaster assistance payouts. For that reason, federal investments in community mitigation were mainly made in the context of disaster events. Project Impact changed that, making it possible for communities that had not experienced disasters to receive funding to mitigate future losses. Through Project Impact, FEMA introduced the concept of *pre-disaster mitigation* and made that concept an important element in federal loss-reduction efforts.

Second, rather than devising a program that would be managed through strict guidelines and tight regulation, FEMA designed Project Impact as a 'bottom-up' approach to mitigation that gave local communities fairly wide latitude in deciding what mitigation goals they would pursue and how. The intent of the program was to establish a wide variety of community-based initiatives to address mitigation issues deemed important by the communities and to encourage the development of innovative solutions to hazard-related problems. In its efforts to foster local community initiative and involvement, FEMA worked directly with participating communities, particularly during the initial pilot phase of Project Impact.

Although communities were actively encouraged to develop their own strategies for reducing disaster losses, FEMA did outline general goals and objectives for the program. These overall goals were: (1) to build community partnerships; (2) to identify hazards and community vulnerability; (3) to prioritize risk reduction actions; and (4) to develop communication strategies to educate the public about Project Impact and disaster mitigation more broadly. Communities were then asked to formally establish locally-based organizations and to initiate activities that would address these objectives.

Project Impact was launched in the summer of 1997 with the identification of seven pilot communities that would receive seed money to implement new local programs and policies to improve their resistance to future disasters. The seven communities designated to participate in the pilot phase of the initiative were: New Hanover County/Wilmington, North Carolina; Deerfield Beach/Broward County, Florida; Pascagoula/Jackson County, Mississippi; Oakland, California; Seattle, Washington; Allegany County, Maryland; and Tucker and Randolph Counties, West Virginia.

1.2 DRC's Project Impact Assessment

In Fall 1997, the Disaster Research Center (DRC), with funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, began an assessment of the Project Impact initiative. Since that time, DRC staff members have made multiple site visits to a total of seventeen Project Impact communities, conducted over one hundred-eighty formal interviews, held eleven focus groups with a total of seventy participants from a wide range of communities across the nation, and collected and analyzed large volumes of documentary material from FEMA and from individual Project Impact communities. To date, DRC has produced several summaries of findings from the research that was conducted in the first two years of this project. Those findings are contained in the following reports:

1. Nigg, Joanne M., Jasmin K. Riad, Tricia Wachtendorf, Angela Tweedy, and Lisa Reshaur (1998). Executive Summary: Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative: Evaluation of the Pilot Phase, Disaster Research Center Final Report #40, University of Delaware.

2. Nigg, Joanne M., Jasmin K. Riad, Tricia Wachtendorf, and Kathleen J. Tierney (2000). Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative: Evaluation of the Pilot Phase Year 2. Disaster Research Center Final Report #41, University of Delaware.

3. Tierney, Kathleen J. (2000). Executive Summary: Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative: Evaluation of the Pilot Phase Year 2. Disaster Research Center Final Report #42, University of Delaware.

4. Wachtendorf, Tricia, Jasmin K. Riad, and Kathleen J. Tierney (2000). Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative: Focus Group Analysis. Disaster Research Center Final Report #43, University of Delaware.

5. Wachtendorf, Tricia, and Kathleen J. Tierney (2001). Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative: Local Community Representatives Share their Views: Year 3 Focus Group Final Report. Disaster Research Center Final Report #44, University of Delaware.

When DRC's study of Project Impact began, the Center focused on the processes involved in organizing and implementing the initiative in local communities across the United States. In 1998, DRC visited each of the seven communities that were chosen by FEMA as pilot sites for the initiative and conducted interviews with one hundred thirteen key stakeholders. Interviewees included Project Impact Coordinators, emergency managers, community planners, building officials, elected officials, and city and county managers, as well as representatives from the business and non-profit sectors. DRC compiled its list of potential interviewees from Project Impact partner lists, the memoranda of agreement communities had signed with FEMA, listings of local organizations involved in planning, permitting, and hazard issues, and recommendations provided by other interviewees. Interviewees were treated as informants with respect to their communities, rather than respondents. That is, while each informant was asked the same set of questions, it was not expected that each would be equally knowledgeable about the subject matter of every question. Information about current mitigation practices and Project Impact activities was then distilled from all of the interviews conducted in each community to develop an overall picture of Project Impact decision-making processes and actions.

As part of its follow-up with the pilot communities, DRC conducted formal telephone interviews with twenty-four Project Impact participants in 1999, all of whom were extremely active in their local initiatives. Members of the DRC research team also visited each community to gain a better understanding of the activities that were under way and to collect any additional documents that had been produced since 1998.

After this second year of assessing Project Impact activities in the pilot communities, DRC found that communities were making progress toward their mitigation objectives. Structural and non-structural mitigation activities were under way, and DRC found a particularly marked increase in mitigation actions among communities that initially had not been involved in mitigation projects. Participants from the pilot communities were generally optimistic about the initiative as a mechanism for encouraging mitigation, yet they recognized that they still needed to overcome various implementation barriers, both at the local level and with respect to other levels of government. The pilot communities had developed financial leveraging strategies to fund mitigation actions. Communities were actively conducting risk assessments and a variety of public educational activities. Mitigation partnerships were expanding to include a broader range of private sector, non-profit, state, and federal partners, and communities were learning how to better identify potential program participants, recruit partners, and keep them actively involved.

Over time, several of the pilot communities experienced disaster events or threats. In some cases, these events provided windows of opportunity for mitigation education and action. In others, disaster events hindered progress on mitigation by creating new problems and diverting attention away from longer-term loss-reduction goals. As the initiative progressed, communities moved from concerns about generating momentum to finding ways to better sustain momentum.

Initiatives were also found to be tightly coupled with and influenced by political struggles and changes in local economies.

The Project Impact participants interviewed by DRC provided lessons that they had learned with respect to goal setting, program structure, and community participation. These same participants pointed to continuing problems associated with inter-governmental cooperation, sometimes inconsistent and poorly-timed communication with funding sources, and pressure to demonstrate tangible results in the short term while at the same time trying to take the time that is necessary to assess, plan, and choose their projects wisely.

During the summer of 2000, DRC continued its assessment of the pilot communities by conducting in-depth telephone interviews with the nine key officials who had primary responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the initiative in their communities. DRC researchers faxed specially-designed grids containing questions about activities and partnerships and asked informants to return the grids prior to their scheduled interviews. This process allowed for more time during the actual interviews to be spent discussing other important issues, such as strategies local communities used for broadening participation in the initiative, lessons learned, the organizational structures that evolved to carry out the initiative, challenges that communities face in promoting mitigation, and respondents' ideas about the future of Project Impact in their communities. The longest of these interviews lasted over three hours, with the average duration being just over two hours.

During 2000, DRC also expanded its data-collection efforts to include ten additional communities—one in each federal region—that are relative newcomers to the Project Impact initiative. Communities were selected to provide greater variance in community size and hazard types. While the seven pilot communities were all given a very high degree of oversight and guidance by FEMA, the ten communities that were added to the study in 2000 are more representative of the nearly 250 communities that became Project Impact participants in subsequent years.

Findings based on the focus group discussions and on the interviews conducted in 2000 in the ten non-pilot communities are discussed in separate reports. This report examines the implementation processes in the seven pilot communities and further charts the progress they have made over time toward achieving their mitigation, risk assessment, partnership building, and public education goals.

Following standard practice for research of this type and in accordance with federal and university regulations, DRC guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of individuals who participated in the research assessment. In carrying out its data-collection activities, DRC also took care to emphasize that the goal of the research was to evaluate the Project Impact initiative as a whole, not to evaluate the success of specific Project Impact programs, organizations, or communities. This report does not identify communities by name. Instead, for reasons of confidentiality, communities are assigned numbers. When specific projects that are only in place in one community are used as examples, the projects are not associated with the numbers assigned to communities.

CURRENT STATUS OF PROJECT IMPACT ACTIVITIES

2.1 Project Impact Process Measures

In the course of preparing this report, DRC developed a new means of classifying the status of risk assessment, mitigation, partnership, and education activities. This resulted in a reassessment of much of the data that were collected in earlier years. The charts presented here thus differ somewhat from the charts used in the Year 2 report because of this new methodology, which is outlined in more detail below. The sections that follow first outline DRC's procedures for coding the data that were collected on Project Impact activities, and then move on to present information on those activities.

New Procedures for Coding and Classifying Information on Project Impact Activities

In Year 1 of DRC's assessment of Project Impact, researchers used information contained in community statements of work (SOW) and memoranda of agreement (MOA) to systematically document the activities that the pilot communities had originally planned to undertake in order to become more disaster resistant. In Year 2, DRC faxed charts that listed those planned activities to community informants who had major responsibility for the initiative in each of their respective areas. Participants were asked to document progress in various activity areas and were provided space to add any additional activities that were under way but were not listed in the charts they had been sent. For analysis purposes, DRC then classified the activities included in the MOAs, SOWs, and community assessment charts in terms of the four main Project Impact program objectives—risk/vulnerability assessment; mitigation; partnerships; and public education. For the follow-up that took place in Year 3, DRC again sent updated charts to the pilot communities listing ongoing and planned activities as well as new activities mentioned by interviewees in Year 2.

Informants contacted during Years 2 and 3 of the study were asked to characterize the status of each Project Impact activity listed in the assessment charts. The options presented to the informants were that: 1) the community had decided not to pursue the activity; 2) the activity had been initiated by the community and was still ongoing; 3) the activity had been completed; and 4) the activity was still planned and would be carried out in the future. In Year 2, the informants were also given the option of indicating that they did not know the status of particular activities. In Year 3, if the status was not known, informants were asked to leave the line blank and the activity was not counted.

When completing its analysis of Project Impact activities, DRC omitted some activities that were related primarily to organizational issues, such as hiring Project Impact Coordinators. Findings from Year 1 and Year 2 indicated that employing a full-time Project Impact Coordinator is an important component to a successful initiative; however, this and other organizational issues cannot readily be classified under any of the four overall program objectives, even though they may be vital to achieving those objectives. Also excluded from the analysis were activities that community representatives stated that they never intended to do, even if those activities had earlier appeared in a MOA. Many communities reported that they had initially developed their

MOAs for signing ceremonies without having much time to do advance planning and without involving the entire community. As a result, they had included a wide range of projects and goals that were intended as options to be later discussed during the planning process. Because communities had never actually agreed on all those measures, DRC assessed progress only on measures that communities subsequently decided they really intended to carry out. Occasionally, informants in the Year 3 assessment were unable to recall the new activities that had been added to the activity list following the interviews conducted in the prior year. In some cases, these activities were incorporated into other activities already included in the chart, while at other times an activity may have been the topic of conversation in the community at the time of the interview but was never formally agreed upon as an intended activity. When this occurred, the activities that never became part of the community's official agenda were not counted, because their status was problematic and because it was difficult to track outcomes. For all these reasons, the numbers provided below in the activity charts reflect conservative estimates of Project Impact activity.

In attempting to match activities with Project Impact program objectives, DRC found that there was some degree of duplication, in the sense that a particular activity could be seen as meeting two or more objectives. For example, some of the educational and informational program elements were designed both to disseminate information and to engage partners. Similarly, there is some overlap between risk assessment and mitigation actions, because often the assessments were done in order to help prioritize mitigation activities. To avoid double-counting in such cases, DRC assigned activities to program elements based on their major emphases and program goals.

In the process of analyzing data collected in 2000, DRC observed that communities had expanded their activities beyond those set out in the MOAs and SOWs and had begun to consider many other mitigation actions as central to their conception of Project Impact. Such activities included, for example, creating stronger building code ordinances and upgrading their Community Rating System (CRS) ratings. Communities were also using additional funding sources such as Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs and Community Block Development Grants to fund mitigation activities. These were positive outcomes, particularly since Project Impact communities are encouraged to use the seed money FEMA provided as a mechanism to leverage alternative funding sources. The sustainability of Project Impact depends upon communities undertaking loss reduction strategies that do not rely solely on FEMA funding, and continuing mitigation projects already in progress. Thus, despite the fact that these activities were sometimes under way when the community was originally designated but were not listed in the MOA or SOW, and despite the fact that the activities were not carried out with Project Impact funding, DRC did count these activities when informants described them as central to and integrated with the Project Impact initiative. Although DRC began to observe this trend in Year 2, it was even more evident in Year 3. Accordingly, DRC used the newly-developed analytic criteria to re-analyze data collected earlier in Year 2, accounting for all activities that were considered central to each community's Project Impact objectives, even if those activities had started out independent of the initiative.

In Year 3, DRC also found that pilot communities had begun branching out from MOA- and SOW-listed activities by creating sub-components of their projects. Based upon information gathered over the past three years, the DRC developed a new analytic approach, which better accounts for these project sub-components. For instance, one community created an extensive business-training program that included a survey to determine the community's needs. It later identified the disaster planning needs of four pilot businesses as part of an expansion of the business-training program. In the past, both these business-focused efforts would have been counted as one activity. The new analytic strategy developed by DRC in Year 3 counts these as two separate activities because they are actually separate efforts requiring different skills and resources.

With respect to phased or expanded projects discussed here, DRC did not consider an action a new and separate activity if a project was expanded *within a community*, since the community would still have been using the same labor force and resources. However, if the expansion occurred *into a different jurisdiction* – such as a neighboring non-Project Impact community, out of state, or into a larger region – then the second, expanded project was classified as a new activity, since such expansions typically call for significant increases in both labor force and training, as well as efforts to garner additional resources. For instance, when a community decided to expand its long-term retrofit project from twenty-five to three hundred homes, the expansion was still counted as part of the original activity because it drew upon the same organizational arrangements and personnel. In contrast, one of the pilot communities expanded its retrofit project to become a regional-level program. This regionalization required additional training and substantial efforts to modify the program. The regionally-based retrofit program was consequentially counted as a separate activity from the original local mitigation program.

The sections that follow outline the progress that pilot communities are making toward the four main goals of Project Impact—that is, assessing their risks and vulnerabilities, mitigating local hazards, building partnerships, and educating the public. Overall trends are discussed, followed by a closer examination of activities related to each of the four objectives. A more detailed discussion of partnership-building efforts and activity is presented later in the report.

2.2 Overview of Activity Trends in Project Impact Pilot Communities

Table 2.2.1 contains summary data on Project Impact activities in the four major program areas—risk and hazard assessment, mitigation, partnership development, and public education and information activities—for 1999 and 2000. Activities are classified according to whether they were ongoing or completed during those years, identified by communities earlier but not actually carried out, or planned for the future. As indicated in the table, during the year 2000, communities were engaged in one hundred eighteen ongoing activities, with an additional twenty-eight activities completed that year. This brought the total of completed Project Impact activities for 1999 and 2000 to fifty-nine. No additional activities were identified as being abandoned by the community initiatives, and nine activities were described as planned for the future.

In 1999, communities were engaged in one hundred seventeen ongoing projects with an additional thirty-one Project Impact activities completed. The communities had decided not to pursue only five activities and had planned on pursing twenty-three activities in the future. Looking at comparisons across the two years, in 1999 communities had pursued approximately the same number of ongoing risk assessment, mitigation, and public education activities (respectively, 33, 33, and 35). Communities were undertaking fewer partnership-building activities (16), compared with other program areas. Most of the activities completed in 1999 were risk assessment (10) and mitigation activities (14). These two types of activities are more likely to have definite start and end dates, in contrast with partnerships and educational activities (3 and 4 completed respectfully), which are more often characterized as ongoing efforts.

In 2000, communities were undertaking more ongoing public education (41) and mitigation activities (35) than risk assessment (25) and partnership-building efforts (17). Most of the additional activities completed in 2000 were again risk assessment (15) and mitigation activities (9), with considerably fewer partnership (2) and education (2) activities considered completed. Interestingly, the ratio of risk assessment to mitigation activities reversed over the year with a greater number of mitigation activities completed in 1999 (14, as compared with 9 in 2000) and a greater number of risk-assessment activities completed in 2000 (17, compared with 10 in 1999). The risk assessment activities carried out in 1999 had in fact paved the way for additional and more detailed assessments to address specific issues and develop strategic plans from the information collected during the previous year. It appears that while communities needed to demonstrate small mitigation successes early on in the initiative, they were also undertaking important risk assessment projects that, when completed and if accompanied with adequate financial and political support, should lead to another surge in completed mitigation projects over the next few years.

TABLE 2.2.1: TOTAL NUMBER OF ONGOING AND COMPLETED PROJECT IMPACT ACTIVITIES ACROSS COMMUNITIES BY ACTIVITY TYPE, 1999-2000

Activity Type	Ongoing		Completed		Decided Not To Pursue		Planned For The Future	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
Assessment	33	25	10	17	1	0	7	3
Mitigation	33	35	14	9	4	0	10	5
Partnership	16	17	3	2	0	0	1	0
Public Education / Information	35	41	4	2	0	0	5	1
Total	117	118	31	28	5	0	23	9

Tables 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 show the number of activities that were under way, completed, not pursued, and planned for the future in each of the seven pilot communities during 1999 and 2000. Table 2.2.2 lists assessment and mitigation actions, while Table 2.2.3 outlines partnership and education projects.

As indicated in Table 2.2.2, both in 1999 and 2000, three of the seven pilot communities (Communities 1, 4, and 7) focused the majority of their Project Impact activity on risk and vulnerability based assessments. In 2000, however, one of these three communities did conduct more mitigation activities than it had the previous year, although still less than the number of assessment activities. Three other pilot communities (Communities 3,5,6) conducted mostly public education activities during both 1999 and 2000. Since most public education activities were ongoing, mitigation activities made up the majority of the activities that had been completed. Of the seven communities, only Community 2 had an overall focus primarily on mitigation projects (see Table 2.2.2).

TABLE 2.2.2: PROJECT IMPACT RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

	Risk and Vulnerability Assessment/Plan Development				Mitigation				Totals			
	Ongoing	Completed	Decided Not to Pursue	Planned For Future	Ongoing	Completed	Decided Not to Pursue	Planned For Future	Ongoing	Completed	Decided Not to Pursue	Planned For Future
Community 1												
1999	9	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	13	1	0	0
2000	7	3	0	1	4	0	0	2	11	3	0	3
Community 2												
1999	4	1	0	0	4	5	1	0	8	6	1	0
2000	2	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	6	2	0	0
Community 3												
1999	6	0	0	3	6	2	0	2	12	2	0	5
2000	6	4	0	1	3	5	0	0	9	9	0	1
Community 4												
1999	2	5	0	2	2	1	0	0	4	6	0	2
2000	4	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	5	2	0	0
Community 5												
1999	4	2	0	0	5	6	1	2	9	8	1	2
2000	1	5	0	0	5	1	0	1	6	6	0	1
Community 6												
1999	3	0	0	0	7	0	0	1	10	0	0	1
2000	3	0	0	0	8	1	0	1	11	1	0	1
Community 7												
1999	5	1	1	2	5	0	2	5	10	1	3	7
2000	2	3	0	1	10	0	0	1	12	3	0	2
TOTAL												
1999	33	10	1	7	33	14	4	10	66	24	5	17
2000	25	17	0	3	35	9	0	5	60	26	0	8

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TABLE 2.2.2: PROJECT IMPACT RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

	Risk and Vulnerability Assessment/Plan Development				Mitigation				Totals			
	Ongoing	Completed	Decided Not to Pursue	Planned For Future	Ongoing	Completed	Decided Not to Pursue	Planned For Future	Ongoing	Completed	Decided Not to Pursue	Planned For Future
Community 1												
1999	9	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	13	1	0	0
2000	7	3	0	1	4	0	0	2	11	3	0	3
Community 2												
1999	4	1	0	0	4	5	1	0	8	6	1	0
2000	2	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	6	2	0	0
Community 3												
1999	6	0	0	3	6	2	0	2	12	2	0	5
2000	6	4	0	1	3	5	0	0	9	9	0	1
Community 4												
1999	2	5	0	2	2	1	0	0	4	6	0	2
2000	4	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	5	2	0	0
Community 5												
1999	4	2	0	0	5	6	1	2	9	8	1	2
2000	1	5	0	0	5	1	0	1	6	6	0	1
Community 6												
1999	3	0	0	0	7	0	0	1	10	0	0	1
2000	3	0	0	0	8	1	0	1	11	1	0	1
Community 7												
1999	5	1	1	2	5	0	2	5	10	1	3	7
2000	2	3	0	1	10	0	0	1	12	3	0	2
TOTAL												
1999	33	10	1	7	33	14	4	10	66	24	5	17
2000	25	17	0	3	35	9	0	5	60	26	0	8

TABLE 2.2.3: PROJECT IMPACT PARTNERSHIP AND EDUCATION-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES

	Partnerships				Public Education/Information				Totals			
	Ongoing	Completed	Decided Not to Pursue	Planned For Future	Ongoing	Completed	Decided Not to Pursue	Planned For Future	Ongoing	Completed	Decided Not to Pursue	Planned For Future
Community 1												
1999	3	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
2000	3	0	0	0	5	1	0	1	8	1	0	1
Community 2												
1999	4	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	6	3	0	0
2000	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	1	0	0
Community 3												
1999	3	0	0	0	9	3	0	1	12	3	0	1
2000	3	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	14	0	0	0
Community 4												
1999	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
2000	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
Community 5												
1999	1	1	0	0	6	0	0	0	7	1	0	0
2000	0	1	0	0	7	0	0	0	7	1	0	0
Community 6												
1999	1	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	10	0	0	0
2000	1	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	11	0	0	0
Community 7												
1999	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	4	5	0	0	5
2000	5	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	8	1	0	0
TOTAL												
1999	16	3	0	1	35	4	0	5	51	7	0	6
2000	17	2	0	0	41	2	0	1	58	4	0	1

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2.3 Status of Project Impact Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Activities

With respect to the risk assessment and vulnerability element of Project Impact, DRC included any activity that identified hazards associated with critical facilities; determined the vulnerability of public infrastructure, populations, or businesses; or assessed risks to transportation or utility systems. Also included in this category were any plans that were developed to provide a basis for actions to reduce hazards, such as completed risk assessments, GIS mapping, and updated hazard mitigation plans. Although plans are not in and of themselves risk assessments, they do constitute an essential first step since they allow communities to define and prioritize their mitigation actions.

In 1999, informants listed forty-three risk assessment actions that were either ongoing (33) or completed (10) across all seven pilot communities. Individual community counts ranged from two to nine ongoing projects (average of 4.7) and zero to five completed projects (average of 1.4). By 2000, the combined ongoing and completed risk assessment actions had decreased marginally to forty-two, with communities engaged in fewer ongoing activities (25) but having completed more than the previous year (17) bringing the total number of completed risk assessment activities to twenty-seven. Individual community counts ranged from one to seven for ongoing activities (average of 3.5) and zero to four for completed activities (average of 2.4). In most cases, the projects that were planned for the future in 1999 had generated activity in 2000. Only two communities decided to postpone a total of three activities. For one community, the postponed project was part of a phased project in which another component had to be completed first. The remaining two activities were in another community where these projects were postponed indefinitely.

Table 2.3.1 lists the types of assessment projects under way and completed in communities. It should be noted that many of these projects have multiple phases. For example, one community developed a phased project with its business and industry task force. This project was a two-phased project in which the initiative first completed a survey of the types of businesses located in that community. A second phase, planned for the future, included the determination of the disaster planning needs of four businesses that will be chosen as part of a pilot study. Once the needs are determined, then the businesses can begin to take steps toward disaster resistance. Another community developed a four-phased watershed study, which will involve an examination of three of the community's watersheds. Once the community has information on the individual watersheds, an overall and comprehensive watershed analysis is planned. Other activities centered on hazard mapping, developing resource inventories, and identifying target areas and populations for mitigation implementation measures.

DRC conclusions regarding assessment and planning activities are as follows:

1. In both 1999 and 2000, a significant number of risk assessment projects were completed within the pilot communities.

2. Communities continued to see assessment and planning as important Project Impact activities.

3. Most communities saw stagnation or a decline in the number of *ongoing* assessment activities from 1999 to 2000; however, these communities typically also *completed* more activities in 2000 than in 1999.

4. Few communities included a socioeconomic analysis as part of their risk and vulnerability assessment projects.

TABLE 2.3.1: EXAMPLES OF RISK ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Develop watershed study and restoration project	Identify and catalogue existing mitigation activities
Develop feasible multi-hazard program components	Conduct site visits for school retrofit assessments
Create a community-wide local mitigation strategy	Develop phased approach to projects based on field analysis
Conduct a business impact analysis	Conduct a generator capability assessment
Conduct a socioeconomic vulnerability analysis	Produce geologic, landslide hazard, and seismic maps
Conduct a hazardous materials vulnerability analysis	Set up a GIS mapping system
Identify single family homes for retrofitting	Evaluate stream restoration
Risk assessment of vulnerable infrastructure	Build inventory of at-risk structures and hazardous buildings
Select target buildings for development of mitigation implementation strategy	Identify technical assistance for risk assessment of critical facilities and SLOSH models
Select target population groups for development of mitigation implementation strategy	Request proposals and execute contract for utility grid analysis
Develop conceptual disaster resistant prototype for minor structural and non-structural retrofit of homes and businesses	Develop actions to further strengthen the capability of the community's GIS to aid future decision making
Conduct and prepare inventory of the community's housing and building stock	Acquire equipment and training needed to run HAZUS software
Conduct an inventory of resources	Ensure that upstream mitigation activities do not create future problems

2.4 Status of Project Impact Mitigation Activities

Only projects that involved specific mitigation actions, not those that focused on mitigation planning, were included in this category. These activities included home retrofitting, Spring Break activities that focused on hazard mitigation, improvements to land use management, development and implementation of tool-lending programs, removal of nonstructural hazards, structure elevation, protection of lifeline facilities, and acquisition of flood-damaged properties.

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Communities reported engaging in approximately the same number of ongoing mitigation projects in 1999 (33) as in 2000 (35). The ongoing mitigation activities for individual communities ranged from two to seven (average of 4.7) in 1999 and from one to ten (average of 5) in 2000. Communities 6 and 7 saw an increase in ongoing mitigation activities from 1999 to 2000, Communities 3 and 4 saw a decrease, while Communities 1, 2, and 5 remained the same. Although the number of total ongoing activities remained fairly constant, communities completed nine additional activities in 2000 and made progress on activities that had been postponed to the future in 1999. On the individual community level, the count of completed mitigation activities remained constant at zero for Communities 1 and 7, increased slightly by one for Communities 4 and 6, dropped substantially for Communities 2 and 5, and increased moderately for Community 3. With the exception of Communities 2, 3 and 4, the majority of communities had more mitigation activities planned for the future in 1999 (average of 1.4) and 2000 (average of .7) than additional risk activities planned for the future during 1999 (average of 1) and 2000 (average of .4).

Several communities put certain projects on hold while they made headway on other activities. One community postponed its annual Spring Break activity with AmeriCorps to work on what it believed were more critical projects. Another community postponed a project that was classified as a 1999 ongoing activity. One noteworthy project planned for the future that merits mention is a joint Department of Energy / FEMA project that involves the simultaneous retrofitting of homes to make them both more energy efficient and more disaster resistant. This activity attempts to foster partnerships with federal agencies in an effort to maximize resources, streamline processes, and tie together the mandates of separate organizations.

Table 2.4.1 lists examples of mitigation projects under way and completed in communities. All seven communities were undertaking some form of elevation, relocation, or retrofit projects, including the creation of a tool lending library, retrofit of critical facilities, buy-out programs, and providing low interest home-retrofit loans to homeowners. Overall, informants reported successful outcomes associated with these projects. Community informants were also quick to point out the obstacles they continually needed to overcome to implement their mitigation initiatives. For example, one community anticipated difficulties providing the low interest loans to homeowners it had arranged with one bank that was subsequently bought out by another bank with which the Project Impact initiative had no prior relationship. At the time of the interview, the informant was unsure as to whether or not the new bank would continue the program. Another community was very successful with its local home retrofit program. Although its success continued when it expanded the program regionally, the expansion did significantly increase the demands placed on those responsible for implementing the activity. Clearly, emerging challenges such as the one this community faced delayed the completion of activities and necessitated additional work on the part of Project Impact organizers.

An inherent benefit of Project Impact is the multitude of programs to which communities have access in order to improve their overall disaster resistance. The National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System is one example. Ideally, communities can use their Project Impact activities dually as NFIP activities, thereby improving their CRS ratings and leading to a decrease in flood insurance rates. One might assume that this activity would be

central to the Project Impact strategies of many communities; however, only two of the seven pilot communities had ever linked the CRS rating with Project Impact when asked to list their community activities. Indeed, one of the communities did so in 1999 but did not in 2000. Many community informants stated that the CRS rating would be central to their community's Project Impact initiative were it not for what they reported as excessive and intensive paperwork necessary to submit the CRS application. Until the CRS rating deduction process becomes more streamlined and is incorporated as part of the Project Impact program, many communities may not recognize that such an activity falls squarely under the disaster resistant community umbrella.

Observations regarding mitigation activities include the following:

1. In both 1999 and 2000, communities were making substantial progress on mitigation activities.

2. Communities typically completed slightly fewer mitigation projects in 2000 than they had in 1999; however, most had substantial mitigation projects under way or had completed portions of ongoing mitigation activities, such as removing some homes out of flood plains, with more removals planned over the coming years.

TABLE 2.4.1: EXAMPLES OF MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

Accept, screen, and approve loan / grant applications	Replacement of non-flexible gas lines / installation of automatic gas shut-off valve
Remove non-structural hazards in school classrooms	Tool lending library (for seismically retrofit homes)
Carry out Spring Break activities with AmeriCorps	Reduce overhead toilet tank hazards in schools
School retrofits	Retrofit water plant
Develop and implement certificate program for contractors and inspectors	Complete structural and non-structural retrofit of buildings
Retrofit critical facilities such as fire stations and public safety buildings	Complete update of non-structural hazard mitigation manual for schools
Clean up and maintain streams	Regionalize local home retrofit program
Develop criteria for inspections on retrofitted homes	Carry out disaster mitigation business program
Acquire flood-damaged structures	Elevate low roadways
Elevate the utilities, appliances, and furnaces in homes damaged by floods	Establish a cleaning and inspection program for culverts, drainage, and storm water systems
Foster the adoption of local building code compliance procedures	Strengthen or establish land use regulations and building codes
Join the Community Rating System program	Mitigate small watershed hazards

2.5 Status of Project Impact Partnership Activities

Before moving on to discuss the partnership-building and public education components of Project Impact, it is important to note that while this report discusses Project Impact activities as "planned," "ongoing," and "completed," these terms are less applicable to partnerships and community education than to risk assessment and mitigation.

While mitigation projects and risk assessments have a beginning and an end, partnership mobilization and education are meant to be ongoing activities, in the sense that they represent tasks with no clear end-point. Attracting partners and educating the public are typically not activities that can be thought of as "complete," but rather are processes that must continue over time. Thus, when the term "completed" is used here in connection with partnerships and public education campaigns, the term refers to *specific projects or efforts*, not to processes that must extend over time in order to have a lasting impact.

Overall there has been very little change over time in Project Impact pilot communities with respect to partnership-building activities. In 1999, communities were engaged in a total sixteen ongoing activities and had completed three activities. Individual community activity ranged from one to four ongoing activities (average of 2.3) and ranged from zero to two completed activities (average of .4). Five of the seven communities had not completed any partnership activities. In 2000, communities were engaged in seventeen ongoing activities and had completed two additional activities. Individual community activities ranged from zero to five ongoing activities (average of 2.4) and ranged from zero to one completed activities (average of .3) where five of the seven communities had not completed any partnership activities. No communities decided not to pursue partnership activities and the one activity that was slated as planned for the future in 1999 was now ongoing in 2000. Not surprisingly, very few of the partnership activities were completed, mainly because creating and maintaining these partnership-building activities was considered an ongoing process.

Table 2.5.1 lists examples of partnership projects under way and completed in communities. Communities undertook three different kinds of partnership activities. First, communities were engaged in activities that were aimed at developing coordinating groups (such as the creation of Project Impact task forces, and developing strategies or incentives to increase Project Impact membership). Some examples of trends in the development of coordinating bodies include forming a mitigation acquisition flood control group, establishing partnership agreements with businesses and industry, and building a committee that will continue to pursue the community's disaster resistant goals. Second, communities attempted to identify contributions that partners could make to the Project Impact initiative. Examples of trends in this area include identifying and increasing funding sources for mitigation, establishing a business coalition in support of Project Impact, and developing strategies for expanding Project Impact membership. Third, communities also attempted to determine how the Project Impact initiative could aid the partners in making the community more disaster resistant. Examples of these trends include creating a non-profit organization for business partnership implementation, identifying incentives for

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participating in Project Impact, and establishing a link between businesses and the emergency operations center.

TABLE 2.5.1: EXAMPLES OF PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Establish partnership agreements with the Mayor's Partnership Council
Establish partnership agreements with the task forces on business and industry
Establish partnership agreements with technical standards task force
Establish mitigation acquisition flood control group
Establish a group to develop and implement a local mitigation strategy
Work with businesses to establish an employee education / assistance program
Create a nonprofit organization for business partnership implementation
Establish a mentoring program between large and small businesses
Develop and implement a business recovery alliance
Establish a link between businesses and the emergency operations center
Identify incentives for partners participating in Project Impact
Develop strategies for expanding membership
Formalize steering committee
Build a committee that will continue the community's disaster resistant goals
Approach utility and transportation organizations regarding possible cost share arrangement for mitigation efforts
Identify and increase funding sources for mitigation

Several communities had undertaken innovative projects to increase disaster resistance. One community created a non-profit status for business and partnership implementation. The same community also created a mentoring program between larger and smaller businesses to aid the smaller businesses in creating contingency plans, retrofitting, and generally becoming more disaster resistant.

Another community decided to reassess and reorganize its Project Impact committee structure as a new partnership. Still another community was striving to improve coordination with regulatory agencies, with the aim of helping that community better enforce laws and ordinances as part of Project Impact.

With respect to partnership activities, DRC found that:

1. Communities were actively engaged in establishing partnerships.

2. As noted above, communities saw partnership-building as an ongoing effort, rather than as an activity with a clear start- and end-date.

3. In general, DRC found that while all Project Impact sites were reaching out to a variety of private sector, government, and non-profit groups, communities still needed to broaden partnership activities to include wider community representation.

2.6 Status of Education and Information-Oriented Activities

With respect to DRC's assessment framework, the public education category includes any activity in which information was given to the public concerning hazards and what can be done to prevent or reduce the losses associated with them. Returning to Table 2.2.3, overall, pilot communities were involved in more ongoing education activities in 2000 (41) than in 1999 (35), but they completed slightly fewer educational activities in 2000 (2) than they had in 1999 (4). A total of six educational Project Impact activities were complete in the pilot communities over the span of two years. Individual community activity in 1999 ranged from two to nine ongoing activities (average of 7) and ranged from zero to three completed activities (average of .6). Five of the seven communities had not yet completed any educational activities. In 2000, individual community activity ranged from two to eleven ongoing activities (average of 5.9) and ranged from zero to one completed activity (average of .3) where five of the seven communities had not completed any educational activities over the past year. Similar to partnership projects, most of the education activities are ongoing, since educating the public on disaster resistance is a continual process.

Table 2.6.1 lists examples of education projects under way and completed in the seven communities. The educational activities targeted a range of audiences including professionals, organizations, the general public, non-English speakers, senior citizens, and children. Some of the activities focused on how to complete mitigation actions (e.g., training school staff to reduce classroom hazards or developing a homeowner's retrofit course), while other programs targeted populations at risk. Several communities significantly expanded their education campaigns from 1999 to 2000. One pilot community developed a program that provided outreach to the community's large Latino/a population. A project completed under this program was the creation of a Spanish hotline that provides information about disaster preparedness and mitigation to this sector of the community. Six of the seven pilot communities held hazard educational fairs or hazard awareness days, often on the anniversary of past disaster events, concentrating on the hazards that most impact their areas. These large-scale annual or semi-annual events are opportunities to educate the public about disaster preparedness and mitigation. Although classified in the table as community awareness activities, these events can also be considered partnership-building events that allow partners to participate and provide support. Moreover, these events offer partners a forum to advertise their products and, as one informant explained, to "get their name out." Several communities that held these kinds of events charged partners for setting up booths. One community used funding from an event to raise disaster awareness in the community by donating the proceeds to the local Red Cross and Salvation Army chapters for mitigation outreach. This community then offered the remaining funds as competitive grants that organizations could use to increase their disaster resistance.

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In 1999, communities stressed the importance of Y2K programs for community disaster resistance. In 2000, after Y2K did not generate the problems many expected, one community decided to tone down its disaster messages. This informant stated that his community was "Y2-K'd out" and that the community had lost much of its interest in disaster-preparedness messages following Y2K.

Website development was another activity that two communities listed as ongoing. Five of the seven pilot communities had developed relatively sophisticated Project Impact websites that provide a plethora of information about the community and its history of disasters, as well as a significant amount of information about mitigation and disaster preparedness and a discussion about the importance of Project Impact. Of the two other communities, one community had a website; however that site only provided a page with a description of Project Impact, while the other community had no Project Impact website at all. Interestingly, communities with websites did not specifically list this effort as an educational activity, perhaps because the importance of the Internet as an educational tool was not explicitly recognized. Only in the communities that were still developing their websites, or did not have websites, was website development listed as a specific activity that needed to be undertaken.

Several communities were implementing innovative disaster education campaigns. One flood-prone community carried out an extensive education campaign in the schools to educate both children and teachers about flood hazards and stream mitigation. Through this effort, Project Impact had integrated the concept of flood plain management into the school curriculum. The initiative aided schools in the development of stream models and created watershed education workshops for teachers. It also provided an extensive educational program for students through which the students took a field trip to a watershed, helped clean up and rehabilitate the watershed, then went to an area that was rehabilitated to demonstrate the importance of flood plain management. This is an ongoing educational program. This same community recruited its high school football team to install high water plaques throughout the community, noting how high the water had risen in past floods.

One community initiated a fire-resistant landscaping project. This project attempts to reduce fire hazards in the community by campaigning for the importance of developing fire resistant landscaping and decks on houses. The community plans to create a fire-resistant garden as a future demonstration project.

Another community created a public education component aimed at improving disaster resistance not only in the community but nationally. That community, which implemented an extensive school retrofit program, was contacted and visited by several other Project Impact communities to provide information concerning how to initiate a non-structural school retrofit program in those communities. This project exemplifies the spirit of Project Impact by taking a local project to a national level and expanding the public education component of the program across jurisdictions.

Observations on the progress of educational activities include that:

1. Communities are successfully engaging in a wide variety of educational activities.

2. Most of these activities are ongoing, without specific end-dates.

3. Educational activities are often closely related to partnership activities and sometimes connected to assessment and mitigation projects.

4. Communities are integrating mitigation educational components into existing programs and organizational efforts.

5. Communities are sharing educational strategies with other Project Impact communities.

TABLE 2.6.1: EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Establish disaster-resistant home and business retrofit training	Initiate educational mapping project
Train community retrofit workforce	Target educational activities to non-English speakers
Carry out Y2K education training program	Market the benefits of retrofitted homes
Hold hurricane, flood, or earthquake preparedness fairs	Conduct hazard retrofit course
Establish hurricane, flood, or earthquake preparedness week	Disseminate building regulations and guidelines
Create incentive plans for businesses	Publish a media series on hazard mitigation
Develop mitigation model houses or other buildings	Develop stream modeling education project
Share success stories	Hold flood education workshops for teachers
Determine the training and education needs for the community and partners	Help schools build stream models as an educational project
Identify the most effective means for delivering training and education programs	Install high water plaques
Determine the types of technical and in-kind assistance required to meet the training and education requirements	Train school staff and volunteers to reduce classroom hazards
Establish long-term strategic all-hazards public awareness campaign	Hold seminars to inform and organize all affected segments of the community
Establish children's education task force	Establish senior citizen education task force
Provide resource packet for home owners	Increase affordable housing outside flood-prone areas
Create and maintain Project Impact website	Regionalize mitigation education programs

3. STATUS OF PROJECT IMPACT PARTNERSHIPS

3.1 Introduction

Developing partnerships is a major Project Impact goal because it is closely linked with the notion of developing a community's disaster resistance. Not only are partnerships supposed to bring additional resources to the local community, but partnering is also a fundamental way to educate and involve diverse segments of the population in a collective effort to improve a community's ability to withstand extreme natural events in the future.

In addition to being asked about partnership-building activities, pilot community interviewees were also asked about changes in the numbers, types, and activity levels of partners engaged in Project Impact. In analyzing interview material, DRC examined the extent to which pilot communities were fostering partnerships among governmental and private sector entities, as well as the specific partnership strategies communities employed.

DRC collected partnership information in each of the three years of its assessment of Project Impact. This included basic information regarding the names of partners that were involved in the initiative as well as data regarding the activity levels of partners. It is important to note that the process of partner data collection was significantly less involved in the first year of the assessment than in the subsequent years of the study. In the first year, DRC conducted a basic analysis of partnerships in the pilot communities. Accordingly, partner information for Year 1 of the study concentrated on the number and types of partners in the communities. These data were collected from the communities' memoranda of agreement. The activity levels of these partnerships varied across the pilot communities because some cities and counties were further along in the implementation process during the first year of the assessment than others.

In the second and third years of the assessment, staff from DRC presented respondents with the list of partners collected from their communities' memoranda of agreement. Respondents were asked to rank each partner's involvement on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "not at all active" and 5 indicating "quite active." Additionally, they were asked to indicate which of the organizations listed had not actually been involved in partnership activities even if they had been named in memoranda of agreement, and they were encouraged to list any additional partners who had become involved with Project Impact since the MOA was developed.

In the first and second year of the assessment, DRC divided partners into three categories: federal partners, state partners, and local or non-governmental partners. In the third year of the assessment, DRC conducted a more in-depth analysis of partnerships in the communities. In order to better characterize the composition of partnership networks and effectively demonstrate the diversity of partners within the communities, partnerships were further divided into the thirteen categories listed below:

1. Federal government
2. State government
3. County government
4. City government

5. Community-based businesses

6. Local branches of national chains or franchises

7. Local media

8. Trade and industry associations

9. Non-profit and social-service based organizations

10. Schools and higher education institutions

11. Hospital and health care organizations

12. Religious institutions, affiliates, and organizations

13. Boards, commissions, and coalitions

Partners that did not fit into any of these thirteen established categories were represented in a fourteenth category: other partners. However, the thirteen specific category types were found to be quite comprehensive for the vast majority of all partners.

The sections that follow present data on various aspects of the partnership arrangements that have developed over time in the seven pilot communities. Included is information on the composition of partnership networks (both within communities and across communities over time), partnering trends by sector, and partnership activity levels.

3.2 Partnering Networks

Table 3.2.1 shows the number of partners in each of the category types in the three years of the study. In the first year of the initiative, the pilot communities had signed between eighteen and thirty-seven total partners to the initiative (an average of 25.1). Community-based business partners represented the largest category of partners in 1998, with numbers ranging from zero to fourteen (an average of 6.4). Partners from local branches of national chains or franchises and federal government partners were the second and third most common partner types in Year 1. Communities had an average of four partners from local branches of national chains or franchises, with numbers ranging from one to nine. Additionally, communities signed between two and seven federal government partners in 1998 (an average of 3.9).

In 1999, the pilot communities had signed between twenty-seven and seventy-two partners (an average of 46.9 partners). While the total number of partners increased dramatically in the second year of the assessment (an increase of 86.3%), the three most common partner types were, once again, community-based business partners, partners from local branches of national chains or franchises, and federal government partners. In 1999, communities had between three and eighteen community-based business partners (an average of 11.4 partners), and between three and nineteen partners from local branches of national chains or franchises (an average of 8.7). Federal government partners ranged between two and nine (an average of 5.6).

In the third year of DRC's assessment of Project Impact, the number of partners in the pilot communities ranged from thirty-four to seventy-four (an average of 50.3 partners). Although the

total number of partners once again increased in the third year of the study (an increase of 7.3 percent), the growth of partners was less dramatic from 1999 to 2000 than it had been from 1998 to 1999.[1] For the third year in a row, the three most common partner types were community-based business partners, partners from local branches of national chains or franchises, and federal government partners. There were between four and twenty-six community-based business partners in 2000 (an average of 15.7). Communities had an average of eight partners from local branches of national chains or franchises, with numbers ranging from four to fourteen. In 2000, there was an average of four federal government partners in the pilot communities, with numbers ranging from one to seven.

TABLE 3.2.1: NUMBER OF PROJECT IMPACT PARTNERS BY SECTOR

		Federal Government	State Government	County Government	City Government	Community-Based Businesses	Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises	Local Media	Trade and Industry Association	Non-Profit and Social-Service Based	Schools and Higher Education Related	Hospital and Health Care	Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations	Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions	Other	Totals
Community 1	1998	7	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	1	1	1	2	0	21
	1999	9	4	0	1	3	3	0	0	7	1	1	1	4	2	36
	2000	7	3	0	1	4	4	0	0	6	1	1	1	4	2	34
Community 2	1998	3	5	1	1	2	7	1	3	2	4	0	0	2	0	31
	1999	2	6	1	0	4	13	1	0	3	3	0	0	1	1	35
	2000	1	3	1	0	8	13	2	0	3	2	2	0	1	0	36
Community 3	1998	4	4	0	0	14	9	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	37
	1999	4	5	1	0	14	12	2	0	2	3	0	1	2	0	46
	2000	2	6	1	0	24	14	2	0	2	3	0	1	3	1	59
Community 4	1998	3	2	0	0	13	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	25
	1999	4	2	0	0	14	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	27
	2000	4	2	0	0	21	4	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	37
Community 5	1998	3	2	4	2	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
	1999	5	5	5	4	18	19	3	4	4	1	1	0	1	2	72
	2000	5	6	6	4	26	12	2	3	4	1	1	1	2	1	74
Community 6	1998	2	2	1	1	6	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	3	0	22
	1999	8	2	0	3	11	7	1	3	2	1	0	0	3	0	41
	2000	3	2	4	9	10	5	0	3	3	1	0	0	3	0	43
Community 7	1998	5	3	0	0	7	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	22
	1999	7	3	16	3	16	4	2	2	5	2	3	0	5	3	71
	2000	6	3	14	3	17	4	2	2	5	2	3	0	6	2	69
Totals	1998	27	20	6	4	45	28	6	5	9	9	3	3	10	1	176
	1999	39	27	23	11	80	61	9	9	23	12	6	3	17	8	328
	2000	28	25	26	17	110	56	8	8	25	11	8	4	20	6	352

Because of the significant rise in the number of partners in the pilot communities in the three years of DRC's assessment, the numbers in Table 3.2.1 do not fully capture changes in the number of partnerships. Table 3.2.2 provides an alternative perspective on the partnership

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1 It is important to note, however, that the total number of partners has doubled between 1998 and 2000 (an increase from one hundred-seventy-six partners to three hundred-fifty-two partners), indicating a very significant upward shift over the three-year period.

numbers in Table 3.2.1 by showing the percentage of partners in each of the fourteen partner categories over the three year period. Relative changes in partnerships can be detected through an examination of Table 3.2.2. For example, in Community 1, the seven federal government partners in 1998 represent 33% of the community's total number of partnerships (21 partners). While Community 1 also had seven federal government partners in 2000, federal government partners accounted for only 21% of the total number of partners in that year (34 partners). Thus, one significant trend over time involves shifts in partnership network composition.

TABLE 3.2.2: PERCENTAGE OF PROJECT IMPACT PARTNERS BY SECTOR

		Federal Government	State Government	County Government	City Government	Community-Based Businesses	Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises	Local Media	Trade and Industry Association	Non-Profit and Social-Service Based	Schools and Higher Education Related	Hospital and Health Care	Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations	Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions	Other
Community 1	1998	33	10	0	0	0	14	0	0	19	5	5	5	10	0
	1999	25	11	0	3	8	8	0	0	19	3	3	3	11	6
	2000	21	9	0	3	12	12	0	0	18	3	3	3	12	6
Community 2	1998	10	16	3	3	6	23	3	10	6	13	0	0	6	0
	1999	6	17	3	0	11	37	3	0	9	9	0	0	3	3
	2000	3	8	3	0	22	36	6	0	8	6	6	0	3	0
Community 3	1998	11	11	0	0	38	24	5	0	3	3	0	3	3	0
	1999	9	11	2	0	30	26	4	0	4	7	0	2	4	0
	2000	3	10	2	0	41	24	3	0	3	5	0	2	5	2
Community 4	1998	12	8	0	0	52	12	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	0
	1999	15	7	0	0	52	11	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	0
	2000	11	5	0	0	57	11	0	0	5	3	3	3	3	0
Community 5	1998	17	11	22	11	17	17	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	1999	7	7	7	6	25	26	4	6	6	1	1	0	1	3
	2000	7	8	8	5	35	16	3	4	5	1	1	1	3	1
Community 6	1998	9	9	5	5	27	5	5	9	9	5	0	0	14	0
	1999	20	5	0	7	27	17	2	7	5	2	0	0	7	0
	2000	7	5	9	21	23	12	0	7	7	2	0	0	7	0
Community 7	1998	23	14	0	0	32	9	5	0	0	5	5	0	5	5
	1999	10	4	23	4	23	6	3	3	7	3	4	0	7	4
	2000	9	4	20	4	25	6	3	3	7	3	4	0	9	3
Totals	1998	15	11	3	2	26	16	3	3	5	5	2	2	6	1
	1999	12	8	7	3	24	19	3	3	7	4	2	1	5	2
	2000	8	7	7	5	31	16	2	2	7	3	2	1	6	2

There are several important trends in network composition that are evident in Table 3.2.2. First, there have been steady changes in the participation of governmental partners. While federal government partners represented 15% of the total number of partners in 1998, they accounted for 8% of the total partners in 2000. The total percentage of state government partners also decreased from 11% in Year 1 to 7% in Year 3. This is due in part to the fact that the proportion of county government and city government partners involved in Project Impact experienced a steady increase in the three years of DRC's assessment (3% to 7% and 2% to 5%, respectively).

Second, the above-mentioned increase in the number of community-based business partners had an impact on the composition of partnership networks. The total percentage of community-based business partners decreased, from 26% in 1998 to 24% in 1999. In 2000, however, the total percentage of community-based business partners increased seven percentage points to 31% of the total partners involved with Project Impact in pilot communities. It is useful to note that this trend can largely be explained by the significant increases in the percentages of community-based businesses participating in Project Impact in three communities—Communities 1, 2, and 5.

Third, the total percentages of the remaining partner types experienced a minimal amount of fluctuation in the three years of the assessment. Most notably, while the number of partners from the non-profit sector and boards, commissions, and coalitions experienced a rather significant increase from 1998 to 2000 (a gain of 16 partners and 10 partners, respectively), their overall participation in local networks only increased slightly. Accordingly, Table 3.2.2 demonstrates that the distribution of partner types has remained fairly constant from 1998 to 2000.

3.3 Partnership Participation Patterns in the Seven Pilot Communities

Information on the composition of Project Impact partnership networks by sector is presented in the pie charts contained in Figures 3.3.1-3.3.10. Figures 3.3.1-3.3.3 show the total proportion of partners in each of the sector types in 2000, 1999, and 1998. Figures 3.3.4-3.3.10 show the proportion of partners in each of the sector types by community in 2000.

Figures 3.3.1-3.3.3 present the modal patterns in partnership distribution in the seven pilot communities in 2000, 1999, and 1998. As the figures demonstrate, the distribution of partnerships in the pilot communities has remained fairly constant since the inaugural year of Project Impact. The largest changes in partnership distribution over these three years include an increase in community-based business partners and a decrease in federal government partners. Business partners (i.e., community-based business partners and partners from local branches of national chains or franchises) account for roughly half of the total partners in the pilot communities. Government partners represent roughly one quarter of the total partnership network composition. The remaining partnership types (including non-profit and social-service based partners and partners from boards, commissions, and coalitions) account for the final quarter of the modal pattern.

Figures 3.3.4-3.3.10 show partnership network composition in each of the pilot communities in 2000. Interestingly, only one pilot community (Community 5) has a partnership distribution that is similar to the modal distribution for the pilot communities in 2000 (as shown in Figure 3.3.1). The remaining pilot communities are characterized by partnership distributions that vary considerably from the modal patterns.

The partnership networks in three of the pilot communities (Community 2, Community 3, and Community 4) are dominated by a high percentage of business partners (as shown in Figures 3.3.5, 3.3.6, and 3.3.7, respectively). Business partners represent 68 % of the total distribution of partners in Community 4, 65 % of the total partnership network in Community 3, and 58 % of the partners in Community 2.

25

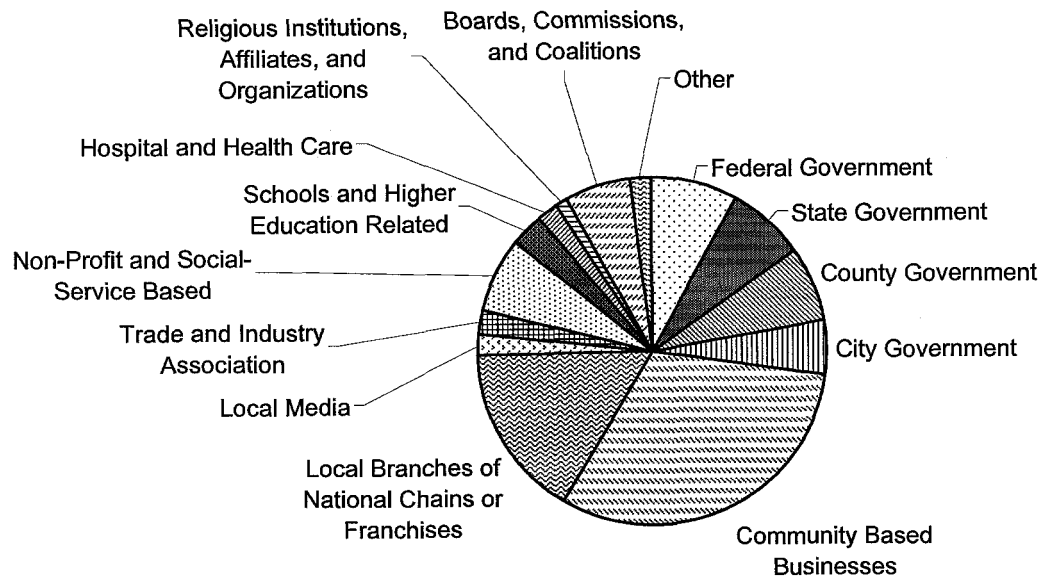**FIGURE 3.3.1: TOTAL PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTION ACROSS COMMUNITY 1-7, 2000**

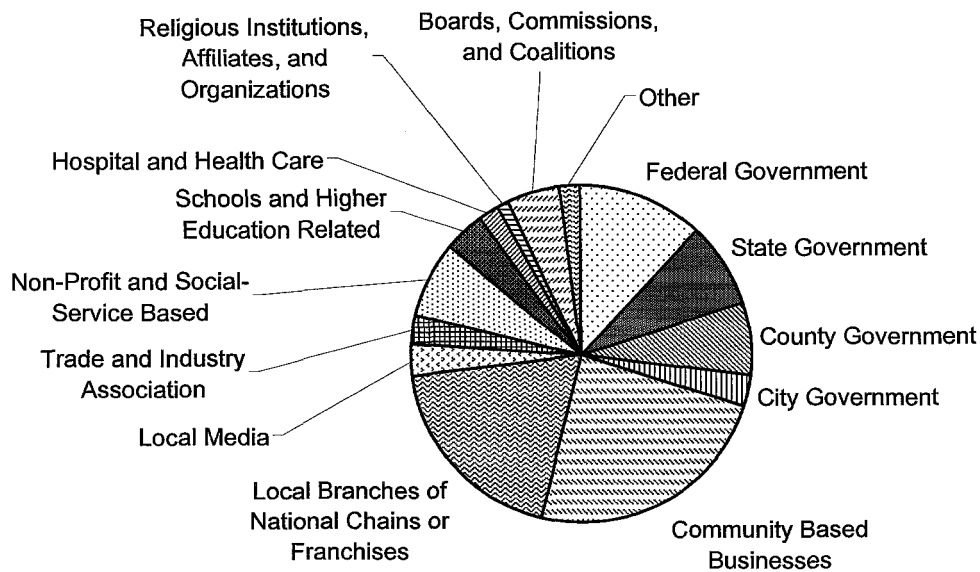**FIGURE 3.3.2: TOTAL PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTION ACROSS COMMUNITY 1-7, 1999**

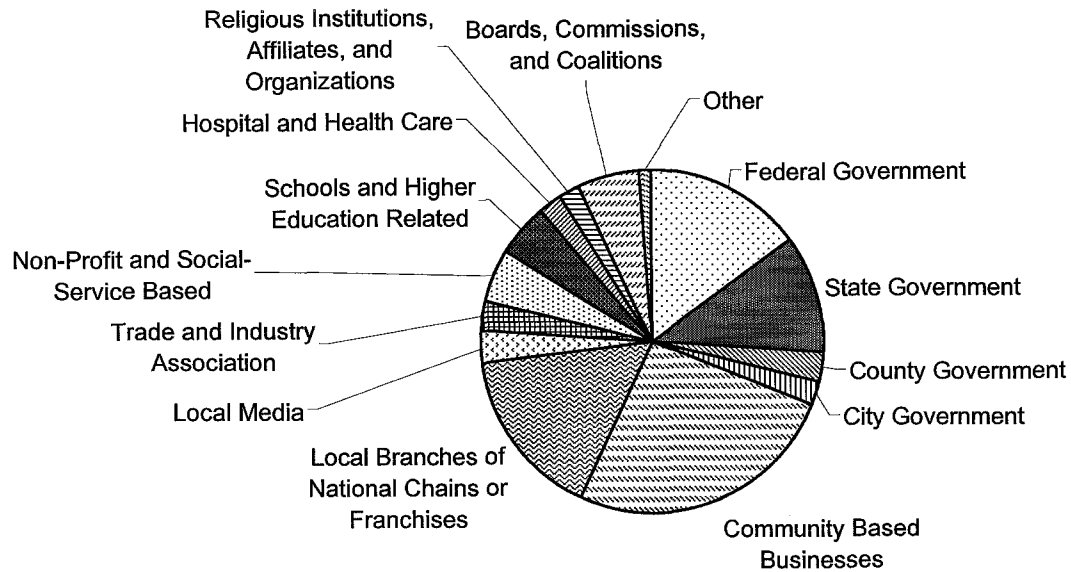**FIGURE 3.3.3: TOTAL PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTION ACROSS COMMUNITY 1-7, 1998**
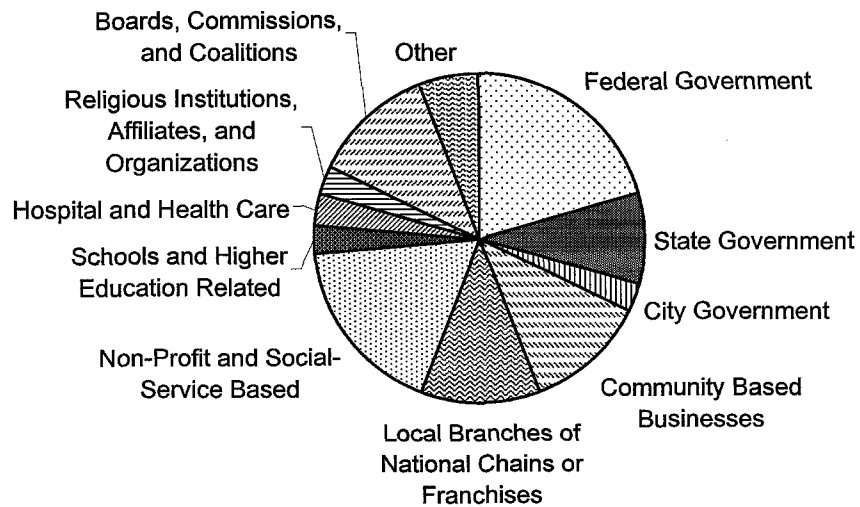

FIGURE 3.3.4: COMMUNITY 1 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

FIGURE 3.3.5: COMMUNITY 2 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions
Federal Government
Hospital and Health Care
State Government
Schools and Higher Education Related
County Government
Non-Profit and Social-Service Based
Local Media
Community Based Businesses
Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises

FIGURE 3.3.6: COMMUNITY 3 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations
Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions
Other
Federal Government
Schools and Higher Education Related
State Government
Non-Profit and Social-Service Based
County Government
Local Media
Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises
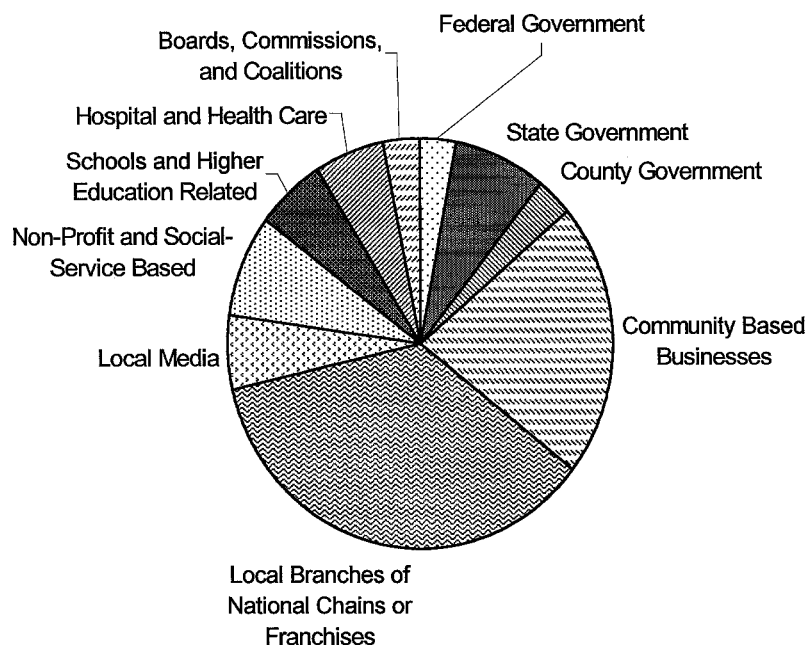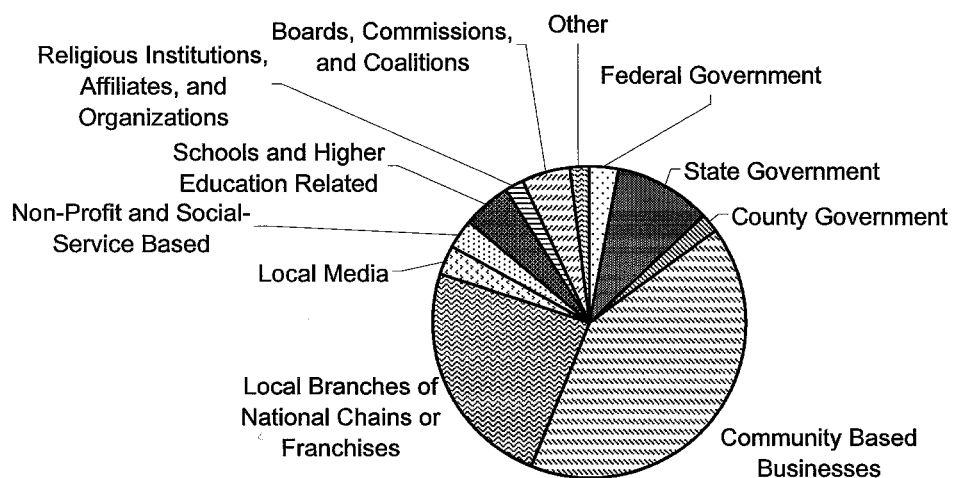Community Based Businesses

FIGURE 3.3.7: COMMUNITY 4 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS
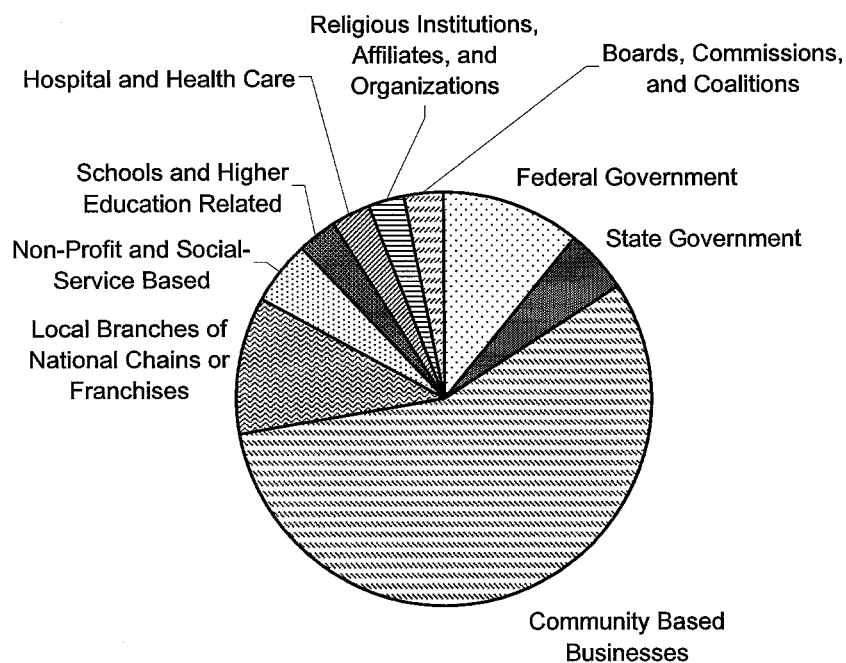

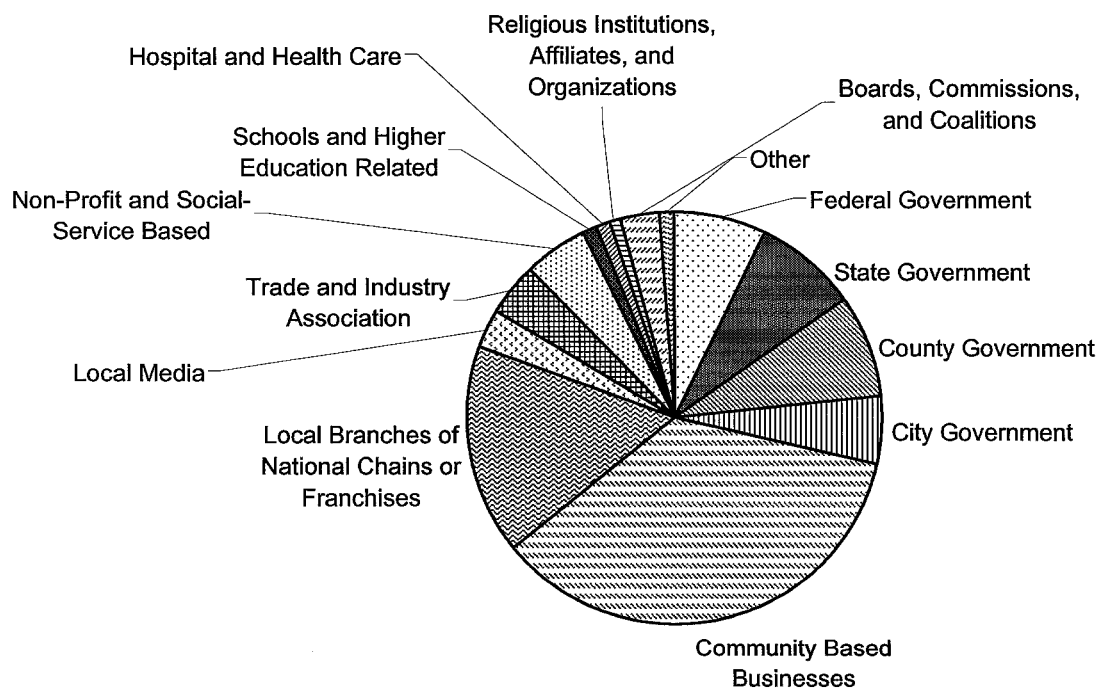**FIGURE 3.3.8: COMMUNITY 5 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS**

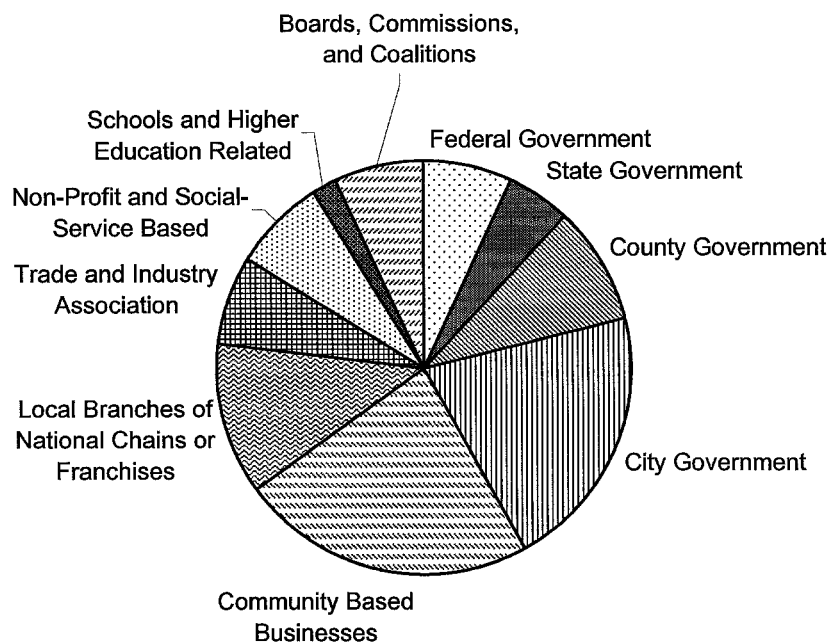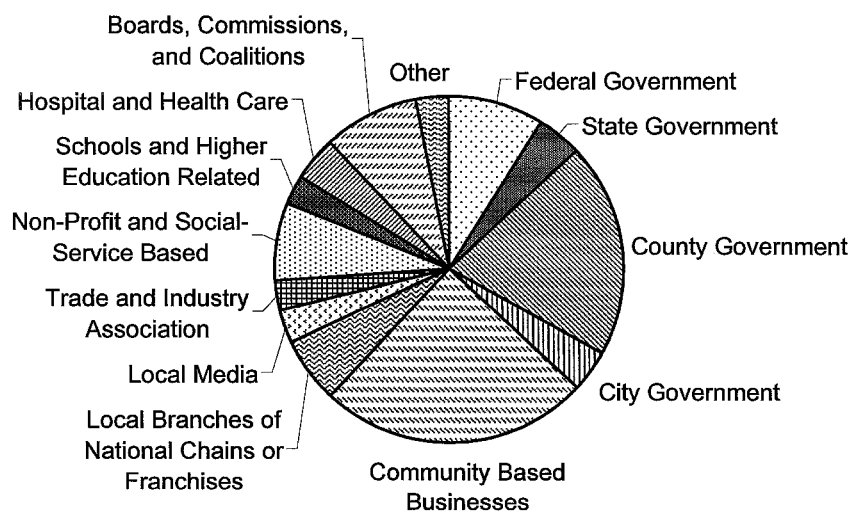**FIGURE 3.3.9: COMMUNITY 6 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS**

FIGURE 3.3.10: COMMUNITY 7 2000 PARTNERSHIP DISTRIBUTIONS

Two of the pilot communities (Community 6 and Community 7) have a high percentage of governmental partners in their partnership networks (as shown in Figure 3.3.9 and 3.3.10, respectively). Government partners represent 42 % of the partnership distribution in Community 6, with city government partners accounting for exactly half of the community's government partners. Thirty-seven percent of the total partners in Community 7 are government partners, with the largest sector of this group being county government partners.

The partnership network membership in the remaining pilot community, Community 1, differs from that of the other six communities. As Figure 3.3.4 demonstrates, there is no discernible trend in the partnership distribution in Community 1. Because Community 1 varies from the above categories, a number of interesting observations can be made about the partnership distribution in that community. Most significantly, the business partners in Community 1 represent only 24 % of the total partnership distribution, roughly half of the trend that is evident in the modal partnership distribution. Instead, federal government partners and non-profit and social-service based partners are the largest partnership-type categories in this distribution (21% and 18 % of the total partnership distribution, respectively). Also, when compared to the total partnership distribution in the pilot communities, Community 1 has a high percentage of partners from boards, commissions and coalitions.

The tables and pie charts on pilot community network composition contain several important types of information on local Project Impact networks. First, they show that partnership networks are diverse, encompassing a range of types of agencies and organizations, as well as different governmental levels. Second, they indicate that the types of organizations that were initially targeted by Project Impact for involvement in community-based education efforts—businesses, particularly locally-based ones—are indeed taking part in Project Impact in significant numbers. Additionally, the charts and tables also identify sectors within the pilot communities that are not yet well represented in Project Impact efforts, such as non-profits, social-service organizations, and religious organizations. Project Impact is clearly doing well in encouraging its initial target audience to take part in local loss-reduction efforts. These findings on partnership network composition point to the need for additional outreach to other, less represented community organizations.

3.4 Partner Activity

Partners vary in the extent to which they can be considered actively involved in Project Impact. These variations can be observed both across communities and over time. Table 3.4.1 shows the total number of active partners in the pilot communities. As stated earlier, in 1999 and 2000, community respondents were asked to rank the activity levels of the partners in their community on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "not at all active" and 5 indicating "quite active." For analysis purposes, partners that were ranked by any community respondent as a 3, 4, or 5 ("moderately active," "quite active," or "very active") were considered active in the Project Impact initiative in that community. Due to the varying levels of community involvement in the first year of the initiative, the DRC did not collect partner activity information in 1998. Thus, the following tables will only contain partner activity information for 1999 and 2000.

General Trends in Partner Activity

As Table 3.4.1 indicates, two hundred fifty-four of the three hundred twenty-eight total partners were considered active in 1999; 77% of the total number of partners in the pilot communities. In 2000, two hundred forty-six of the three hundred fifty-two total partners were considered active; representing 70% of the total number of partners. This decline in the percentage of active partners can be attributed to the significant decreases in activity levels in two pilot communities: Community 7 and Community 4. Community 7 experienced a forty-seven percentage point decrease in total active partnerships between 1999 and 2000. Sixty-three of Community 7's partners were considered active in 1999, while only twenty-nine of the sixty-nine partners were considered active in 2000. Community 4 experienced a twenty-seven percentage point decrease in total active partnerships from 1999 to 2000. In 1999, all of Community 4's twenty-seven partners were considered active, and, in 2000, twenty-seven of Community 4's thirty-seven partners were considered active.

While Community 7 and Community 4 experienced decreases in the activity level of partners from 1999 to 2000, the activity levels in the remaining pilot communities increased from 1999 to 2000. However, as reflected in the overall decline of the percentage of active partners, these increases were minor in comparison with the decreases in Community 7 and 4. Community 1 experienced an increase of ten percentage points, the most significant increase from 1999 to 2000. Community 2 experienced an eight percentage point rise in active partnerships from 1999 to 2000. Both Community 3 and Community 5 experienced an increase in active partners of six percentage points from 1999 to 2000. Community 6 experienced a two point increase in the percentage of active partners from 1999 to 2000.

TABLE 3.4.1: TOTAL ACTIVE PROJECT IMPACT PARTNERS BY COMMUNITY

		Total Partners	Total Active Partners	Percentage of Active Partners
Community 1	1999	36	21	58
	2000	34	23	68
Community 2	1999	35	30	86
	2000	36	34	94
Community 3	1999	46	30	65
	2000	59	42	71
Community 4	1999	27	27	100
	2000	37	27	73
Community 5	1999	72	55	76
	2000	74	61	82
Community 6	1999	41	28	68
	2000	43	30	70
Community 7	1999	71	63	89
	2000	69	29	42
Totals	1999	328	254	77
	2000	352	246	70

Partner Activity Levels in the Pilot Communities by Sector

Tables 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 provide a more complete profile of partner activity levels in the pilot communities. While Table 3.4.1 focuses on the activity levels of all of the partners in the communities, Table 3.4.2 shows the number of active partners in each of the fourteen partner

categories. For example, according to Table 3.4.2, three of the nine federal government partners in Community 1 were considered active in 1999. The information in Table 3.4.2 is interpreted as percentages in Table 3.4.3. For example, Table 3.4.3 shows that 33% of Community 1's federal government partners were considered active in 1999.

The percentages in Table 3.4.3 should be considered within the context of the real numbers presented in Table 3.4.2 because the percentage data could be misleading if examined apart from the information in Table 3.4.2. According to Table 3.4.3, for example, 100% of Community 7's county government partners were considered active in 1999. In that same year, 100% of Community 7's schools and higher education related partners were considered active. When examined separately from the information in Table 3.4.2, these two percentages appear to have an equal degree of significance. However, further investigation reveals that Community 7 had

TABLE 3.4.2: TOTAL ACTIVE PARTNERS BY SECTOR

	Federal Government	State Government	County Government	City Government	Community-Based Businesses	Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises	Local Media	Trade and Industry Association	Non-Profit and Social-Service Based	Schools and Higher Education Related	Hospital and Health Care	Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations	Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions	Other	Totals
Community 1 1999	3/9	3/4	-	1/1	3/3	3/3	-	-	4/7	1/1	1/1	0/1	1/4	1/2	21/36
2000	4/7	3/3	-	0/1	3/4	4/4	-	-	3/6	0/1	1/1	0/1	4/4	1/2	23/34
Community 2 1999	2/2	4/6	1/1	-	3/4	11/13	1/1	-	3/3	3/3	-	-	1/1	1/1	30/35
2000	1/1	3/3	1/1	-	8/8	13/13	1/2	-	2/3	2/2	2/2	-	1/1	-	34/36
Community 3 1999	3/4	5/5	1/1	-	6/14	8/12	2/2	-	1/2	3/3	-	0/1	1/2	-	30/46
2000	2/2	6/6	1/1	-	17/24	8/14	2/2	-	1/2	3/3	-	0/1	1/3	1/1	42/59
Community 4 1999	4/4	2/2	-	-	14/14	3/3	-	-	-	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1	-	27/27
2000	4/4	2/2	-	-	13/21	4/4	-	-	1/2	1/1	1/1	0/1	1/1	-	27/37
Community 5 1999	5/5	4/5	5/5	4/4	15/18	11/19	2/3	1/4	4/4	1/1	1/1	-	1/1	1/2	55/72
2000	5/5	6/6	6/6	4/4	19/26	10/12	2/2	2/3	3/4	1/1	1/1	1/1	0/2	1/1	61/74
Community 6 1999	4/8	2/2	-	2/3	10/11	3/7	0/1	3/3	1/2	1/1	-	-	2/3	-	28/41
2000	2/3	0/2	2/4	8/9	8/10	4/5	-	1/3	2/3	1/1	-	-	2/3	-	30/43
Community 7 1999	5/7	3/3	16/16	3/3	14/16	4/4	2/2	1/2	4/5	2/2	3/3	-	5/5	1/3	63/71
2000	1/6	2/3	7/14	2/3	5/17	3/4	2/2	0/2	1/5	1/2	1/3	-	3/6	1/2	29/69
Totals 1999	26/39	23/27	23/23	10/11	65/80	43/61	7/9	5/9	17/23	12/12	6/6	1/3	12/17	4/8	254/328
2000	19/28	22/25	17/26	14/17	73/110	46/56	7/8	3/8	13/25	9/11	6/8	1/4	12/20	4/6	246/352

The dashes in Table 3.4.2 represent the absence of partners in the partner type categories.

sixteen county government partners and only two schools and higher education related partners in 1999. Thus, the data in Table 3.4.2 provides an important perspective on the percentages provided in Table 3.4.3.

The discussion of partner activity levels in the Project Impact pilot communities will incorporate information from both Table 3.4.2 and Table 3.4.3, focusing on changes in activity between 1999 and 2000 of the assessment. According to the totals rows in Table 3.4.1, the pilot communities suffered a general decline in the percentage of active partners between 1999 and 2000. In 1999,

77% of the three hundred twenty-eight partners in the pilot communities were considered active. In 2000, however, 70% of the three hundred fifty-two total partners were considered active.

As Table 3.4.4 shows, nine of the fourteen partner type categories experienced decreases in partner activity percentages from 1999 to 2000. These decreases ranged from eight percentage points to thirty-five percentage points. The most dramatic decreases in partner activity percentages occurred in the following categories: county government partners (35 percentage points); hospital and health care partners (25 percentage points); non-profit and social-service based partners (22 percentage points); trade and industry association partners (18 percentage points); schools and higher education related partners (18 percentage points); community-based business partners (15 percentage points); and boards, commissions, and coalitions partners (11 percentage points). Religious institutions, affiliates, and organizations and city government partner categories experienced the smallest decreases (8 percentage points and 9 percentage points, respectively).

TABLE 3.4.3: PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVE PARTNERS COMPARED TO TOTAL PARTNERS BY SECTOR

		Federal Government	State Government	County Government	City Government	Community-Based Businesses	Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises	Local Media	Trade and Industry Association	Non-Profit and Social-Service Based	Schools and Higher Education Related	Hospital and Health Care	Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations	Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions	Other	Totals
Community 1	1999	33	75	-	100	100	100	-	-	57	100	100	0	25	50	58
	2000	57	100	-	0	75	100	-	-	50	0	100	0	100	50	68
Community 2	1999	100	67	100	-	75	85	100	-	100	100	-	-	100	100	86
	2000	100	100	100	-	100	100	50	-	67	100	100	-	100	-	94
Community 3	1999	75	100	100	-	43	67	100	-	50	100	-	0	50	-	65
	2000	100	100	100	-	71	57	100	-	50	100	-	0	33	100	71
Community 4	1999	100	100	-	-	100	100	-	-	-	100	100	100	100	-	100
	2000	100	100	-	-	62	100	-	-	50	100	100	0	100	-	73
Community 5	1999	100	80	100	100	83	58	67	25	100	100	100	-	100	50	76
	2000	100	100	100	100	73	83	100	67	75	100	100	100	0	100	82
Community 6	1999	50	100	-	67	91	43	0	100	50	100	-	-	67	-	68
	2000	67	0	50	89	80	80	-	33	67	100	-	-	67	-	70
Community 7	1999	71	100	100	100	88	100	100	50	80	100	100	-	100	33	89
	2000	17	67	50	67	29	75	100	0	20	50	33	-	50	50	42
Totals	1999	67	85	100	91	81	70	78	56	74	100	100	33	71	50	77
	2000	68	88	65	82	66	82	88	38	52	82	75	25	60	67	70

The dashes in Table 3.4.3 represent the absence of partners in the partner type categories.

While these figures seem to suggest that partner activity levels are declining across the board, it is very important to note that most of these declines took place in a single community— Community 7. This community saw a rather significant decrease in partnership activity between 1999 and 2000. Community 7 is in fact an "outlier" in terms of changes in activity levels—so much so that if the other six communities are considered without taking Community 7 into account, there would be a slight increase in the proportion of active partners overall.

In contrast, five total partner-type categories experienced increases in partner activity percentages from 1999 to 2000. The most dramatic increases occurred in the "other" partner category (17 percentage points), local branches of national chains or franchises partners (12 percentage points), and local media partners (10 percentage points). Less significant increases were experienced in state government partners (3 percentage points) and federal government partners (1 percentage point).

While Table 3.4.2 and Table 3.4.3 contain detailed information about partner activity in the pilot communities, there are several notable changes in partner activity in some pilot sites that should be highlighted. First, there were changes in the percentage of community-based business partners that were active between 1999 to 2000. The most significant changes in community-based business partners were detected in Community 7 (a decrease of 59 percentage points in partner activity), Community 4 (a 38 percentage point decline), Community 3 (an increase of 28 percentage points), and Community 5 (a 10 percentage point decrease).

Second, as indicated in Table 3.4.3, there was a significant increase in the activity level of city government partners in Community 6, from 67% to 89%. This increase in activity level corresponded to an increase in the total number of city government partners in Community 6, from three partners to nine partners. Third, there was an increase in partner activity in the local branches of national chains or franchises partner category in Community 5, from 58 % to 83 %. This increase in activity is particularly interesting because Community 5 had experienced a decline in the number of partners from local branches of national chains or franchises (from 19 in 1998 to 12 in 1999). While the local branches of national chains or franchises category in Community 5 experienced a decline in the number of partners, the activity level of that particular category increased.

TABLE 3.4.4: PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVE PARTNER CHANGE BY SECTOR

Partner Type Category	1999 Total Active %	2000 Total Active %	Active % Point Change- 1999 to 2000
Federal Government	67	68	+1
State Government	85	88	+3
County Government	100	65	-35
City Government	91	82	-9
Community-Based Businesses	81	66	-15
Local Branches of National Chains or Franchises	70	82	+12
Local Media	78	88	+10
Trade and Industry Associations	56	38	-18
Non-Profit and Social-Service Based	74	52	-22
Schools and Higher Education Related	100	82	-18
Hospital and Health Care	100	75	-25
Religious Institutions, Affiliates, and Organizations	33	25	-8
Boards, Commissions, and Coalitions	71	60	-11
Other	50	67	+17
Totals	77	70	-7

3.5 Conclusion

The composition of partnership networks in the pilot communities remained fairly constant in all three years of DRC's assessment of Project Impact. The largest partner categories in each of three years were community-based businesses, local branches of national chains or franchises, and federal government. However, non-profit and social service-based organizations, county government and city government agencies, and boards, commissions, and coalitions were increasingly common in the pilot communities.

A number of fluctuations were observed in partner activity levels. These fluctuations varied from relatively minor (e.g., Community 6 experienced a 2 percentage point increase in partner activity) to very significant (the decline of partner activity in Community 7). Changes in partner activity appear to be unrelated to the total number of partners in the community or to community size.

To put the material presented in this chapter into context, it should be noted that partner involvement and Project Impact-related activity should be expected to undergo variation over time. Declines in partner activity in a given year may simply mean that projects involving particular partners may have come to an end, while increases may indicate that new projects are beginning in which partners can be involved. In other words, changes in partnership activity are to be expected. In judging whether Project Impact is succeeding in creating community-based coalitions to support loss reduction, partner network composition and diversity are probably more important than year-by-year shifts in partner activity levels.

The following section presents additional information on partnerships that was provided by community informants during interviews. This information, which is more qualitative, is meant to complement the quantitative trends that were discussed above.

4. BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TOWARDS DISASTER RESISTANCE

4.1 Introduction

As noted earlier, the development of partnerships is an essential ingredient for Project Impact progress and ultimately for the success of the initiative. Partnerships provide important resources to the initiative as well as an opportunity to educate both the private sector and the general public about disasters and mitigation measures. A community representative effectively conveyed the importance of successful partnerships to the development of disaster-resistant communities in this way:

> *One of our best lessons learned was that you have to build good*
> *partnerships. That's what I would tell anyone, that's the baseline*
> *for Project Impact...That is the true foundation of the program.*

The discussions that follow will examine the strategies utilized by the pilot communities to maintain existing partnerships and attract new partners. They will also detail what informants believe are the most important contributions that partners make to the program. Also discussed are informants' insights on their communities' successes and shortcomings in building partnerships with both large corporations and small businesses, as well as efforts to build partnerships with community organizations and groups representing vulnerable populations. Finally, this section will summarize difficulties with partners that were experienced by the pilot communities.

4.2 Maintaining Existing Partnerships

This section will provide an overview of the information on partnership-building that was provided during interviews with representatives from the seven pilot communities. As the above quote indicates, the pilot communities overwhelmingly stressed the importance of developing a range of active partners. By the time of DRC's assessment in 2000, the pilot communities had sustained strong relationships with many of their partners for a period of roughly three years. In order to investigate how this was done, informants were asked to discuss specific strategies that they used to maintain partnerships in their communities. This information on community strategies was analytically classified into four categories: the institution of regular partner meetings; the effective management of Project Impact activities; the recognition of the efforts of partners; and the importance of "windows of opportunity" to push the partnership-building agenda of Project Impact.

Multiple respondents stressed the importance of *regular meetings* with the partners in their community. The partner meetings are typically held once a month or once a quarter, and are regularly attended by a core group of partners. A representative from Community 6 indicated that, of the forty-three total partners in that community, at least fifteen to twenty partners regularly attend the monthly steering committee meetings. A representative from a community that holds quarterly partnership meetings also noted a very high attendance rate at these gatherings.

According to DRC's interviewees, regular partnership meetings serve four key functions. First, the meetings present an opportunity for communication, both between different types of partners and between the Project Impact Coordinator and the partners. This avenue for communication provides partners with an important opportunity to network. In one community, the quarterly partnership meetings are designed to shine a spotlight on the efforts of particular partners to become disaster resistant. As a representative from the community observed:

> *We feature three of our partners at each one of [our meetings]. They can get up and give a little song and dance, a dog and pony show, if you will, about what their company, what their organization has done to promote disaster resistance within the community. It's been very interesting and sometimes you can get a little competition going there between some of the companies. They'll see that 'XYZ' company is doing this, so they've got to outdo them.*

In addition, as one respondent mentioned, partnership meetings allow the partners to share the lessons they have learned though their involvement in the project. Meetings remind the partners about the "big picture" of the Project Impact initiative. Typically, partners are involved in a limited number of the projects that are being undertaken as part of the community initiative. The meetings allow partners who are involved in projects that do not have a significant amount of overlap (such as home retrofitting and hazard mapping) to be exposed to the efforts of other organizations and groups.

Third, partnership meetings are an important strategy for keeping the partners excited about Project Impact and the initiative's activities. As one community representative observed, the varied collection of partners at the partnership meetings quite often results in a healthy diversity of different opinions and suggestions on strategy. According to the representative, the blend of partners at meetings helps keep many of the partners interested in Project Impact. Finally, the partnership meetings provide a sense of equal participation among the partners. One community representative indicated that promoting this sense of equality is one of the keys to successfully maintaining partnerships.

Community informants also indicated that the effective management of projects helped maintain the active involvement of partners. This process includes prioritizing the projects that fall under the Project Impact initiative and selecting partners that may be particularly well-suited to the project's needs. One community representative indicated that partners are recruited on a "project-by-project" basis to have maximum impact and to make specific contributions. In other words, before a project is begun, the individuals involved with Project Impact determine what the needs are for the project. Based upon these needs and the nature of the project, the Project Impact Coordinator approaches partners to work on the project.

Another interviewee suggested that partners must be worked into the existing structure of projects. Once again, it is important to match the goals of the project with the strengths of the

partner. This informant also indicated that the needs of both private organizations (i.e. businesses) and public organizations (i.e. non-profit agencies) must be considered as partners are brought into the existing structure. While the agendas of many businesses are naturally compatible with Project Impact goals, that complementary element may not be so obvious for public and non-profit agencies. As one informant observed:

> *Making up a place or a role for [the partners] within the existing structure...that's our main thing. From the private partners, it is defining a role for them. By saying, 'We need you, you need us, let's work together.' The public...or non-profit, sometimes you're very much competing with whatever the agency's goal is. Even with [national non-profit partner], they go by their national policies, their program areas. And even though they are a national partner, you're competing with whatever their agency goals and missions are....Maybe their big thing is [response to disaster events] or the sheltering and the family preparedness and all of that, but their focus may not be so directly on mitigation of businesses.*

As a result, this disparity between the goals of the Project Impact initiative and the goals of individual partners must be considered in order to effectively match partners with projects.

Another way to maintain partnerships is to recognize the efforts of the partners that are actively involved in the initiative. Indeed, a key attraction for partners to the Project Impact initiative is the positive impact that the program can have on the organization's image. In addition to public recognition of a partner's efforts, an informant indicated that another benefit is that administrators in the program can refer other individuals and organizations to the services provided by the partner. Thus, a business or organization stands to gain both positive publicity and increased patronage as a result of its participation in Project Impact.

Finally, it is important to note that a community's ability to maintain partnerships appears to some degree to be connected to factors that are out of the control of Project Impact Coordinators and other project administrators. Quite simply, a community that has recently experienced a disaster event or is almost constantly aware of the threat of natural disasters is more likely to have partners that maintain their level of activity with the initiative. While each of the pilot communities was selected by FEMA based on its level of disaster risk, only one community acknowledged its disaster history as a significant factor in maintaining partnerships. As a representative from the community observed:

> *We've had really good success in keeping [partners]....We've had a lot of experience with disasters, so I think that's been a key, too. I'd have to say it's a little easier to sell Project Impact and mitigation when people are not complacent, when they've seen it. They know that it's going to happen.*

4.3 Developing New Partnerships

In addition to maintaining their existing partner networks, the pilot communities have also focused actively on developing relationships with new partners. Interviewees mentioned two basic strategies that they have utilized to mobilize new partners: building off of existing relationships with businesses and organizations, and identifying and then actively seeking new businesses or organizations to recruit into the Project Impact initiative.

Informants noted that the most effective method to attract new partners into the initiative is to utilize the existing networks of businesses and organizations in the community. In some cases, such networks already had a hazards focus. For example, many informants pointed to successes in utilizing the contacts that exist within the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) that were established to manage chemical hazards as part of SARA Title III. In other cases, efforts targeted boards comprised of representatives from businesses and other organizations. As one informant observed about this process:

> *Well, the no-brainers were the ones [with which] we already had partnerships. You know, because we had an existing management board organization, which represented businesses, it represented government and outside agencies. So, we went with those people first because we already had an established partnership with them.*

In some communities, existing partners in the initiative referred the Project Impact administrators to other organizations that were able to assist in the program. An informant described this process and commented on the value of such referrals:

> *Somebody within an organization who knows somebody in another organization...I would just have a meeting with this person and we have a conversation, 'you should give them a call'. This has been really helpful as opposed to, I guess, something similar to 'cold-calling.'*

A Project Impact Coordinator also noted that existing partners play an important role in developing relationships with other businesses and organizations:

> *We rely on our partners to kind of let us know if they've heard [of any prospective partners]. If they know of anything that's going on, to kind of make some of the connections, too. I even told our outreach group a couple weeks ago, 'I can't do this by myself...[if you know of a prospective partner], it makes sense that you would make the first contact with them, and then direct them back to me.' Otherwise, I'm starting with someone who I have no idea who they are. So, I kind of am asking our partners to participate more [in developing new partnerships].*

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Community representatives mentioned a number of strategies that they utilized in order to recruit partners that have not been involved in the Project Impact initiative or in other local programs or agencies that promote disaster resistance. As one informant observed, these recruitment tactics quite often require a good deal of creativity on the part of the Project Impact Coordinator. One successful approach that was mentioned by multiple communities was the targeting of larger businesses or organizations in the community. As respondents noted, large businesses quite often employ individuals whose main duties include disaster planning and response; thus, these individuals provide ideal contacts for the Project Impact Coordinators. Multiple community respondents indicated that they attempted to demonstrate the "value-added benefits" of participation in the Project Impact program to the large corporations. As one informant observed:

> *I think that's still a good strategy, if the company...could participate in some funding that would benefit their employees. In some specific way that would ultimately [benefit] the corporation. In other words, their employees would be on the job when they're supposed to be instead of trying to recover from a flood or a hurricane or whatever the hazard might be.*

According to our informants, another strategy to develop partnerships is to recruit new businesses and organizations at meetings and conferences in the community. Community respondents indicated that these functions quite often present the Project Impact Coordinator with a large audience of potential partners. One informant described her community's success utilizing this strategy:

> *One of the best things [we] probably did...was to go out in the community and speak at any meeting possible, whether it was the Chamber of Commerce or an association meeting or a workshop. Go out and speak about Project Impact for about ten or fifteen minutes and tell people to contact [the Project Impact Coordinator] for more information and to sign people on.*

Another informant mentioned the value of networking at conferences:

> *Conferences have been a great way to meet new partners. At different speaking engagements, people hear about us, and then we talk later and they get a business card.*

Network ties were continually mentioned as a key vehicle for partner recruitment. Community informants were clearly more comfortable approaching businesses or organizations that had pre-existing relationships with Project Impact or emergency management-related activities in the community than simply "cold-calling" potential partners. In the interviews conducted in 2000, only one respondent directly discussed an experience with contacting an organization without the benefit of an established relationship. The respondent recalled an attempt to institute a relationship between the community's Project Impact initiative and the organization:

[The organization's] logo was on a ski racer that was racing for charity. And I also know that this particular business had given relief funds to the Colombian earthquake victims. I called them with that in mind, because obviously they're a company who cares about relief and assisting communities in disasters, and so forth. So, we started a great conversation and we'll see where that goes.

It is important to note that, while the Project Impact Coordinator did contact the business without the benefit of a pre-existing relationship, that organization was targeted specifically because it had evinced a readiness to associate itself with disaster-related concerns.

4.4 Partner Contributions

The respondents from the pilot communities indicated that partnerships provide many key resources to the Project Impact initiative. Even though each of the pilot communities has developed a unique initiative and, consequently, distinctive relationships with its partners, there was a general consensus among interviewees on the most important resources that their partners provide.

Partner contributions can be classified into seven general categories: expertise, in-kind donations, media attention, money, personnel, time, and contributing to a sense of unity within the initiative. Table 4.4.1 lists these categories by the number of mentions they received from the community informants. Interestingly, the resources that were most commonly mentioned by our informants (including time, expertise, and personnel) require the least amount of financial investment from the partners. Resources that are more dependent upon funding assistance, such as in-kind and financial donations and contributions that raise the media awareness of Project Impact, featured less prominently in our respondents' answers.

TABLE 4.4.1 KEY RESOURCES THAT PARTNERS PROVIDE TO THE PROJECT IMPACT INITIATIVE

Resources	Number of Mentions
Expertise	4
Time	3
In-Kind Donations	3
Personnel	3
Unity	2
Funds	1
Media attention	1

It should be noted that these seven general categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, it is safe to assume that a partner that provides time to Project Impact also provides personnel to the initiative. Similar connections can be detected among the other resources. The discussions

that follow provide more detail on the various ways in which partners are seen as contributing to Project Impact.

Expertise

Respondents cited expertise as an important resource that their partners provide to the initiative. Expertise can range from technical support to knowledge about the media and information dissemination. Additionally, because many of the partners were introduced to the initiative due to their prior involvement with disaster resistance programs and activities, partners can provide a wealth of disaster-based knowledge to Project Impact.

Time

A number of respondents indicated that time was the most valuable resource that partners provide to their Project Impact initiatives. Project Impact administrators place a high degree of value on the participation and commitment of their partners in the program. As one informant noted:

> *So, with partners willing to participate in subcommittees, to help with putting together outreach events, whatever it may be. Their time has been...invaluable on a variety of levels...We're quantifying their time so that there's a dollar amount attributed to that so we can track matching funds.*

Thus, time is viewed in the pilot communities as a tangible resource with a definite monetary value.

In-kind Donations

In-kind donations are another key resource that partners provide to Project Impact. Businesses or organizations often donate a wide variety of materials, products, and services to the initiative. Examples of in-kind donations varied significantly in our interviews with representatives from the pilot communities, from more conventional donations—such as hardware stores that donated hurricane-shuttering materials—to less orthodox contributions to the community's mitigation efforts—such as major fast food restaurant chains that provided lunch discounts to groups that were working on projects. In one community, partner donations serve as the foundation for a yearly silent auction that raises a significant amount of money for the community's Project Impact initiative.

Personnel

Community informants also acknowledged the contributions made by partner personnel to the success of their initiative. For Project Impact Coordinators and other representatives from the initiative, running the program and its various projects can be overwhelming in terms of the commitment that is required. Thus, personnel volunteered by the partners can provide valuable

assistance to Project Impact, thereby facilitating a greater level of activity in the initiative. Indeed, as a preceding quote noted, personnel from partner organizations can serve as key members of Project Impact committees and subcommittees.

Unity

Two community representatives stated that partners play a key role in presenting an image of unity in the initiative. According to the informants, the image of solidarity established through the common efforts of the partners makes a significant contribution to helping establish a disaster resistant community.

Money

As stated earlier, contributions from partners typically take the form of in-kind donations of materials and products. However, direct financial donations are clearly among the most important resources that partners provide.

Local initiatives clearly can benefit greatly from direct cash contributions. However, tax-related barriers may be creating problems for local fund-raisers. A community representative noted that many large corporations would not donate money to the program because, while contributions to non-profit organizations can be used as tax write-offs, Project Impact does not have non-profit status. Thus, while some corporations wanted to donate funds to the initiative, corporate guidelines restricted them from providing financial assistance to Project Impact.

Media Attention

Finally, one informant specifically highlighted the contribution partners make by garnering media attention for Project Impact. The ability of partners to utilize their media contacts effectively can provide an important asset to the Project Impact initiative in communities. As the respondent noted:

> *If I had to pick [the most important resource, it would be] our media, just because of the public relations that they help us with. It is the best resource we have. They are our information link to the entire community. Without them, it is very hard to promote something or get coverage on the preparedness or education activities that our community needs to be taking.*

4.5 Building Partnerships with Large Corporations

Several community respondents stressed the value of building partnerships with large corporations. As demonstrated in Table 3.2 in the preceding section, partners from national chains or franchises consistently represent the second largest group of partners in the pilot communities, after community-based business partners. Large corporations thus represent a significant percentage of the partnerships in most pilot communities. Some of the large

corporate partners in the pilot communities also participate as national partners in Project Impact. Another key reason for the significant presence of large corporations in the pilot communities (as discussed above in the section on "Developing New Partnerships"), is that large companies are viewed by our informants as generally more approachable than small local businesses and organizations.

Many interviewees stated that large corporations are quite often an important source of support in terms of volunteering time, contributing in-kind donations, and providing assistance to projects. As respondents observed, large corporations are more likely than the smaller, locally-based businesses to have individuals who occupy positions related to emergency management; thus, "champions" of the Project Impact initiative may be easier to locate in large corporations. Larger companies also typically have community-relations activities in place to guide their relationships with various types of community programs. Due in part to this community focus as well as their larger resource base and overall profitability, large corporations can donate significant amounts of materials and products to Project Impact. Because of the larger workforce size of large corporations, employees from these companies are typically in a better position to donate their time and services to the initiative.

Community 2, Community 5, and Community 6 reported the most positive experiences in building partnerships with large corporations. Community 3 and Community 7 related largely negative experiences in building corporate partnerships. Based on interviewee reports, positive and negative outcomes with respect to building partnerships with large corporations appear to be related to four main factors: pre-existing relationships with large corporations; difficulties within corporations; community characteristics; and the ability of the Project Impact Coordinator to garner corporate support. These factors are discussed briefly below.

Pre-existing Relationships with Large Corporations

Informants cited more success in building relationships with corporations that already maintained a level of involvement with local boards or commissions. As discussed in section 4.3 above, pilot communities frequently approached businesses or organizations that had pre-existing ties to the community and local emergency management-based initiatives. An informant discussed one community's success with developing partnerships through local groups:

> *We've [had success] with larger corporations from the outset. That was an immediate thing because of [the local emergency planning group]...We've been fortunate in that way because there were built relationships between the organizations through this group. If we had to start from scratch, that probably would've been more difficult...That, I think, would've set us back.*

Corporate Difficulties

Some informants indicated that their communities had experienced problems developing corporate partnerships due to difficulties within those organizations. Probably the most

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frequently-mentioned challenge that impacts relationships with larger business partners is the relatively high level of turnover in management positions in local branches of national corporations. For example, one informant noted that, as a result of the management turnover at a local branch of a national hardware store chain, Project Impact leadership had difficulty keeping a contact within the store. However, informants did note that management changes in partners are occasionally beneficial to Project Impact, because the new personnel may be more willing to contribute time, money, or resources to the initiative than had their predecessors.

Our informants mentioned that a change in overall corporate policy or philosophy sometimes affects partnerships with large organizations. In other words, the local contact for the corporation may be a champion of Project Impact, but the champion's enthusiasm for the program may not be shared by the corporation's home office. As an informant observed:

> *That's probably been my biggest frustration is that...the people that we work with are really great, but when they bring it back into their upper management those people do not necessarily see the value for their organization. So, their participation might not be as high.*

Community Characteristics

Clearly, a community that lacks large corporations will have difficulty building corporate partnerships. According to one informant, for example, the absence of national chains or franchises in his community has inhibited its ability to build partnerships with corporations.

While community size is clearly related to the presence of large corporations in Project Impact sites, it is important to note that there is no consistent pattern relating the size of the community to its success in building coalitions with large organizations. Thus, while the larger pilot communities may have more large corporations, they do not necessarily have a higher success rate in converting these organizations into active partners.

The Role of the Project Impact Coordinator

As stated earlier, the Project Impact Coordinator plays an essential role in the development of partnerships. Because of the time demands associated with the position, community respondents indicated that the Project Impact Coordinator is often limited in his or her ability to develop partnerships with large corporations. Accordingly, many informants cited time constraints as a factor that influences the level of success in building corporate partners.

4.6 Building Partnerships with Small Businesses

Since the start of Project Impact, community-based businesses have represented the most significant partnership sector in the pilot communities. As Table 3.2 demonstrated, community-based businesses accounted for 26 % of the total partners in the pilot communities in 1998, 24 % of the total partners in 1999, and 31 % of the total partners in 2000. According to that same

table, in 2000, community-based business partners were most prevalent in Community 4 (57 % of the total community partners), Community 3 (41 % of the total community partners), and Community 5 (35 % of the total community partners).

Despite the high number of community-based business partners in the pilot communities, only Community 5 and Community 1 considered themselves to have been successful in building partnerships with small businesses. Our informants cited community-based business partners' lack of time and resources as key problems that have blocked efforts to develop partnerships with those businesses.

The most commonly-cited barrier that has prevented partnership building with small businesses is time. While the lack of time on the part of the Project Impact Coordinator has been continually mentioned as a hindrance to partnership building, informants also observed that because of the high demands placed on small business owners and their workers, representatives of many community-based businesses simply do not have the time to participate in Project Impact. An informant commented on her community's difficulties in developing community-based business partners:

> *That's probably a group we don't have too many of – are smaller organizations. And a lot of that reason has to do with time. They don't have...a full time person related to or addressing disaster issues, business continuity, those sorts of things. So, whereas the larger corporations have either a risk management [unit], a business continuity unit, or something along those lines, these middle to smaller businesses don't have that luxury.*

As another respondent observed:

> *It is harder to get [smaller companies] on board...their time is very precious to them. They don't have the time to be out a day or two for a seminar. They need to be in their store making a profit.*

This finding is consistent with what DRC has observed more generally regarding business size and commitment to disaster reduction. Smaller businesses tend to be less interested in overall workplace disaster preparedness, due to both time and financial constraints.[2]

As discussed above in the section on "Building Partnerships with Large Corporations," large corporations are typically more able to contribute in-kind donations, materials, and financial assistance to Project Impact programs than local businesses. Quite simply, because the pool of resources (such as materials, product, and money) available to most community businesses is relatively modest, community-based business partners are typically unable to make large

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2 "Determinants of Business Disaster Preparedness," James M. Dahlhamer and Melvin J. D'Souza, International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters 15 (1997): 265-281.
"Rebounding from Disruptive Events: Business Recovery Following the Northridge Earthquake," James M. Dahlhamer and Kathleen J. Tierney, Sociological Spectrum 18 (1998): 121-141.

contributions to Project Impact. In particular, respondents from economically depressed and financially struggling pilot communities stressed the limitations of many of their local partners with regards to donating resources.

However, informants also noted that some community-based business partners have been able to rise above these limitations and challenges, providing valuable resources to the initiative. One informant praised the efforts of a particularly active community-based partner:

> *[One local construction outfit], is a local siding company that also does storm shutters. They've been real[ly] active in trying to support the program and have helped us with some hurricane tracking maps. They have also donated some services for installation of hurricane shutters. They've created some grant programs....They thought they could participate in using Project Impact money to subsidize some shutters for commercial businesses and residential homes.*

4.7   Building Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations and Groups Representing Vulnerable Populations

In addition to building partnerships with "conventional" partner types such as businesses and governmental organizations, Project Impact representatives noted the importance of establishing positive relationships with groups representing vulnerable populations in their communities. Occasionally, these relationships developed into formal partnerships, as reflected in our data on non-profit and social service-based partners.

Community representatives were asked if they were addressing the needs of particularly vulnerable populations in their communities. Table 4.7.1 shows whether or not the pilot communities indicated that they are addressing the needs of the following populations and groups: the elderly, low-income populations, day care centers, hospices, physically or mentally challenged segments of the population, ethnic minorities, the homeless, and battered women's shelters.

As Table 4.7.1 demonstrates, each of the seven pilot communities indicated that they have used the Project Impact initiative to reach out to their elderly populations. The most commonly-cited strategy that the communities use to help elderly populations become more disaster resistant is education, including educational activities at senior citizen centers and nursing homes. One community informant noted that many of the attendees of her community's Project Impact-sponsored retrofit classes are senior citizens. In addition, a few respondents indicated that their communities have begun to accommodate pets in emergency shelters as a response to concerns from pet owners, in particular elderly residents that own pets. Informants hoped that this measure would increase the likelihood that the senior population and other community residents will utilize emergency shelters in future disasters.

TABLE 4.7.1 VULNERABLE POPULATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED BY PROJECT IMPACT ACTIVITIES

Community	Elderly	Low-Income	Day Cares	Hospices	Physically or Mentally Challenged	Ethnic Minorities	Homeless	Battered Women
Community 1	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Community 2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Community 3	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Community 4	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Community 5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Community 6	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Community 7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

Six of the seven pilot communities acknowledged the special needs of the low-income population in their communities. These efforts include retrofitting homes in low-income areas that have been repeatedly affected by natural hazards, establishing a grant and loan program for low-income residents, and focusing on the needs of economically-challenged single parent families. According to representatives from Community 4, their community has not addressed the needs of low-income populations primarily because these groups do not reside in a specific vulnerable location that has been targeted in the community. While other communities indicated that they have addressed the needs of low-income groups through retrofitting programs and buy-outs in poorer neighborhoods, the absence of a geographically concentrated local population of low-income groups in Community 4 has, according to informants, prevented outreach to this vulnerable population.

Four of the pilot communities indicated that they have addressed the needs of day care centers in their communities. Community representatives mentioned a number of strategies to reach day care centers, including conducting educational programs, retrofitting day care facilities, and reviewing the disaster plans of the centers. While they have yet to address the needs of day care centers, representatives from Community 4 indicated that those centers were a "targeted priority" for future Project Impact activities in their community.

Three of the pilot communities have attempted to meet the special needs of hospices. Community 7 cited the success of its educational outreach to local hospices. As a result of these educational activities, the hospices have been actively involved in the community's annual disaster preparedness fair.

Three of the pilot communities indicated that they have addressed the needs of physically or mentally challenged residents in their communities. In one community, Project Impact officials reviewed the disaster plans of homes for persons with disabilities, provided technical assistance to the homes, and assisted in the supervision of disaster drills. Another community has specifically attempted to meet the needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing. As a representative from this community noted:

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We have actually spent some county funding to purchase some TTY [text-telephone] equipment that is going to be in our Joint Information Center. We're in the process of working on some volunteerism with them to help out before, during, and after disasters.

In a third community, the fact that the mentally and physically handicapped are widely dispersed within the community was cited as a reason that the Project Impact program had not addressed the needs of this vulnerable population.

Three of the seven sites had attempted to address the needs of ethnic minorities. Once again, education was cited as a strategy that is being utilized to reach these groups. A representative from one community noted that a community development block grant was used to improve drainage conditions in low-income areas that have a high percentage of ethnic minorities. As mentioned in an earlier section in this report, another community implemented a Spanish-language hotline with emergency shelter and mitigation information. Two of the pilot sites noted the extremely small number of ethnic minorities in their communities as the primary reason that they have not reached out to these groups.

Two communities have specifically addressed the special needs of their homeless populations. In the first community, the Project Impact initiative has developed a plan to shelter the homeless in the case of extreme weather conditions. A representative from this community also asserted that local religious-based organizations had existing plans to assist and provide shelter to the homeless in the case of a disaster event. At the time of the interview, the Project Impact Coordinator from a second community had just made initial contact with a locally-based group that works with the community's homeless population and was in the process of developing a plan for assisting the homeless. A number of the pilot communities noted that the number of homeless in their communities is either very small or non-existent.

Only one pilot community mentioned that it had attempted to reach out to a battered women's shelter by reviewing its emergency plans. A number of community representatives reported that their communities did not have battered women's shelters. While one of these representatives from a Project Impact pilot site claimed that there was no shelter in that community, follow-up inquiries determined that a battered women's shelter does in fact exist there.

4.8 Other Challenges Associated with Partnerships

While the above sections have explored many common problems that communities have experienced in building partnerships, this final section will detail some of the more challenging and unusual barriers that communities have encountered. For the most part, the problems that will be discussed in this section were not common in the Project Impact pilot communities. However, these problems do raise some interesting issues that could hinder the future success of the program.

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Declining Interest on the Part of Some National Partners

Some of the informants pointed to the declining level of involvement from the national FEMA partners in their communities as a barrier interfering with momentum. Despite their status as national partners in the federal Project Impact effort, the local branches of national partners may not have a strong level of commitment to the program. A representative from one community discussed this problem in some detail:

> *When we started this program, FEMA really had a lot to do with who our original partners were...[But,] they really didn't fit in the loop other than being signers. They really have not participated at all...We don't really work with them that much. There wasn't a natural fit except for maybe their name...They had no personal or organizational or business interest in what we were doing...They've kind of dropped by the wayside.*

Accordingly, as the Project Impact initiative grows, a stronger relationship develops between the program and the partners that have actively volunteered their time and resources to Project Impact, as opposed to nominally-involved ones.

Perceptions of a National Program

One community experienced an interesting problem when it attempted to engage two national insurance companies as Project Impact partners. According to the Project Impact Coordinator, a large insurance association would not allow the companies to sign with local, as opposed to national, programs. Because Project Impact is a community-based national program, there may be a conception that the program is simply a creation of local government or locally-based organizations. Clearly, more needs to be done to build linkages between the local community level and national corporations.

The Issue of Problem Partners

In such a large program that seeks to enlist so many organizations in partnership activities, it is not unexpected that problems occasionally develop with partners that overstep bounds or behave improperly. Although rare, such difficulties have occasionally sprung up with Project Impact. For example, a representative from one community discussed problems that her community had with two partners. According to the informant, those partners had failed to live up to the standards of professionalism that were expected of the Project Impact partners. As the community representative stated:

> *We have set a standard from day one that we were going to handle things with the utmost respect to all our partners. No information would go out without prior approval, without making sure that we're not stepping on the toes of any other organizations or businesses, because sometimes you can get two businesses with*

diverging ideas....We had a vendor partner that we got rid of who had done nothing but cause problems for pretty much everybody, and was unprofessional and so forth. We made it very clear that that's not acceptable, bad-mouthing and that sort of thing. That kind of thing is just not kosher. We had another partner who was a media partner and went out with a television message that gave incorrect information to the public. We severed ties with that organization as well...We walked them through it saying, 'This is misleading, we don't want to be a part [of the television message]. This is what it should say.' They chose not to take the message...and they ran it anyway.

5. SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

5.1 Introduction

From the beginning of the Project Impact initiative, pilot communities have expressed concerns about how to sustain momentum. In the first year of the initiative, each of the communities reported that a high level of enthusiasm had accompanied their signing ceremonies. However, community informants have also discussed the difficulties they had following the signing ceremony, principally because there was often no structure in place to take advantage of the heightened level of media focus it provided.

In subsequent years, interviewees have been asked about the strategies that are being used to build and sustain momentum. According to their reports, the key to a successful strategy for increasing visibility appears to be consistently using a variety of techniques to keep Project Impact in the news and perceived as a vital organization in the community. Clearly, the pilot communities believe that an increasing awareness of the initiative will help promote support from the general public. Also, the increased visibility of Project Impact frequently results in the attraction of new business partners and the continued activity of existing partners.

The sections that follow look at momentum-related issues in more detail, focusing on the role of public education in sustaining momentum, the influence of federal and state agencies, the impact of codes and legislation, creative ways of building momentum, and why some communities have difficulty sustaining their efforts.

5.2 Education Strategies

Many respondents identified education as a vital aspect of sustaining momentum. Education strategies encompassed a broad range of activities including disaster fairs and expos; the production of pamphlets and literature to promote Project Impact; the distribution of maps that identify local hazards; and promotion for the initiative in outlets such as television, newspapers, radio, billboards, and the Internet. These strategies were intended to spread awareness of the local threat of disasters and of the Project Impact initiative to both the private sector and the general public.

In both 1999 and 2000, hazard-related expositions and disaster fairs were commonly mentioned as particularly successful ways to educate the community about hazard threats. In addition, these high-profile events were quite often an effective way to garner media attention and, as a result, boost the visibility of Project Impact. As one community representative noted:

> *[The disaster expo] has been one way to get the information out,*
> *let the public know there is something where they can get hands-on*
> *questions answered on the spot. You know, that sort of thing to*
> *keep the momentum going.*

These disaster programs are typically held on an annual or bi-annual basis. Occasionally, they take place during a time of the year that has special significance for the community, such as on

the anniversary of a disaster event or during hurricane season or earthquake preparedness month. According to our informants, such "well-timed" disaster awareness events generate a significant amount of media coverage and help move Project Impact efforts forward.

In one community, a monthly television program was created to educate the community about Project Impact activities and mitigation measures. In addition to airing the program in English and Spanish, the community had recently begun producing a version of the program targeting the needs of people with disabilities. Concerning this program, the representative stated:

> *We give out a lot of information about preparedness as well as*
> *mitigation on that program...We have reached those three specific*
> *target audiences. And, every opportunity we get, we're talking*
> *about [Project Impact].*

Community informants also mentioned the value of education outreach programs in sustaining momentum. These education programs include actions that can be as simple as pamphlet distribution in various public locations. One community informant cited his community's success with education outreach to both the private and public sector:

> *Well, we go into the private sector and try to educate employees of*
> *the importance of making sure their houses are safe and secure.*
> *We go to businesses to make sure that they understand that it's not*
> *just the business [that is affected by a disaster], but the employees*
> *also.*

5.3 The Influence of Federal and State Agencies in Sustaining Momentum

Several respondents from the pilot communities indicated that assistance from both FEMA and state agencies was an important factor in sustaining momentum. The initiative clearly benefited from the strong network of emergency management and mitigation agencies that existed before the creation of Project Impact. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the establishment of strong relationships with these outside agencies was seen by many of our respondents as crucial for continuing program momentum.

One of our informants viewed these agencies as additional partners at the local level. Much like other local partners, these agencies were actively involved with special events such as disaster fairs and expos. In addition to providing assistance at these events, these agencies quite often promoted them in their interaction with the media and in their newsletters and websites. The active involvement of supra-local agencies in the Project Impact initiative significantly raised the local visibility of the program and its objectives.

As the originator of Project Impact, FEMA is the federal agency that has by far the greatest impact on the success of the initiative in the pilot communities. In addition to providing initial grant money, FEMA plays an active role in promoting and nurturing the initiative, from the production of promotional materials to the arrangement of regional and national meetings for Project Impact communities. Many of our informants referred to numerous other FEMA

activities and products that have contributed to sustaining momentum. Informants mentioned that FEMA's relationship with its national partners helped establish strong links with many of those partners. One informant stated that FEMA has done a good job in marketing Project Impact. The establishment of a national marketing campaign provides secondary benefits in the individual communities, as the Project Impact name becomes more prominent on a national scale.

Informants cited FEMA's mentoring program as making a particularly valuable contribution to sustaining momentum. That FEMA-funded program was created in order to foster interaction among Project Impact community representatives and to provide assistance on implementing Project Impact and pre-disaster damage prevention activities. Because of their experience and success with Project Impact, many of the pilot communities were obvious choices to be mentors in the program. One informant stated that her community's involvement in the mentoring program had clear benefits for sustaining momentum:

> *[Our FEMA liaison has] been really helpful in linking us with other communities that want more information in certain areas—mentoring. You know, kind of linking the dots between two communities. That has really helped keep things going because whenever you deal with a new community they are so excited. It kind of re-energizes things...They are a completely different community, unique in how they deal with issues, and they'll bring something new to what we're doing.*

As this quote shows, mentoring relationships are beneficial both to mentors and those being mentored; the mentored community receives valuable guidance from a more experienced community, while the mentor is exposed to new approaches to mitigation and preparedness.

One informant noted that her community was involved in mentoring activities with several non-Project Impact communities in surrounding areas. In this situation, the community shared its experiences and lessons learned as a Project Impact community with other communities in the region that have similar risks. According to the informant:

> *We look at [this particular community] as being a model or technical advisor to the other communities...We've been trying to keep those communities involved and working through the process and being partners in it, even though they do not have [a Project Impact] designation. So, I think that's what has kept our momentum going and lasting.*

The informant also acknowledged that, while her community was selected by FEMA as one of the pilot communities, many of the surrounding communities might have been just as eligible for the designation. Accordingly, the community is using its status as a Project Impact community to assist other communities in their own efforts to become disaster resistant.

In addition to FEMA, the informants also valued their relationships with other federal, state, and local agencies in sustaining momentum. Those agencies included, but were not limited to, local and state emergency management agencies, the United States Geological Survey, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the United States Department of Energy.

5.4 Potential Influences of Code Changes and Legislation on Sustaining Momentum

One informant mentioned that a change in local regulations had a significant impact on sustaining momentum in a pilot community. In that community, a new ordinance required beach houses to be built a few feet higher than the base-flood elevation level. When a storm surge affected structures that did not adhere to the new specifications, the value of this new mitigation measure became quite obvious to the residents in that beach community. The informant believed that the successful "demonstration" of the new ordinance provided an effective selling point for disaster preparedness and mitigation and the Project Impact initiative in general. As this example suggests, mitigation programs that are put to the test in actual events can sustain momentum by providing concrete evidence that mitigation works.

5.5 Innovative and Creative Momentum-Building Strategies

While some common themes appeared in our informants' observations on sustaining momentum, they also had unique views of the challenges associated with maintaining commitment to Project Impact. Indeed, respondents from the same community often gave quite different accounts of how their communities were working to promote Project Impact. Clearly, a great deal of creativity was required of both the Project Impact Coordinator and those actively involved in the initiative to identify innovative ways to bring attention to the program, get more individuals involved, and help people to understand the concept of a disaster resistant community.

The previously examined relationship between a pilot community and neighboring non-Project Impact communities in the area was perhaps the most innovative strategy for sustaining momentum discussed by interviewees. The fostering of relationships between both Project Impact and non-Project Impact clearly expands upon FEMA's mentoring program, allowing the principles of the initiative to be transferred to communities that do not have direct contact with FEMA.

Another informant mentioned a second innovative strategy for sustaining momentum. The community embraced the concept of "building livable and disaster resistant communities" that was originally promoted by FEMA Director Witt at the 1999 Project Impact Summit. The community then began looking at hazard threats from the perspective of residents in the area that was affected by the disaster. This shift in focus resulted in a more comprehensive view of disaster events, and therefore allowed the community to incorporate a more diverse range of partners into its program. As the informant noted:

> *So, we'd be concerned about the flooding, but we'd also be concerned about the trash, and the stream, the fact that the stream is orange, all of these issues. This has allowed us to partner with*

> *all different kinds of groups and come up with projects that are*
> *really good projects. We are really getting the most out of every*
> *dollar spent.*

5.6 Problems with Sustaining Momentum

In this year of the study, our informants did not directly highlight any specific problems related to sustaining momentum. However, as we found last year, success in building momentum seems to be attributable to the presence of an active Project Impact Coordinator. The program coordinator is clearly central to any effort to move the initiative forward. Not surprisingly, representatives from a pilot community that had turnover in the position since the start of Project Impact expressed hope that the initiative in that community will be "more self sufficient" and "more self sustaining" in the future. Because of the lack of a consistent Project Impact Coordinator, this community must work once again on building the foundation of its program (signing partners, developing the structure of their program) before it can even begin to focus on sustaining momentum.

6. PROJECT IMPACT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

6.1 Introduction

Organizational structures and decision-making processes influence the direction an organization takes and the achievement of its goals and objectives. Some types of structures are better suited than others to concentrate or broaden an organization's focus, accomplish particular kinds of tasks, and motivate members towards organizational goals. For these reasons, DRC examined the structure of Project Impact programs and the modes of program decision-making in the seven pilot communities.

For analytic purposes, DRC developed a fourfold classification that categorizes decision-making processes as centralized or decentralized and organizational structures as either hierarchical or flat. However, it must be noted that these binary categories are not absolute. Even the most hierarchical Project Impact structures are relatively flat compared to many other types of established community programs and organizations. Most Project Impact organizations have subgroups that require at minimum some general approval from the steering committee or larger partnership for large spending allocations from seed money and leveraged allotments and for significant changes in initiative policy and practice. These distinctions are still useful in our assessment of the initiative, but no community is completely hierarchical or decentralized in its structure.

6.2 Decision-Making and Organizational Structures

Decision-Making Structures

Communities were characterized as having centralized decision-making structures if they had established or identified an individual or a core group that could make decisions concerning what Project Impact activities would be undertaken and what strategies would be pursued. In contrast, a community with a decentralized structure may also have a core decision-making group, such as a steering/coordination committee or executive council; however, in these communities, other sub-committees or task groups often generate and execute their own activities without the need for formal approval from the core group. In other words, although the core group is informed about the activities of the subgroups and provides overall guidance, subgroups are able to initiate projects and activities on their own and without central direction.

Organizational Structures

Project Impact sites with hierarchical organizational structures had fairly elaborate organizations, typically comprised of a core group, a variety of task groups or sub-committees (often further subdivided according to specific project tasks), and some staff of liaison members. Often the Project Impact organization was located within some unit of local government and was required to report to others before taking on major new initiatives or being able to incorporate personnel into Project Impact activities. A flat organizational structure is one that has fewer organizational

levels or layers, that does not have a steering committee, but that may have a series of task groups, each deciding upon its own agenda and carrying out its own activities.

The organizational structure and decision-making processes adopted by a community Project Impact initiative have the potential for enhancing certain aspects of the program while limiting its effectiveness in other areas. For example, while hierarchical forms of organization can promote accountability, they can also discourage innovation or fail to promote deep organizational involvement. Flat organizational structures tend to be more satisfying for those who take part in organizational activities, because it tends to be easier to gain access to people in key positions. Centralized decision-making structures can work well when a single individual or office has the authority to require others to perform, but are less effective when entities are participating in an activity voluntarily or where formal lines of authority do not exist. Based on the research literature, less centralized decision-making processes seem most appropriate for Project Impact because the program attempts to bring together diverse community actors, each with their own resources, personnel, and specialized expertise, and because no single entity has the authority to compel a broad-base of community participants to take part in the program.

6.3 Project Impact Pilot Community Structures

Table 6.3.1 shows how DRC classified the pilot communities along the dimensions of decision-making and organizational structures in the first two years of its assessment. Table 6.3.2 shows how DRC classified these same communities in the assessment's third year.

TABLE 6.3.1: PILOT COMMUNITY CLASSIFICATION BY ORGANIZATIONAL AND DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE TYPE, 1998 and 1999

	Centralized	Decentralized
Hierarchical / Vertical	7	1, 2, 5, 6
Flat	4	3

TABLE 6.3.2: PILOT COMMUNITY CLASSIFICATION BY ORGANIZATIONAL AND DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE TYPE, 2000

	Centralized	Decentralized
Hierarchical / Vertical	1	2, 3, 6, 7
Flat	5	4

All but two of the communities have seen changes in either their decision-making processes or their organizational structure, although it is important to note that these changes generally took place gradually.

Initially, Community 7 was the only community that had a hierarchical organization structure and a centralized decision-making process. It had formalized a large steering committee, with numerous subcommittees, and decisions about what projects were to be undertaken were suggested by the steering committee and carried out under the direction of the Project Impact Coordinator. While this community still has a relatively vertical program structure, the community representative interviewed for the assessment described funding distribution, activity prioritization, partnership strategy development, mitigation activity selection, and education activity selection as decisions currently made by task forces rather than project leadership. Information and recommendations filter through the structure instead of being dictated down to subgroups by the steering committee. Community 7 has moved from hierarchical and centralized to hierarchical and decentralized in structure.

In previous years, Communities 1, 2, 5, and 6 had exhibited the more common organizational form—a hierarchical structure combined with decentralized decision-making authority. Community 6 remained unchanged. Like other communities exhibiting this organizational form, Community 6 was characterized by heavy involvement on the part of the emergency manager and the Project Impact Coordinator. People in these roles worked closely with the steering committee, comprised of chairs from numerous subcommittees. Similar to Community 7, subcommittees worked relatively independently, spent their resource allocations without a great deal of oversight, and selected and prioritized activities. Subcommittees generated their own ideas and fed those recommendations back up through the organizational structure.

Community 2 also remains hierarchical and decentralized in structure; however, the community has edged closer to being more hierarchical and centralized. Much of the Project Impact seed money funding decisions are made centrally by the Project Impact Coordinator while funds leveraged from other sources, yet still affiliated with Project Impact, are frequently spent by subcommittees and departments without this individual's approval. Other people interviewed in this community reported that decisions are developed and carried out without the oversight of the Project Impact Coordinator, although the Project Impact Coordinator reports playing a more centralized role.

Communities 1 and 5 have both shifted over time in terms of their organization and decision-making structures. Community 5 became much more flat and centralized in its structure. When this community first became involved in Project Impact, it had active participation from a steering committee and several subcommittees. These groups were involved in generating a broad-based long-term mitigation plan for the community. Since that time, the completion of the plan as well as staff turn-over has left the bulk of the mitigation activity decision-making in the hands of the Project Impact Coordinator, who believes that this structure places too much reliance on the coordinator position and does not involve the community to the degree the initiative potentially could. Reportedly, plans were under way to reintegrate the steering committee and form a number of subcommittees for additional activity completion. In sum, the Project Impact Coordinator hoped to reestablish a more vertical and decentralized structure.

Since starting out with Project Impact, Community 1 remained hierarchical while becoming more centralized in the way it distributed funds and developed and prioritized activities. At first, this Project Impact program was decentralized, and decisions and suggestions flowed up through the structure. As the initiative approached the end of activities funded with seed money allocations, tasks were more frequently assigned and carried out by the upper levels of the structure. Although mitigation and education activity selection was still handled in a decentralized way, partnership strategy development, activity prioritization and funding distribution were highly centralized.

Conversely, Community 3 moved from a flat to hierarchical structure. While the emergency manager still played a pivotal role in this community, the community underwent a gradual process over the three years in which its proposed steering committee took shape and subcommittee groups were formed. Community 3 remained classified as decentralized, since subcommittees generate ideas and carry out activities related to mitigation and education; however, this community edged toward a centralized decision-making structure because funding distribution was handled by the emergency manager and partnership strategy development and activity prioritization was dealt with by the steering committee, albeit with input from others.

Community 4 moved from a flat and centralized structure to one that remains flat but is more decentralized. Initially, a general hazard mitigation committee was established to make all program decisions. Subcommittees were then established and given more decision-making authority. In a very recent move, as projects were being completed, task forces were merging, which may result in an emerging trend to move back toward a more centralized structure in the near future. As this Project Impact Coordinator explained:

> *I might end up doing a lot of the legwork to get it to where it needs*
> *to be because you can't always depend on committees because they*
> *take forever. But the ideas and even if I throw [ideas] out [to*
> *them], they still expand upon [my ideas] and make it the group's.*

6.4 Summary

Most of the organizational changes that occurred within communities were not viewed by informants as significant changes in structure. Instead, they reflected changes in practice, or as one Project Impact Coordinator described, "just a different way of doing business." At times, these changes reflected a tailoring-down of the initiative as it matures, completes activities, and begins to become subsumed under other departmental functions or merged into other subgroups. At other times, they reflected an emergence of a more formalized structure and the development of the initiative beyond an individual or core group. External factors, such as participation turn-over, also had an impact – time will tell whether it was a temporary or permanent effect – on the decision-making process and the application of the organizational structure in place.

Most importantly, the pilot communities were approaching the end of their Project Impact seed money funding cycles in 2000. Continued examination of these seven communities over the next several years will provide insight into whether or not the organizational and decision-

7. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH PROJECT IMPACT

7.1 Introduction

This section summarizes what community informants view as the most important benefits and challenges associated with participating in the initiative. As indicated below, many of the benefits communities acknowledge are very consistent with the goals that were originally envisioned for Project Impact, such as the ability to leverage resources. At the same time, just as they have in past years, communities continue to struggle with significant challenges, many of which arise because of the very nature of Project Impact as a community-based initiative.

7.2 Benefits

Communities have derived many benefits from Project Impact, and each community was able to describe individual projects that had made an important contribution toward reducing potential disaster losses. Five themes emerged from these discussions. These themes centered on the benefits associated with resource leveraging, understanding risk, loss reduction, education, and fostering partnerships and collaboration.

Project Impact has helped communities leverage resources from numerous groups and in a variety of forms

One of the benefits communities have gained from their involvement in Project Impact is the abundance of resources they have been able to obtain from different groups, businesses, and agencies. One community that experienced a disaster event in the past year saw Project Impact partners assist in the recovery effort with in-kind donations, provision of resources to the community, and assistance with human and health service needs. Community representatives reported many instances of leveraging, such as when governmental organizations fund mapping and assessments, universities pay for training and courses, and business and neighborhood associations assume the costs for mitigation activities, education, assessment, and promotion. Because Project Impact is a local initiative falling under the umbrella of a larger nation-wide program, communities are able to tailor their approaches to the community context and address their own specific needs while at the same time using the legitimization that comes with a nation-wide effort to attract more partners and community as well as governmental support. According to this community representative:

> *Because FEMA was involved, it allowed us to tap into new partners and focus on getting more partners.*

Project Impact has helped communities understand their risks and plan accordingly

Several of the communities involved in the pilot phase of Project Impact were already aware of the risks they faced. Other communities, however, used Project Impact funds to conduct risk assessments and prioritize mitigation activities based on those assessments before following through on mitigation actions. Although conducting risk assessments delayed their progress in

completed mitigation activities, these efforts produced maps and documents that were used to convince elected officials and the community at large of the need to engage in mitigation. It also set in place a long-term plan to address the overall vulnerability of the community to its hazards.

Project Impact has helped reduce damage in pilot communities impacted by disaster and is poised to help reduce losses in future events

Elevation or removal of flood-risk homes, LP gas-tank securing ordinances, the provision of non-English disaster information on television stations and over the phone, removal of overhead water tanks in schools, and home and business retrofit are just a few of the many mitigation activities that were organized and funded by local Project Impact initiatives. In some cases, communities may have eventually carried out these projects with other funding sources or through other ad hoc programs; however, Project Impact garnered the support and leveraged the funding to give these activities higher priority than they would otherwise have had. A vivid example of the impact this increased prioritization has had can be seen in one community where, without the timely removal of overhead water tanks in schools, there would have been a greater likelihood of property damage, injury, and even loss of life following a recent disaster. In other instances, mitigation activities would not have been undertaken without the input, organization, and resources provided through this initiative. For example, the visibility of Project Impact in one community helped school districts clearly see there was a need to introduce mitigation strategies into their buildings and realize that it was less expensive for them to mitigate now with new construction than to retrofit that same construction in several years. As this community representative elaborated:

> *As far as safe zones, reinforced roofing, window protection....electrical transfer switches...even planned landscaping without trees close to the building.... stuff like that, they will be putting that into all the new schools in our community. [This action] is important because I think we have two or three brand new schools under construction that they're going to take a lot of mitigation action in. And this would not have happened without this project because they probably never would have taken a look at it.*

Communities have laid the groundwork for future mitigation efforts and capitalized on the synergy associated with Project Impact to increase their disaster resistance. A second community representative asserted:

> *We ultimately have a safe[r] and a better community because of Project Impact. There's no doubt in my mind, and I think we've proven that in the disaster[s] we've experienced over the years.*

Still another explained:

> *We [had] done a lot on our own prior to Project Impact, but I think what Project Impact brought was a refocusing back on the whole mitigation issue, because we did a lot of mitigation after [a disaster] but then it kind of died down, you know, and it went back to the whole preparedness theme, the usual theme. But with Project Impact, it just gave us an opportunity to regenerate the whole concept of mitigation.*

Several communities suggested that their activities were more successful than had been anticipated. One community exceeded its expectations in a home seismic retrofit project. At first, Project Impact organizers only expected to retrofit twenty-five homes; however, they were already able to complete seismic retrofits, including additional fire mitigation strategies, of one hundred homes and also to complete non-structural retrofits in over four hundred-fifty homes.

Project Impact has aided education and outreach efforts

Community informants stressed that Project Impact has provided a forum for education and outreach efforts. Disaster fairs or educational exhibitions organized by Project Impact participants have resulted in high-profile events reaching a large number of community members. While communities must strive further in their efforts to promote mitigation and outreach to all segments of the community, many have improved their records since the initiative's inception. One community, typical of others in the pilot group, attracted over eight thousand attendees to its disaster fair, took in over $200,000 in vendor fees and in-kind donations, and raised $22,000 for non-profit agency mitigation efforts. A Project Impact participant from this community described the benefits of this event:

> *It was just a fabulous event, and the entire community, whether they were competitors or not, [were] working together this one day to promote mitigation, to promote education. And I truly believe, because of a lot of these things and especially this event that we do each year, that I think we have a better and safer community as a result.*

Project Impact partnerships have contributed to educational disaster mitigation television programming, mitigation training in businesses, schools, and the broader community, as well as promotional material design, printing, and distribution. Educational resources have been developed and shared with other communities. The pilot sites have capitalized on windows of opportunity following disasters to promote mitigation through Project Impact and have used Project Impact as a promotional mechanism to spark interest when apathy grows during the lull between disaster events.

Project Impact helps build partnerships, foster teamwork, and bridge community efforts

Many of the community representatives interviewed by DRC reported enhanced teamwork and partnership as an important benefit of their Project Impact involvement. Furthermore, some communities began addressing their risks in a regional way. Although inter-jurisdictional coordination entails many challenges, communities that are taking the cross-jurisdictional approach believe the results are worthwhile.

One community representative stated that the Project Impact initiative brought together in his community organizations that had not been working together before but should have been, and has given them leverage to move ahead on projects. Now, these organizations are sharing information with one another and integrating projects instead of each agency "reinventing the wheel." Another community tied mitigation efforts to existing weatherization and environmental quality strategies. By bridging the gaps between initiatives, the Project Impact community was able to address two important issues in one strategy. This community representative observed:

> *[It helps to] just get people together to talk, to say what they're working on, what are you working on, how can we work together. It's huge, it really is. That's where you start spending money wisely and you start really doing projects that would benefit the people in the area that you're doing the project in.*

Teamwork has spread beyond community borders. Many of the pilot communities have been quite active in mentoring communities that are new to the initiative and sharing ideas as well as mitigation and participation strategies. Project Impact has fostered a nationwide network of mentors, and the pilot communities have played an important role in traveling across the country to help other communities and hosting international visitors interested in learning more about community-based mitigation. The annual summits have provided an excellent opportunity for networking and information sharing. Participants still call for improvements to the summits, such as better access and support for those coming from across the country, smaller regional summits throughout the year, more hands-on workshops at the summits, and more sessions devoted to helping the mature Project Impact communities—those that have been mentoring others—progress to the next phase of the initiative. Yet the summits allowed the pilot communities to share what they have learned, be acknowledged for their accomplishments, and network with other more established Project Impact communities.

7.3 Challenges

Communities outlined numerous challenges that they faced in trying to implement the initiative. Some pointed to problematic bureaucratic requirements, conflicts between FEMA and state emergency management agencies, and pressures from FEMA to spend money before they were ready to; yet they also saw these as issues that were not impossible to overcome. Commonly-mentioned challenges included dealing with changes in partnerships, attracting to the mitigation discussion table partners who are opponents on other issues, keeping mitigation on the agenda of local elected officials, finding a balance between inundating partners and encouraging activity,

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taking into account varying capabilities and contexts in carrying out activities, and identifying long term funding sources.

Changes in partnerships necessitate repeated recruitment efforts

Several communities reported losing partners or noticing a reduction in activity when partners experience internal turnover, merge with other companies, or experience a change in ownership. Partners may have been active because certain individuals took an interest in disaster mitigation. When those individuals were no longer with the organization or no longer received support for their Project Impact efforts from their superiors, the partner organization sometimes became inactive. As a result, Project Impact organizers not only need to concentrate on recruiting new partners, but also on selling the Project Impact concept to new people within existing partner companies and agencies. When these large partner organizations restructure, Project Impact organizers must make a directed effort to encourage management to allow additional mitigation education for employees who may have not been in the organization when previous training was held.

Challenges associated with changes in partnerships are not restricted to the private and non-profit sectors. Turnover in governmental agencies can present similar problems. One community experienced problems implementing a safety element to the city's general plan because of staff turnover within the lead agency. The person with whom the Project Impact staff was working most closely left the community. This department has since hired someone to work on the project, but the turnover caused delays in activity.

In another community, the mayor and city council had a complete turnover. This Project Impact initiative had to begin the process of garnering support from elected officials all over again. Project staff sent out packets of information before the people took office to let them know what the Project Impact group had been doing and also did Power Point presentations. As this representative described:

> *We had to just literally go back to square one and do an educational process with [the elected officials]. But the new local administration is very energetic about the project and supportive. Several more elected official turnovers are expected soon, [we are] losing people who were very supportive and now [do] not [know] whether or not the incoming person will be equally supportive.*

Turnover within the Project Impact Coordinator role can prove particularly problematic to the initiative. When a Project Impact Coordinator leaves, that person takes away valuable information and established connections. Whenever a new staff member takes over this position, but especially when he or she has had no prior involvement with the initiative, community efforts are delayed while the new coordinator becomes familiar with the initiative's objectives, methods, plans, funding, and members. Hiring a new Project Impact Coordinator is by no means an insurmountable obstacle, and the initiative should never be so tightly coupled to an individual

that it relies on his or her continued presence and participation. Turnover does, however, bring with it delays that must be accounted for in project timelines and plans.

Some partners oppose specific mitigation efforts, which deters them from participating in the overall initiative

Several communities explained that key potential partners in their localities are also engaged in actively fighting against disaster-resistant land-use or building regulations. In one community, the fight was against the implementation of a state building code. Because these organizations are opposed to increased building code regulation, the local Project Impact initiative experienced difficulty in building partnerships with them. Project Impact organizers want to attract a variety of perspectives and bring groups together to forge a consensus. Still, these organizers do not want to compromise the goals of disaster resistance to appease groups that are putting the community at risk. This community representative said:

> *[We have] a common goal [in] wanting our community to be better, safe, more disaster-resistance. There's no doubt. But always trying to be compassionate to an agency, industry, or business's primary goal and try[ing] to work that goal into our goal, the disaster-resistance goal, without offending them, without pushing them to where they won't participate, that was tough. That was one of the hardest things.*

Some communities are struggling to keep their elected officials focused on mitigation

Understandably, elected officials often want to move on to new issues and projects that they believe are both important and timely to constituents. Project Impact participants struggle to keep their elected officials focused on disaster mitigation, to maintain support for the initiatives and costs, and to remind officials that disaster mitigation is an ongoing effort. One community representative observed:

> *You get this money [from FEMA] for this program, you get a coordinator, you get all this stuff up and running, but that's not going to go on for years to come. The community needs to take responsibility for it. And it's been successful. It's been a great benefit to our community and you have to keep them signed on to that. [The community must] keep the momentum going with elected officials because ultimately [it is] them and a lot of management staff [who are] going to make the decision whether [the project] continues to go on or not.*

Project Impact organizers must find a balance between inundating their partners and encouraging activity

The balance between under-using and over-using partners is one that communities struggled to find. While they want to maximize the resources partners have available, encourage their full participation, and demand some level of activity for receiving partnership status, Project Impact organizers also recognize that it is unfair and counter-productive to over-burden their partners. One community that confronts two types of disaster threats acknowledged the need to ease up on partnership demands for one and capitalize on the other. During and following the Y2K computer disruption threat, many of this community's private sector partners, as well as the general public, were busy with preparations. As this representative explained:

> *For a whole year, last year, a lot of businesses really were inundated with disaster, disaster, disaster. What we found was that so much planning and so much preparation had gone into those events, especially at the end of the year, that people needed a break [at] the start of this year. And people were having to re-focus on the [routine jobs], what they did before Y2K came along.*

Although it took away from some of the community's momentum, the Project Impact organization gave the public and their partners a short break after New Year's 2000, then started to present them with some new disaster information, and by the middle of the year they were beginning to build up attention on the disaster mitigation again. At the same time, this community was able to use a separate riot incident to connect with impacted small businesses, discuss disaster mitigation in a broader sense, and educate them about the Project Impact initiative.

While certain activities may succeed in some jurisdictions, other areas do not necessarily have the capacities to carry out similar projects

When implementing community-based mitigation, particularly at the neighborhood level, communities encounter differences in local capacity to move ahead with similar projects. Residents are more likely to go to mitigation meetings and training when held in their own neighborhoods, but an organizational body is needed to support it. Some neighborhoods simply do not have the same well-established community-based programs to take the lead as other jurisdictions. Different neighborhood associations do not necessarily have the same resources and neighborhoods also do not necessarily have the same cultures. The challenge for Project Impact organizations is to recognize when activities are not readily transferable to all jurisdictions. Realizing this does not mean that these areas should be ignored. It does, however, point to the need to work with neighborhood groups and develop creative strategies that best suit their needs and resources.

Communities must identify sources of long-term funding

It was clear to DRC that by the third year of the initiative, finding long-term funding sources was becoming a more pressing challenge for the pilot communities as every month went by. Communities were still operating on grant funds, leveraged resources, local funding, and some remaining seed money. Program elements had been institutionalized to varying degrees across the seven communities. For projects with staffing and administration costs and future activities that had yet to become institutionalized, the future seemed unclear. Although communities had obtained commitments from individuals, partners, local government, and the larger region for some projects, the discussion continued to return to how communities were going to pay for these proposed mitigation efforts. Without the financial support for Project Impact staff to facilitate progress, some communities expressed legitimate concern regarding their ability to maintain momentum. Some communities experienced difficulties in getting people together to work on activities because many of the people who were part of a task force were also busy with other responsibilities. Others stated it is unrealistic to expect sustained private sector involvement because of the demands placed on employees in today's business world. Funding for a full-time Project Impact Coordinator was imperative for identifying funding sources, maintaining partnerships, and administering the project. The question of long-term funding remained unclear for many communities at the time interviews were conducted.

Some community representatives opined that initiatives that have taken the time to develop sustainable management structure, partnerships, and a long-term plan should be rewarded with sustained federal commitment to helping communities undertake disaster mitigation over those communities that used all their seed-money for large capital projects without establishing a system to sustain the effort. As expressed by this informant:

> *It was just that we were following the principles of Project Impact,*
> *and if you follow them, you're not going to be able to spend that*
> *money quick[ly]. And anybody who did spend their money*
> *quick[ly], I would wager to say, did not do all of the partnering*
> *and planning and things that it takes.*

One community representative believed that FEMA should give money to help older communities to keep efforts going and reward successes. This informant suggested that post-seed money awards should incorporate leveraging guidelines and should be merit-based for communities that invested their seed money in sustainable longer term efforts, rather those that spent in on short-term finite projects.

8. THE FUTURE OF PROJECT IMPACT IN LOCAL PILOT COMMUNITIES

8.1 Views on the Future of the Project Impact Initiative

Overall, pilot community informants were optimistic about Project Impact's future in their communities. For example, informants indicated that they believed the Project Impact initiatives would still be active in their communities ten years from now. Informants considered their communities stronger – both in terms of disaster resistance and community partnership – for having become involved in Project Impact. As one Project Impact Coordinator stated, because of its involvement in Project Impact, the community will "be better built, better prepared, and a safer community ten years from now."

Pilot communities were not blind to the role that political decisions at the national level and turnovers in government personnel would play in the future of the initiative. Although most of their more recent campaigns and mitigation activities were tied to the Project Impact "brand," and some communities reported high program recognition among their residents, the private sector, and local elected officials, informants were also aware that a new administration might not continue to use that same "brand." Some informants, often those whose communities were particularly successful in promotional efforts, believed that loss of the name would constitute a setback. According to them, their communities would retain the name because of its familiarity, and as one person said:

> *[Project Impact has] kind of been instilled in terms of constituents*
> *calling about it or businesses, that's what they call and ask for.*

Others had anticipated when the initiative began that the Project Impact name might not always have currency on a national level and chose to promote the initiative using a slightly different name. For example, one community representative said:

> *Project Impact is an initiative. [Our] program is the*
> *implementation of that idea. It gives [our community] ownership*
> *[of] it.*

Although they varied in their perspectives on the importance of the Project Impact name, all community informants we interviewed hoped that the national, state, and local support for their mitigation actions, the concepts behind the initiative, as well as the network of Project Impact communities, would continue. As one community representative explained:

> *Obviously, we have the elections coming up and it may not be*
> *called Project Impact next year but it has brought mitigation to the*
> *forefront, especially at the local level where some people didn't*
> *even know what mitigation was. And I think that it has definitely*
> *energized local jurisdictions and communities that mitigation is*
> *important and brought it out so public officials – elected officials –*
> *know that this is important too. And I think that since that*

*happened, there's no way to go back and then I think it's almost
unconscionable to even do that.*

Informants saw state and national support – financial, technical, political, and educational – as an important component of larger, long-term mitigation efforts. As one informant stated:

> *A continued support of the program from FEMA, I think, [is]
> really important, especially for even smaller communities. [It is
> important] that FEMA continue to support the concept of
> mitigation because it carries a lot of weight when [the community
> is] trying to get new partners. Just the continuation of their
> involvement and their resources, you know, the application of their
> people resources.*

For one community that wanted to continue the progress it had made toward disaster resistance over that past three years, the need to identify additional funding for operating costs was imperative for sustaining mitigation and partnership activity. That Project Impact site required a full-time staff position devoted to the effort, since existing positions did not allow for the time needed to successfully facilitate and make progress on the initiative. This community had yet to find an alternative source for administrative position costs but was still hopeful one could be identified.

In contrast, another community that was very active in mitigation prior to Project Impact found that most of its Project Impact programs had become self-sustaining, that the community had more activities planned for the future, and that some of these mitigation activities were already in the early stages of development. Over the years, this community added new programs, increased its mitigation and promotion activity, and saw both a greater attendance and increased funds from corporations and vendor fees at disaster education events. A representative from this community hoped that FEMA would continue the initiative. In that informant's words:

> *I think that [with Project Impact, FEMA has]...probably the best,
> with the exception of social security...one of the best programs
> around. [I] hope it works, [that the program remains in place]
> when [the director] leaves.*

Despite its positive evaluations of the Project Impact, this same community was taking steps both to diversify its mitigation funding base and to integrate the initiative so task forces will continue despite leadership changes on a local or national level. This representative went on to say:

> *We're trying to really integrate it into the system so when Project
> Impact goes away, and there's no more money or whatever, it's
> already in the system, it's not a big deal, it's something that you've
> already been putting your money into, or integrating mitigation*

into the community, and it's not a special event, it's something that
you do on a day to day basis.

8.2 Conclusions

Clearly, pilot communities are committed to disaster mitigation. Project Impact has enabled well-established mitigation efforts to flourish, attracted a broader range of participation, bridged local mitigation actions, initiated regional projects, and evolved a focused planned approach from what had been ad hoc activities. Where communities were less advanced in their mitigation efforts, Project Impact has provided a national platform from which to approach elected officials, community groups, and the business community, complete risk assessments, and begin a more concentrated effort toward increasing disaster resistance.

Since the inception of the initiative, some communities have suffered disasters; others have experienced turnover in local Project Impact administration and partnerships. Because these seven communities participated in the pilot program, all went through the growing pains of implementing a new national initiative while trying to establish what worked best in their respective communities. It is important to note that all of the pilot community representatives interviewed by DRC hoped to be involved in Project Impact over the next decade. Yet, these communities must now contend with many new questions and challenges, such as the following:

Will local communities provide administrative funding to continue the program, including paid staff positions, and if not, where will this money come from?

Will the federal and state agencies continue to augment local funding for larger mitigation projects?

Will the structure and mandate of local initiatives change once the federal seed money has been spent?

Will the change in federal administration and the uncertain future of Project Impact –for example, its ability to provide guidance, contacts, policy, leadership, and funding – negate what has already been accomplished?

Project Impact pilot communities are still on a learning curve with respect to how best to implement the philosophy of community-based pre-event loss reduction. While communities have reported small successes – some of which have saved lives and property as a direct result of the initiative – many of the benefits of their mitigation actions cannot be assessed until after a disaster strikes. Pilot communities must now decide how they want to proceed, determine how they need to adapt now that the federal seed money is spent, discover whether their initiatives can survive with the change in federal administration, and find out if the past three years have generated enough local support and established appropriate management structures and strategies to sustain future mitigation efforts.