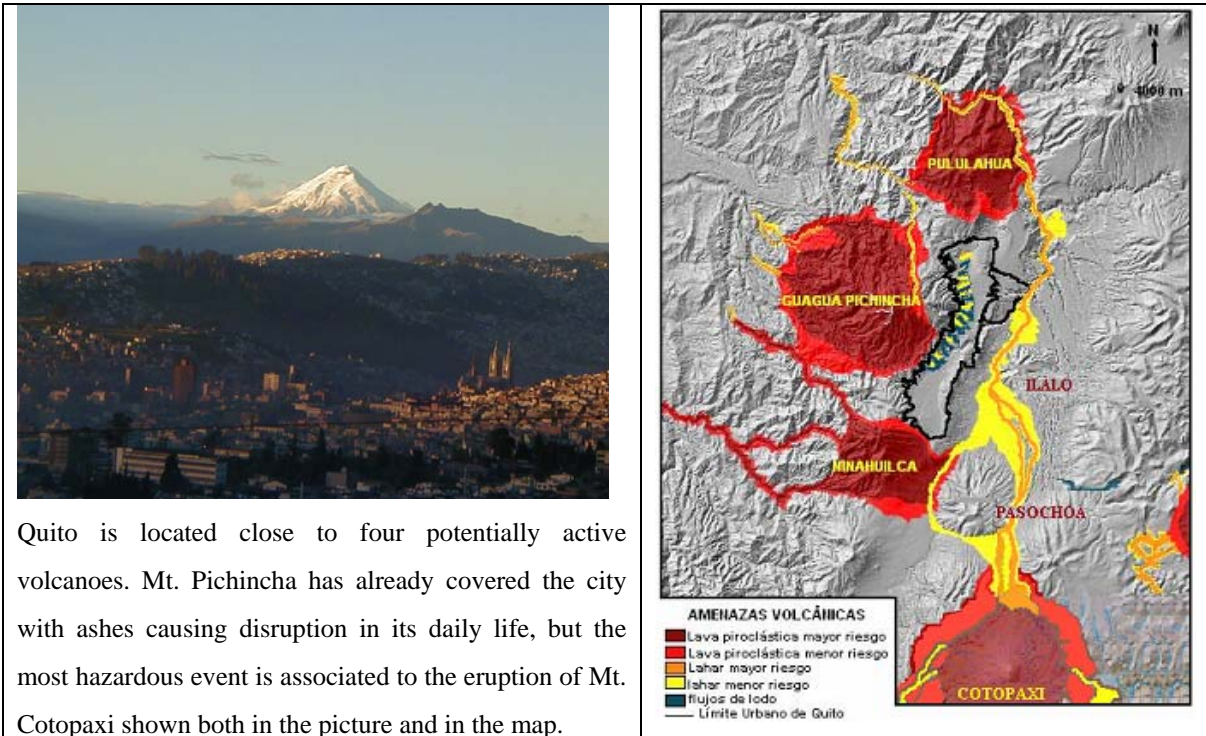


## Sound Practice No.3

### Cotopaxi Plan<sup>1</sup>



Quito is located close to four potentially active volcanoes. Mt. Pichincha has already covered the city with ashes causing disruption in its daily life, but the most hazardous event is associated to the eruption of Mt. Cotopaxi shown both in the picture and in the map.

**Reference:** H. Yepes, Lorena Vinuesa, EMI America's Cluster Meeting, LA, 2004

### Background

The Ecuadorian landscape is characterized by the presence of important active volcanoes located in the so-called Inter Andean Corridor. Sixty one of these colossal mountains represent the Ecuadorian Volcanic Arch. During the last five years, Quito was affected by the eruption of a plume of ashes from Mt. Pichincha and Reventador in at least three occasions. Additionally there are other active

<sup>1</sup> This sound practice was written by J. Fernandez, 3cd Program-Component 1 Coordinator, based on a series of interviews with Dr. Lorena Vinuesa, Ms. Ximena Jijon and Mr. Marcelo Campana from Departamento de Seguridad Ciudadana, Municipality of Quito.

volcanoes in the proximity of the city like Cotopaxi, Cayambe and Quilotoa.

Quito Metropolitan District has eight decentralized Administrative Zones (Administraciones Zonales), one of them, Los Chillos Valley, lay in the vicinity of Mt. Cotopaxi, one of the highest and most dangerous snow capped volcanoes in the world (5897 msnm), that has shown some warning signs in the recent years.

Los Chillos Valley is one of the two new urban development poles of the city, it has shown a steady population and industrial growth, along with an increment of the commercial activities and services provision. This has highly increased the demographic density in the area, while at the same time it increases the risk by having more people and assets exposed.

### **Purpose of the project**

Implementing preventive actions to reduce the possible impact of the eruption of Mt. Cotopaxi in the Valley that includes community capacity building, contingency plans, inter-institutional coordination, mock drills is the main purpose of this initiative.

### **Specific actions**

Impact zones and loss estimates have been assessed based on the research done by the Geophysics Institute of Escuela Politecnica Nacional (IG-EPN). Eight sectors have been identified as the most risky ones, mainly those close to the rivers basins that will carry the flows of mud in case of an eruption.

Identifying who and where do people live in the valley, a recent population census done on April 2003, established that there are 4098 persons living the Valley.

Twenty two temporal shelters have been identified that could guard around 3500 persons in case of an emergency. These shelters are being brought up to international standards, so they can satisfy basic needs of the displaced population for a certain period of time.

A sustained process of community training has been implemented, which includes the knowledge of safety zones, evacuation plans, alert codes, shelters

location, designing a plan for the family and its specific needs and the content of a basic emergency kit. Target groups have been chosen from different schools, industries and the neighbouring community.

June 19, 2004 was established as the date for the first simulation or mock drill that included the active participation of the community, the public and private sectors located in the Valley.

A Center of Information for Risk Management was established in the “Cotopaxi House”, it is meant to serve as gathering and discussion place that can count on presentations and expositions related to the subject on permanent basis. Among other interesting informative panels, it counts on a real seismographic instrument that is part of the instrumentation that monitors the volcano.

### **Time lines and sustainability**

This project started in November 2002 and it is expected to continue under the municipal budget.

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### **Knowledge Base Coding Reference:**

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