

ACBB Series: Tuesday, April 8, 2025



“Who defines the metric? Community-driven evaluation in disaster recovery”

Participatory approaches to evaluation are recommended when addressing complexity or innovation in evaluation, however there are limited examples of this in disaster recovery. Faced with a series of cascading disasters, the Puerto Rico serves as a backdrop to three different post-disaster research engagements aimed at generating knowledge about recovery and emergency preparedness. The presentation brings together the researchers, program beneficiaries and comparison communities members to discuss the evaluation strategies used, the challenges encountered and benefits of a community-driven impact evaluation.

After the ACBB participants will have the opportunity to take part in group exercises that preview: Most Significant Change, Outcomes Harvesting, Field (Verbatim) Theater, and Data Parties. The objective is to provide a hands-on preview of how monitoring and evaluation efforts that participants at the center can result in rapid organizational learning in disaster recovery.

You can access information on this event and the slides used in the presentation here by following the QR code or visiting www.prpasswordshop.org



Who defines the question and metrics? Community-driven evaluation in disaster recovery

FEMA ACBB		April 8, 2025, 12:00n -1:30pm	Time: 90 minutes
Workshop Developer: Laura Gorbea, Lgorbea@prpassworkshop.org PR PASS Workshop		Materials: 1 Presentation, 3 Online Audience Polls	
Implementation goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Review different program monitoring and evaluation techniques and practices ❖ Learn about the challenges and benefits of community engagement across evaluation ❖ Experience participatory data analysis (stories) 		Key concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-driven, Participant-centered • Most Significant Change • Rapid Organizational Learning • Data Parties • Triangulating Data • Rapid Dissemination 	
Workshop Agenda			
Time	Activities	Resource	
5m	I. Welcome and Gathering Poll Online How familiar with participatory methods ? Planning, mitigation, community engagement, monitoring and evaluation	Shafia Powell, FEMA	
15m	II. Presentation: “Who Defines the Metric?” A review of community-driven research methods, their unique relevance across 3 different evaluation projects.	Laura Gorbea, Applied Anthropologist PR PASS Workshop	
10m	III. Reflections on Practice: Engaging vulnerable populations affected by a natural hazard event is challenging. Community volunteers who joined the researcher team “Was participation worth the effort? What change did you see? ”	Research Volunteers: Damary Pagán (Program Beneficiary) Frank Aquino (Comparison Group)	
5m	V. Building Rigor and Confidence in the Results Discussing with participants, communities and stakeholders preliminary findings advances both the confidence in the results and their application across the spectrum.	Antonio Fernós, Economist, Researcher Interamerican University	
5m	VI. Rapid Organizational Learning and Other Outcomes In closing remarks, examples of programmatic changes are discussed as well as other broader applications.	Laura Gorbea, PR PASS Workshop	
20m	VII. Question and Answer session – Invitation to complete online exit evaluation	Shafia Powell, FEMA	
20m	VIII. Practice Presentation: “The role of story-telling across various monitoring and evaluation practices” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Field (Verbatim) Theater in monitoring & learning (b) MSC: Experience selecting stories (c) Review design decisions for MSC in the PRRP (d) Experience thematic analysis (e) Triangulating data using stories 	Laura Gorbea, Applied Anthropologist PR PASS Workshop	
10m	VI. Question and Answer session	Shafia Powell, FEMA	

About the Panelists:

(In order of appearance)

Laura Gorbea

Executive Director

Puerto Rico Public and Applied Social Sciences Workshop

Laura Gorbea served as lead external evaluator for Habitat for Humanity's Puerto Rico Recovery Program. A social scientist that has 20 years of experience as an applied anthropologist, technology entrepreneur, and education policy consultant. Her applied work has focused on nonprofit program evaluation, community-based research, school community engagement, corporate social responsibility, and multi-modal communication strategies. She has served as an education consultant to the Puerto Rico Department of Education on a variety of issues including technology, bilingual education and the impact of children's exposure to violence on learning. She possesses a PhD in Anthropology from Stanford University.

Gorbea is currently working on a participatory impact evaluation of an entrepreneurship capacity building program aimed at reducing poverty. She is also active providing guidance in participatory strategies and community engagement to planners working on Whole Community Resilience Plans serving 10 communities in Puerto Rico.

Damary Pagán

Beneficiary of the Puerto Rico Recovery Program

Pagán completed the Habitat Builds Puerto Rico Program in 2021 and went on to take a variety of additional construction related courses such as, cabinet-making, green construction, and project management. She is a retired professor of administrative sciences and human resources. In her 42 year career as a professor she taught at the University of Puerto Rico and University of Sacred Heart, where she attained the rank of full professor. Outside of academia, Pagán also worked as a certified professional Computer Information Systems Auditor (CISA).

Frank Aquino

Comparison Community Representative in an Impact Study Steering Committees

Aquino was invited to participate in a community workshop organized by PR PASS Workshop in July 2021. The objective of the day's activities was to arrive at community sourced definitions of vulnerability and recovery. At the end of the workshop, Aquino expressed interest and was selected to be a part of a steering committee that oversaw the Puerto Rico Recovery Program Impact Evaluation. On the Steering Committee he represented the experiences of non-beneficiaries living in Rio Piedras and facing the challenges of not having secure home-ownership. Today, Aquino is a professor of social science methodology at the University of Sacred Heart.

Antonio Fernós Sagebien

Economist

School of Business, Interamerican University of Puerto Rico

Antonio Fernós Sagebien has experience in transdisciplinary research on disaster recovery experiences. He has been a Fellow at the Institute of Behavioral Science at the University of Colorado at Boulder and is currently a professor at the School of Business at the Metropolitan Campus of the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico. He holds a PhD in Finance from Tulane University, New Orleans, specializing in corporate finance and municipal debt markets.

Fernós also has experience as a banker, having worked in the Strategic Planning Division of Banco Popular de Puerto Rico, as a Portfolio Manager in the Risk Management Area of Doral Financial, and as a Credit Policy Manager in the Standardized Risk Division for Banco Santander de Puerto Rico and Island Finance. He served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Puerto Rico Statistics Institute and, a Fellow in Entrepreneurship at Babson Business School, and an Erasmus Scholar at the Complutense University of Madrid and the University of Córdoba, both in Spain.

Frequently Cited References

Some references appear on the presentation slides, other were part of the literature review and cited in the development of presentation notes with collaborators.

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Community Engagement

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Participatory Approach

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Methods and Examples Using Narratives

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Disseminating Knowledge

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Additional Resources and References

Efficiency in disaster reconstruction through participatory engagement of communities

- Thomas, J. M. (2022). *Making Things Happen: Community Participation and Disaster Reconstruction in Pakistan* (Vol. 5). Berghahn Books.

Helpful guide to selecting among participatory methods

- Dueda, S. R., Zimmerman, E. B., Vaughn, L. M., Dias, S., & Harris, J. (2022). A Guide to Selecting Participatory Research Methods Based on Project and Partnership Goals. *Journal of Participatory Research Methods*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.35844/001c.32605>

Data Party Resources

- <https://newyorkersvolunteer.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/10/data-party-toolkit-block-1.pdf>
- <https://pyd-academy.extension.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Data-Party-Toolkit.pdf>