

# Strategies for Reducing and Preventing Disasters in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila

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The Universidad Carolina received Border 2020 Program funding to work with the municipality of Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila to develop a comprehensive Green Infrastructure (GI) Masterplan to help reduce flooding within the urban area. Over the years, increased flooding has not only affected infrastructure but led to increased pollution in existing rivers and water bodies due to sedimentation or sewage overflows, as well as, affected public health. By increasing the incorporation of GI elements throughout the city, the project helped to also raise awareness to the natural ecosystems in this region but more importantly improve public health and the urban environment.

The project team developed three major documents as part of the project:

- Green Infrastructure Master Plan for Ciudad Acuña
- Green Infrastructure Guide for Communities within the Chihuahua Desert
- Facilitator Manual for Educational Workshops on Green Infrastructure Strategies: Reducing and Preventing Disasters in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila

As part of the project, a total of 46 participants (6 staff members from the Municipality of Ciudad Acuña, 15 community leaders throughout the city and 25 university students), were trained in three train-the-trainer workshops (Figure 1). These 46 newly trained facilitators then conducted an additional six educational public workshops and six train-the-trainer workshops in the fall and spring of 2018-2019.



*Figure 1. Participants at one of the train-the-trainer workshops.*

A total of 120 participants attended the workshops. Those participants that attended the train-the-trainer workshops were tasked to continue to do additional training within their community to educate on green infrastructure elements in the community (which was beyond the scope of this funded project).

In one of the educational public workshops, attendees were able to participate in developing a small GI project in their community (Figure 2).

With the development and the adoption of the GI Masterplan, city leaders hoped to use more of the natural environment to address flooding issues and reduce the risk associated with stormwater and wastewater overflows. The GI Guide developed will also serve as a great tool for 32 of the 38 other municipalities located within the state of Coahuila who lie in the same desert and ecosystem as Cd. Acuña.

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Figure 2. Public Education Workshop on GI. Participants developed a small GI project.