IMPACTS OF EL DORADO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

COMMUNITY SURVEY 2016
This survey of the perception of impacts of El Dorado International Airport was undertaken with a sample population of 80 families within the zone of direct influence of the second runway of the airport, in the Fontibón locality of Bogotá, Colombia. This sample was composed of 41% women and 39% males, older than 18 years, who have spent more than five years in their home. More than 40% of the respondents have lived in the airport zone of influence for more than 20 years.

Within their immediate families, 38% of the survey respondents counted persons older than 65 years of age, and 41% counted children below the age of 16 years, with some of those having disabilities or illnesses that increased the adverse impact of the increased operations of the airport (in terms of noise), especially during nighttime hours.

93% of survey respondents confirmed that they do not have any form of noise insulation in their homes, while only 2% have insulation in a single room, but they describe that insulation as worthless, either because of its total ineffectiveness to prevent noise or due to faulty installation that generates other problems including infestations of insects and other pests.

Similarly, the insulation produces an airtight seal, preventing proper ventilation. In any event, it is limited to a single room of the home which makes rest of the spaces of the home are exposed to noise without any mitigation.

In terms of the effects on health, 95% consider that the operation of the airport difficulties in sleep in the residents of the airport zone of influence, while 90% consider that it affects their concentration and 93% appear to suffer chronic insomnia.

Headaches rank as the second highest impact on health caused by airport noise, after difficulties sleeping, only slightly above loss of hearing.
The operation of the runway also generates health impacts such as anxiety (52%), increased heart rate (50%), ringing of the ears (62%), leading to increased stress and a loss of tranquility that the residents, like anyone in the world, expects to find in their rest.

It is important to highlight that some survey respondents responded that they did not know if they suffered impacts such as tachycardia (abnormally elevated heart rate), anxiety or other illnesses requiring specialized diagnosis. This is reflected in higher numbers – above 20% - of “no response” or “do not know” to these questions.

Another important impact is the vibrations produced by the aircraft which generates damage to buildings. Without mentioning the negative health impacts associated with these, 95% of survey respondents showed evidence of vibrations in their homes and 78% said that these vibraciones have generated cracks in the roofs and walls.

In relation to children under the age of 16, 65% of survey respondents associated the operation of the airport with a loss of hearing in those children, 50% with an increase in difficulties with learning or academic development, 48% associated it with memory problems and 39% saw a relationship between the impacts of the airport operation and problems with reading and speech.

Again, the number of those who responded that they did not know whether these impacts were clearly evidenced exceeded 20%, however they affirmed that behaviour and/or academic and intellectual development that can be associated with the high exposure to noise and the noise contamination produced by the airport.