



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

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



Photo courtesy of CEPREDENAC

USAID/OFDA and CEPREDENAC staff met in early October to discuss mutual efforts to improve DRR in Central American cities. From left: USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor Sidney Velado, Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan, CEPREDENAC Executive Secretary Iván Morales, and Manager for International Cooperation and Projects Noel Barillas.

Supporting Urban DRR in the Region

In Latin America, population growth, rapid and unplanned urbanization, and poverty exacerbate vulnerabilities in the face of frequent natural disasters.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the region's large cities.

As part of its Regional Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Plan for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), USAID/OFDA supports DRR activities in urban centers, helping to increase the resiliency of vulnerable populations in densely populated areas.

Toward this goal, USAID/OFDA recently awarded six grants totaling more than \$6 million to six international and non-governmental organizations working to promote urban

DRR in the LAC region.

Following is a brief summary of the six projects, all launched in October 2012:

REGIONAL, Strengthening Urban DRR in Central America: As part of an ongoing partnership to promote DRR in Central America, USAID/OFDA has provided the Central American Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters (CEPREDENAC) \$250,000 to strengthen comprehensive disaster management capacities among Civil Protection agencies that work in urban environments. As part of the project, CEPREDENAC will work to strengthen regional and national ef-

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Photo courtesy of Juan Pablo Sarmiento, Florida International University

USAID/OFDA and partner agency representatives participated in the launch of four USAID/OFDA-funded urban DRR projects in October.

DISASTER RESPONSE

USAID/OFDA Assists Families in Jamaica, Haiti affected by Sandy

In late October, Hurricane Sandy moved through the western Caribbean as a Category One then Category Two hurricane, crossing directly over eastern Jamaica and Cuba and through the Bahamas archipelago.

According to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the hurricane and associated heavy rains and flooding resulted in at least 57 deaths; displaced tens of thousands of people; and caused extensive damage to homes, public infrastructure, and agricultural crops in member states Jamaica, Haiti, and the Bahamas.

Two of the affected countries, Jamaica and Haiti, requested international assistance to

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Photo by Julie Leonard, USAID/OFDA

Residents of 11 Mile in St. Thomas Parish fix roof damage caused by the passage of Hurricane Sandy through eastern Jamaica.

DISASTER INFORMATION

New Knowledge Center in Public Health and Disasters Available

With funding from USAID/OFDA and the Canadian International Development Agency, the Pan American Health Organization has launched an online Knowledge Center in Public Health and Disasters.

The web site features a guide to essential concepts in public health and disasters in the region and contains links to complementary information resources, including publications and videos, relevant initiatives, and web sites of pertinent agencies.

The site was launched in Spanish in August and will soon become available in English. The site address is: www.saludydesastres.info.

Supporting Urban DRR in the Region

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forts to establish strategies and policies that reduce vulnerabilities and emphasize comprehensive disaster management in education and training processes. The project aims to benefit at least 200,000 people in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

REGIONAL, Supporting Resilient Cities: In support of the U.N. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) "Making Cities Resilient" campaign, USAID/OFDA has provided the ISDR regional office for the Americas \$150,000 to help develop local government capacities to design and implement actions aimed at building the resilience of urban neighborhoods. The ISDR campaign has several objectives, including obtaining commitment from public authorities, increasing the awareness of municipal officials in charge of implementing local policies for DRR, and stimulating inter-disciplinary and multi-sector partnerships for DRR. As part of the last objective, ISDR held the Third Session of the Regional Platform for DRR in the Americas from November 27 to 28 in Chile. USAID/OFDA supported this event with an additional \$100,000 and sponsored various participants from the region to attend the conference.

GUATEMALA, Safer Neighborhoods: USAID/OFDA has provided approximately \$1 million to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to implement the "*Barrios Más Seguros*" (Safer Neighborhoods) program in the city of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. The two-year program will assist inhabitants of four neighborhoods vulnerable to seismic events, flooding, and volcanic activity mitigate their disaster risks. The program expects to benefit approximately 10,000 people through a strategy of aligning government plans and policy, the ISDR "Making Cities Resilient" campaign, participatory education, gender mainstreaming, and youth involvement with existing local committees for disaster reduction. With USAID/OFDA support, CRS will engage people in retrofitting their homes to improve environmental health and mitigate flooding, as well as train and organize communities and key stakeholders in general disaster management.

GUATEMALA, My Neighborhood: USAID/OFDA has provided nearly \$2 million to fund a two-year program implemented by Project Concern International entitled "*Barrio Mío*" (My Neighborhood). The program expects to benefit nearly 18,500 inhabitants of more than a dozen informal neighborhoods in Mixco, Guatemala. Specifically, the initiative will bring together private-sector partners, national and municipal agencies, universities, and local communities to reduce urban risk. The program will build local and municipal capacities to prevent and prepare for disasters, improve the safety of shelter and settlements, improve water and sanitation infrastructure, and reinforce the livelihoods and coping mechanisms of vulnerable urban households.

HAITI, Community Initiatives in DRR: USAID/OFDA has provided \$1.6 million to World Concern to implement the "Community Initiatives in Disaster Risk Reduction" program in northwestern Haiti. The 18-month program expects to benefit more than 26,000 people in marginalized informal communities of Northwest Department. The program will engage community members in community construction projects to repair flood control canals and sewers and improve water and sanitation services. The program will also train local builders in government construction standards and work with the community to retrofit selected community infrastructure, such as schools and churches, to serve as emergency shelters for hurricanes and earthquakes.

PERU, Support for Risk Reduction in Lima: USAID/OFDA has provided nearly \$1.2 million to Save the Children to help inhabitants of high-risk areas of urban Lima become more resilient to disasters. The two-year program intends to benefit approximately 17,500 people in Sector VII, Villa El Salvador, one of Lima's 42 districts located south of the metropolitan center. With USAID/OFDA support, the program plans to mobilize neighborhoods around integrated DRR strategies that include livelihoods, shelter, gender, and child protection. The program is aligned with municipal and national DRR strategies, including decentralization, and will work closely with the Government of Peru and other stakeholders.

DISASTER RESPONSE

USAID/OFDA Assists Families in Jamaica, Haiti affected by Sandy

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respond to the impacts from Hurricane Sandy.

In response, USAID/OFDA immediately provided \$150,000 to Jamaica, through partner HelpAge International, and assistance valued at \$515,000 to Haiti, through partners the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and CRS.

JAMAICA: Hurricane Sandy passed over eastern Jamaica as a Category One hurricane on October 24. After the storm passed, a seven-person USAID/OFDA assessment team in Jamaica worked closely with the Government of Jamaica's Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), the Jamaica Red Cross, and partners HelpAge and CRS to evaluate damages and humanitarian needs. Assessments indicated the hurricane damaged houses, livelihoods, and water, sanitation, and health facilities, resulting in the need for emergency humanitarian assistance. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$150,000 to support HelpAge International in addressing critical needs, including access to safe drinking water, temporary housing and shelter materials, and livelihood recovery activities.

HAITI: Though Hurricane Sandy did not make landfall in Haiti, heavy rains associated with the storm caused widespread flooding and mudslides in southern Haiti and parts of the capital, Port-au-Prince. A four-person USAID/OFDA assessment team worked in coordination with 10 local consultants from USAID/OFDA's surge roster of disaster relief professionals to evaluate humanitarian conditions and U.S. Government response options.

Through IOM, USAID/OFDA immediately distributed \$415,000 worth of pre-positioned USAID/OFDA-funded emergency relief commodities, including more than 7,600 plastic sheets for shelter, approximately 7,000 family hygiene kits, and nearly 10,000 blankets, to benefit an estimated 35,000 people in affected areas. Additionally, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 to CRS for shelter repair assistance to affected families in Grand' Anse Department. USAID/OFDA continues to assess humanitarian needs in Haiti, with emphasis on livelihoods recovery and shelter.



Photo by Bazil Jeanvilneuve, USAID/OFDA

Residents of Les Cayes, in southwestern Haiti, navigate flooded streets after Sandy brought heavy rains to the region.

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