



# St. Thomas, Jamaica

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## Local progress report on the implementation of the 10 Essentials for Making Cities Resilient (First Cycle)

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# Essential 1

*Put in place organization and coordination to understand and reduce disaster risk, based on participation of citizen groups and civil society. Build local alliances. Ensure that all departments understand their role to disaster risk reduction and preparedness.*

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## **How well are local organizations (including local government) equipped with capacities (knowledge, experience, official mandate) for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation?**

Level of Progress achieved: 4

### **Description of Progress & Achievements:**

The St. St. Thomas Parish Council is given the responsibility to manage disaster risk reduction for the Parish. It is equipped in some ways as the Council interacts with all communities through its Parish Councillors. The Parish Council spearheads the Parish Disaster Committee I which comprises the stake holders from critical agencies, groups and organizations with a plan to coordinate all efforts in preparing for and responding to all major disasters. The Council also employs a disaster Coordinator whose duty is to develop programs to facilitate effective coordination; the Coordinator is assisted by a number of seminars, sub committees, community groups and training exercises. The major challenge however is a severe lack of support financially, which has resulted in knowledge remaining dormant and unutilized plans. Some important facilities remain nonexistent while the available skills are wasted.

## **To what extent do partnerships exist between communities, private sector and local authorities to reduce risk?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

### **Description of Progress & Achievements:**

Communities generally support attempts to establish groups for initial response. The sustainability of these groups is a challenge. The groups disintegrate when resources are unavailable to implement programmes, and or when the coordinator is absent

**How much does the local government support vulnerable local communities (particularly women, elderly, infirmed, children) to actively participate in risk reduction decision-making, policy making, planning and implementation processes?**

Level of Progress achieved: 3

Description of Progress & Achievements:

The Parish Disaster Committee is in full support of programmes in Vulnerable Local Communities. These programmes engender closer relationships with members of the Communities, mitigation exercise implemented to reduce the vulnerability of the said communities however a lack of proper funding and support from some member agencies as severely hampered the progress of these efforts.

**To what extent does the local government participate in the national DRR planning?**

Level of Progress achieved: 4

Description of Progress & Achievements:

The establishment of a Parish Disaster Committee, Sub and Zonal Committees and the employment of a Coordinator to facilitate the purposes of these committees are testament to the extent of the commitment of the parish Council

## Essential 2

*Assign a budget for disaster risk reduction and provide incentives for homeowners, low-income families, communities, businesses and public sector to invest in reducing the risks they face.*

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### **How far does the local government have access to adequate financial resources to carry out risk reduction activities?**

Level of Progress achieved: 1

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:

No budgetary allocation provided for risk reduction The Parish Council has insufficient funds to impact this area

### **To what degree does the local government allocate sufficient financial resources to carry out DRR activities, including effective disaster response and recovery?**

Level of Progress achieved: 1

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:

Budgetary allocation to this area is made directly to or through the National Coordinating body. Hence the Local Authority is dependent in part on ODPEM.

### **What is the scope of financial services (e.g. saving and credit schemes, macro and micro-insurance) available to vulnerable and marginalised households for pre- disaster times?**

Level of Progress achieved: 1

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:

The Parish Council's Poor Relief Department and the Ministry of Labour & Social Security have some programmes in place to aid vulnerable and marginalized households, however these programmes are few and inadequate to meet the needs that exist. This area needs serious consideration. The efforts of Voluntary Organization such as the Red Cross also provides some help and the Parish Disaster Committee tries to enhance this programme through its Sub Committee on Public Education and Health.

**To what extent are micro finance, cash aid, soft loans, lone guarantees etc available to affected households after disasters to restart livelihoods?**

Level of Progress achieved: 1

Description of Progress & Achievements:

Not enough is available and the information where available is not readily shared with the Local Authority.

**How well established are economic incentives for investing in disaster risk reduction for households and businesses (e.g. reduced insurance premiums for households, tax holidays for businesses)?**

Level of Progress achieved: 1

Description of Progress & Achievements:

I am not aware of any economic incentive programme in St. Thomas. This is an area that should get some attention

**To what extent do local business associations, such as chambers of commerce and similar, support efforts of small enterprises for business continuity during and after disasters?**

Level of Progress achieved: 1

**Description of Progress & Achievements:**

A chapter of the Chamber of Commerce in St Thomas, is in the embryonic stage The Parish Disaster Committee is not aware of any input from them. It is hopeful that they will see the need to give support in this area.

## Essential 3

*Maintain up-to-date data on hazards and vulnerabilities, prepare risk assessments and use these as the basis for urban development plans and decisions. Ensure that this information and the plans for your city's resilience are readily available to the public and fully discussed with them.*

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**To what degree does the local government conducted thorough disaster risk assessments for key vulnerable development sectors in your local authority?**

Level of Progress achieved: 4

Description of Progress & Achievements:

Thorough disaster risk assessments for key vulnerable sectors are normally carried out however lead agencies request this information. The result and feedback is not shared with the Local authority, and no guide as to the use of the information in future planning.

**To what extent are these risk assessments regularly updated, e.g. annually or on a bi-annual basis?**

Level of Progress achieved: 3

Description of Progress & Achievements:

Assessment is generally carried out on an annual basis but is affected by financial constraints and support from organizations.

**How regularly does the local government communicate to the community, information on local hazard trends and risk reduction measures (e.g. using a Risk Communications Plan) including early warnings of likely hazard impact?**

Level of Progress achieved: 4

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:

In Light of the established periods for particular events that affect Jamaica The Communities are constantly updated on the hazard trends and risk reduction measures using social groups such as the Church, community sensitization meetings, Zonal Committee meetings ,special programmes in the schools or through the press. Emphasis is placed on certain exercises during specified periods for particular events.

### **How well are local government risk assessments linked to, and supportive of, risk assessments from neighbouring local authorities and state or provincial government risk management plans?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:

Disaster risk assessment is a virtually a new term pursued by the National Disaster body. It is practiced by the Parish through training and projects carried out over the years. The National Coordinating body needs to forge the linkage, with the Government's risk plan in order to clearly define the parameters, so as to allow a clearer understanding of the term, which would result in a more cohesive relationship.

### **How well are disaster risk assessments incorporated into all relevant local development planning on a consistent basis?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:

The incorporation of Disaster Risk assessments into local developmental planning is widely accepted and recognized. The process of transition is however slow and there is need to be o roadmap for its establishment.



## Essential 4

*Invest in and maintain critical infrastructure that reduces risk, such as flood drainage, adjusted where needed to cope with climate change.*

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### **How far do land use policies and planning regulations for housing and development infrastructure take current and projected disaster risk (including climate related risks) into account?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

Housing	Yes
Communication	Yes
Transportation	Yes
Energy	Yes

#### **Description of Progress & Achievements:**

Not fully established even though there is a serious attempt to do so. Information from NEPA and the ODPEM on similar subdivision does not tie in. This is an important area that needs attention. Currently subdivision plans now need detailed drainage maps and in some cases soil stability comments are sought.

### **How adequately are critical public facilities and infrastructure located in high risk areas assessed for all hazard risks and safety?**

Level of Progress achieved: 5

#### **Description of Progress & Achievements:**

The assessment of critical facilities is adequate. There needs to be serious response to the findings of the assessment. it is the response to the findings of the assessment that needs serious attention.

**How adequate are the measures that are being undertaken to protect critical public facilities and infrastructure from damage during disasters?**

Level of Progress achieved: 3

**Description of Progress & Achievements:**

A number of critical facilities within the parish are very vulnerable and are at risk whenever known hazards meet the vulnerability. The response to the assessment finding is too slow or incomplete and this area needs to be addressed with urgency.

# Essential 5

*Assess the safety of all schools and health facilities and upgrade these as necessary.*

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**To what extent have local schools, hospitals and health facilities received special attention for "all hazard" risk assessments in your local authority?**

Level of Progress achieved: 3

Schools	Yes
Hospitals/ health facilities	Yes

Description of Progress & Achievements:

Favourable attention is paid to the above mentioned facilities which in some cases get extra attention because of their importance in disaster response

**How safe are all main schools, hospitals and health facilities from disasters so that they have the ability to remain operational during emergencies?**

Level of Progress achieved: 3

Schools	Yes
Hospitals/ health facilities	Yes

Description of Progress & Achievements:

The schools are relatively safe there are some which need extensive work, more efforts need to be made by the ministry to repair their facilities. The main hospital can be considered to be reasonably safe. however some mitigative work needs to be carried out to further improve its safety; a few health facilities however cannot be considered safe as a number of them cannot be operational in a hurricane impact.

**To what degree do local government or other levels of government have special programs in place to regularly assess schools, hospitals and health facilities for maintenance, compliance with building codes, general safety, weather-related risks etc.?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

Schools	Yes
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Hospitals/ health facilities Yes

**Description of Progress & Achievements:**

During the construction phase at various stages the building is checked. Improvement is needed in this area.

**How far are regular disaster preparedness drills undertaken in schools, hospitals and health facilities?**

Level of Progress achieved: 3

Schools	Yes
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Hospitals/ health facilities Yes

**Description of Progress & Achievements:**

Schools conduct drills on a regular basis, especially at the primary level; there needs to be a more concerted effort in this are for the secondary and tertiary institutions. Health facilities have done some amount of drills but not as consistent and comprehensive enough. There needs to be a regulation which will have these institutions participating more willing in events of this nature.

## Essential 6

*Apply and enforce realistic, risk compliant building regulations and land use planning principles. Identify safe land for low-income citizens and develop upgrading of informal settlements, wherever feasible.*

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### **How well are risk-sensitive land use regulations and building codes, health and safety codes enforced across all development zones and building types?**

Level of Progress achieved: 1

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:

Efforts are being made to enforce regulations across the Parish but a shortage of manpower; financial constraints and uneducated populace are some of the constraints in achieving this effort.

### **How strong are existing regulations (e.g. land use plans, building codes etc) to support disaster risk reduction in your local authority?**

Level of Progress achieved: 4

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:

The regulations are strong. It is the enforcement of these regulations that pose the problem

## Essential 7

*Ensure education programmes & training on disaster risk reduction are in place in schools and communities.*

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**How regularly does the local government conduct awareness-building or education programs on DRR and disaster preparedness for local communities?**

Level of Progress achieved: 3

Programs include cultural diversity issues	No
Programs are sensitive to gender perspectives	No

Description of Progress & Achievements:

Funding through some international agencies in recent times has heightened awareness especially in newly formed Zonal Committees and other established community groups but sustainability of this effort is hampered by financial and human resource.

**To what extent does the local government provide training in risk reduction for local officials and community leaders?**

Level of Progress achieved: 5

Description of Progress & Achievements:

Enormous effort is made in this area

**To what degree do local schools and colleges include courses, education or training in disaster risk reduction (including climate related risks) as part of the education curriculum?**

Level of Progress achieved: 3

Description of Progress & Achievements:

Efforts are being made to achieve this goal

**How aware are citizens of evacuation plans or drills for evacuations when necessary?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

Description of Progress & Achievements:

Efforts are being made to increase citizens awareness through the parish Disaster Committee, National and parish organized events. Resources remain limited to enhance the program, because of the importance of this exercise efforts are continually being made to increase awareness.

## Essential 8

*Protect ecosystems and natural buffers to mitigate floods, storm surges and other hazards to which your city may be vulnerable. Adapt to climate change by building on good risk reduction practices.*

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### **How well integrated are local government DRR policies, strategies and implementation plans with existing environmental development and natural resource management plans?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:

Efforts are being made at integration but the gains are minimal. More effort should be made in this area.

### **To what degree does the local government support the restoration, protection and sustainable management of ecosystems services?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

Forests	Yes
Coastal zones	Yes
Wetlands	Yes
Water resources	Yes
River basins	Yes
Fisheries	Yes

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:



The environmental group has a representative on the Council's planning approval committee, and they are given the necessary time to voice their concerns on the environmental impact of all development proposals.

**How much do civil society organizations and citizens participate in the restoration, protection and sustainable management of ecosystems services?**

Level of Progress achieved: 3

Description of Progress & Achievements:

There is some collaboration with the Jamaica Social Investment Fund in the Community of Thornton for potable water. The Forestry Department is engaged in public education and the replanting of trees. The enforcement of regulations by the Forestry Dept. is also bearing fruit constantly educating

**How much does the private sector participate in the implementation of environmental and ecosystems management plans in your local authority?**

Level of Progress achieved: 1

Description of Progress & Achievements:

In St. Thomas there is little to no participation by the private sector.

## Essential 9

*Install early warning systems and emergency management capacities in your city and hold regular public preparedness drills.*

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**To what degree do local institutions have access to financial reserves to support effective disaster response and early recovery?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

Description of Progress & Achievements:

The local authority has some level of autonomy in establishing financial reserves to support disaster response and recovery; however it varies from organization to organization.

**To what extent are early warning centres established, adequately staffed (or on-call personnel) and well resourced (power back ups, equipment redundancy etc) at all times?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

Description of Progress & Achievements:

Some amount of resources and staffing support exists, however the process is not one that everyone is committed to. This is not a reality in the parish of St. Thomas

**How much do warning systems allow for adequate community participation?**

Level of Progress achieved: 4

Description of Progress & Achievements:

Warning systems can have a positive effect on communities and can also engender more community participation.

**To what extent does the local government have an emergency operations centre (EOC) and/or an emergency communication system?**

Level of Progress achieved: 4

Description of Progress & Achievements:

The Parish has a fully established EOC, however the operation currently carried out during an event is not fully comparable to the training given by the ODPEM. There is a great need to fully educate the institutions, organizations and representatives of the public that are required to be a part of the EOC operation. The equipping of the EOC is another area that requires serious attention.

**How regularly are training drills and rehearsal carried out with the participation of relevant government, non-governmental, local leaders and volunteers?**

Level of Progress achieved: 3

Description of Progress & Achievements:

Efforts are made by the Parish Disaster Committee conducts drills from time to time, . More emphasis is placed on this exercise during Fire Safety Week, Earthquake Awareness Week and leading up to Disaster Preparedness Month, when individual organizations, schools and groups carry out exercises and involve the wider cross section of the response bodies.

**How available are key resources for effective response, such as emergency supplies, emergency shelters, identified evacuation routes and contingency plans at all times?**

## Level of Progress achieved: 2

Stockpiles of relief supplies	Yes
Emergency shelters	Yes
Safe evacuation routes identified	Yes
Contingency plan or community disaster preparedness plan for all major hazards	Yes

### Description of Progress & Achievements:

Emergency supplies are inadequate and are difficult to manage. Resources in storage need attention so they don't exceed shelf life, they are not affected by the elements or insects and they are used for the purpose which it was intended. Storage space, location and distribution area are also challenges that need to be addressed. The emergency shelters are identified and manned, although not adequately, some are not suitable. Evacuation routes and contingency plans are available and can be easily accessed.

## Essential 10

*After any disaster, ensure that the needs of the survivors are placed at the centre of reconstruction with support for them and their community organizations to design and help implement responses, including rebuilding homes and livelihoods.*

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### **How much access does the local government have to resources and expertise to assist victims of psycho-social (psychological, emotional) impacts of disasters?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:

This area is weak. Personnel need to be trained and catalogued for possible deployment. Financial constraints will definitely affect the progress in this area.

### **How well are disaster risk reduction measures integrated into post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation activities (i.e. build back better, livelihoods rehabilitation)?**

Level of Progress achieved: 2

#### Description of Progress & Achievements:

Inter –Agency collaboration is the key requirement for this process to work. This area needs improvement.

### **To what degree does the Contingency Plan (or similar plan) include an outline strategy for post disaster recovery and reconstruction, including needs assessments and livelihoods rehabilitation?**

Level of Progress achieved: 3

## Description of Progress & Achievements:

The contingency plan sets out the needs and strategies to deal with post disaster recovery and reconstruction. Financial constraints are making implementation difficult.