



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, San José, Costa Rica

DISASTER RESPONSE

Providing Assistance to Central America amid Rain and Floods

Beginning on October 10, continuous heavy rainfall associated with Tropical Depression Twelve-E resulted in flooding and associated landslides throughout Central America, affecting more than 640,000 people and resulting in the deaths of more than 110 others.

Within a week, the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua had declared states of emergency in their respective countries and requested international humanitarian assistance.

In response, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$550,000 for response activities, including the local procurement and distribution of emergency relief commodities in the region. The U.S. Department of Defense also provided \$100,000 for the local procurement and distribution of emergency relief supplies in El Salvador and Honduras.

Between October 12 and 19, USAID/OFDA activated assessment teams in

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Top photo: Flood-affected families in San Vicente Department, El Salvador, receive USAID/OFDA kitchen and hygiene supplies. Below left: Affected individuals in Choluteca Department, Honduras, receive USAID/OFDA-funded emergency supplies. Below right: Floodwaters recede from a house in Marcovia Department, Honduras.



Photo by Francisco Linares, USAID/OFDA



Photo courtesy of Plan International



Photo courtesy of Save the Children

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

USAID/OFDA Helps Create Safer Pre-schools in Chile



Photo courtesy of Fundación Integra

USAID/OFDA Disaster Risk Management Specialist Mariela Chavarriga (kneeling at left) attended the event.

On September 30, Fundación Integra delivered USAID/OFDA-funded safety equipment to 29 pre-schools in the Los Ríos region of Chile.

The equipment – including first aid kits, battery-powered megaphones and flashlights, and other supplies – is part of a disaster preparedness project implemented by Fundación Integra with small grant funding from the USAID/OFDA Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP). As part of the \$34,000 project, the foundation trained staff in emergency response protocols and installed siren alarms in schools to increase the safety of the 2,200 pre-school children.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Region's Education Officials Sign "Panama Declaration"

With support from USAID/OFDA, UNICEF, and other U.N. agencies and partners, education officials from 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean met in Panama in mid-October to sign the "Panama Declaration for Disaster Risk Reduction."

In this declaration, education sector representatives from throughout the region pledged to guarantee the right to education during disaster and emergency situations, promote the incorporation and strengthening of risk

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Photo by Gabriela Albrez, USAID/OFDA

Emergency response officials in Guatemala learn how to use USAID/OFDA-funded water filters provided during the humanitarian response to widespread floods and mudslides.

Bringing Flood Relief to Central America

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Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama to monitor conditions and conduct damage and needs assessments in affected areas. Team members coordinated closely with host government emergency officials and partner organizations.

EL SALVADOR: USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$370,000 in humanitarian assistance to El Salvador, including \$100,000 for the local purchase of kitchen sets and fuel for rescue and relief operations.

On October 23, USAID/OFDA transported emergency relief supplies valued at nearly \$270,000 – including 10,200 ten-liter water containers, 9,984 hygiene kits, 2,500 blankets, 1,020 kitchen sets, and 100 rolls of reinforced plastic sheeting – from the USAID/OFDA warehouse in Miami, Florida, to San Salvador.

In addition, the Government of El Salvador Civil Protection Agency distributed nearly 3,000 USAID/OFDA-funded personal hygiene kits, which were pre-positioned in El Salvador last year.

A nine-member USAID/OFDA assessment team, led by Regional Advisor Sidney Velado, helped to coordinate and monitor the distribution of USAID/OFDA relief supplies in affected communities.

GUATEMALA: USAID/OFDA provided \$50,000 to Guatemala, through USAID/Guatemala, for the local purchase of relief supplies donated to the Government of Guatemala for distribution to affected populations, including 5,000 ponchos, 500 water filters, 3,000 personal hygiene kits, vehicle fuel, and emergency first response equipment – including helmets, backpacks, and rope.

HONDURAS: USAID/OFDA provided \$105,000 in humanitarian assistance to Honduras, including \$50,000 to Plan International and \$50,000 to Save the Children for child protection activities and the local procurement and distribution of relief supplies, including hygiene kits, kitchen sets, mattresses, and blankets. Additionally, USAID/OFDA, through the RDAP, provided more than 1,300 gallons of helicopter fuel, valued at \$5,000, to the Government of Honduras to support rescue and relief operations in flood-affected areas.

NICARAGUA: In response to the floods, the U.N. World Food Program distributed \$75,000 worth of relief supplies – including plastic tarps, water containers and filters, flashlights, and tools and materials for shelter construction – pre-positioned in Nicaragua with funds totaling \$50,000 from USAID/Nicaragua and \$25,000 from USAID/OFDA.

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COMING UP

USAID/OFDA-Funded DRR Projects

On November 17, the American Red Cross and CARE plan to initiate three new USAID/OFDA-funded disaster risk reduction (DRR) projects in South America. The projects, totalling nearly \$3 million, will strengthen disaster preparedness and response capacities in Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru. On November 3, the American Red Cross and Catholic Relief Services launched two other USAID/OFDA-funded DRR projects to benefit communities in the Caribbean.

Forum on Public-Private Sector Alliances

USAID/OFDA is sponsoring a regional forum on public-private sector partnerships in DRR, entitled “Private Sector Contributions to DRR: Opportunities for Cooperation Available to Governments,” scheduled for November 17 and 18 in Panama City. The Latin American and Caribbean Economic System is organizing the event with support from the U.N. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and Panama’s City of Knowledge educational and research complex.

South American DRR Consultation Meeting

USAID/OFDA, in association with the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Response (CAPRADE), is organizing a South American stakeholder consultation meeting on DRR in Bogotá, Colombia, on November 22. During the consultation, scheduled to take place within the framework of a larger CAPRADE meeting, USAID/OFDA will inform disaster management stakeholders in South America about the USAID/OFDA Regional DRR Plan for 2012-2014. Similar consultation meetings were held for Central American stakeholders in January and Caribbean stakeholders in July.

USAID/OFDA/LAC Sub-Regional Meetings

USAID/OFDA/LAC Regional Office staff members and RDAP specialists plan to participate in sub-regional planning meetings for South America, Central America and Mexico, and the Caribbean, scheduled to take place in Brazil on November 29 and 30, Guatemala on December 5 and 6, and the Bahamas on January 11 and 12, 2012.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Declaration Promotes DRR in Education

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management in the region’s school curricula, establish a regional platform for disaster risk management in the education sector, and implement a policy for continuous evaluation and improvement of infrastructure in new and existing schools in accordance with disaster risk management standards.

Representatives from the ministries of education of Argentina, Belize, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela, signed the declaration on October 14. Representatives of other organizations, including USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor Sidney Velado, signed the document as witnesses.

USAID/OFDA education and disaster risk management specialist Manuel Ramírez helped organize the conference.

USAID/OFDA also sponsored the participation of conference delegates from Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and funded translation services for the conference, which took place from October 12 to 14 in Panama City.