



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 by Eduardo Gutiérrez, USAID/OFDA

The innovative “Mandala” technique, a symbiotic agricultural system that integrates a produce garden around a fish-stocked pond, is a strong example of how the USAID/OFDA Regional Disaster Assistance Program’s (RDAP) Small Grant Program benefits local communities.

USAID/OFDA Small Grant Program Promotes Resiliency in Local Communities

Through RDAP, USAID/OFDA has funded five new small grant agreements in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region to benefit local communities through disaster risk reduction (DRR) and risk management projects.

Since 2009, the RDAP Small Grants Program has funded 15 projects through community-based, local non-governmental organizations to help safeguard livelihood assets, and prevent shelter loss. Projects are awarded approximately \$30,000 and last between nine months and one

year. As summarized by USAID/OFDA Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan, “Considering the modest funding amounts, the Small Grants Program delivers truly significant benefits to communities involved.”

The following small grant agreements are scheduled to start this month and conclude in early 2014: **BAHAMAS, Government-Certified Emergency Community Shelters Upgrade:** USAID/OFDA is providing the Bahamas Salvation Army technical assistance and \$30,000 to refurbish

Continued on page 2

A farmer in Crateús, Brazil, displays the harvest resulting from applying effective water-management techniques to a drought-ridden landscape.



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Global Campaign to Reduce Disaster Risk in Urban Centers

With support from USAID/OFDA, the U.N. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) Making Cities Resilient: 'My City is Getting Ready!' global campaign, launched in May 2010, is coordinating partners working to minimize the adverse impacts of natural hazards through enhancing the capability of vulnerable groups and local communities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

Among other activities, the Making Cities Resilient campaign specifically focuses on developing urban risk management strategies within participating municipalities. The campaign brings together more than 200 cities in the Americas and more than 1,300 cities around the world to discuss issues of local governance and urban risk, disaster risk reduction in basic public infrastructure such as schools and

Continued on page 2



Photo by Auriana Koutnik, USAID/OFDA
Urban centers, such as Panama City, are taking action to reduce vulnerability.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Costa Rica’s Red Cross Trains New Team of Instructors

In Costa Rica, a rise in weather-related incidents, such as flooding, landslides, and forest fires, are increasing the need to strengthen local capacities and provide instructors and training for new Red Cross responders.

An additional 16 members of the Costa Rican Red Cross Society have recently received approval for further training as international instructors, following completion of the USAID/OFDA-supported Course for Instructors on May 8 through 13. The training familiarizes recipients with topics such as the Interactive Teaching Method, adult learning, and objective development, as well as imparts communication skills and training techniques.

Since 1998, USAID/OFDA has trained emergency personnel from a wide range of national and regional entities through RDAP.

USAID/OFDA Small Grant Program

Continued from page 1

bish two community shelters that serve at least three communities in Nassau.

BELIZE, Bolstering the District Emergency Rescue Response Unit: With \$30,000 from USAID/OFDA, the Belize Disaster and Rescue Response Team will provide 75 volunteers with upper-level disaster rescue and response training, equipment, and monitoring and evaluation, helping strengthen emergency response teams in Belize's six departments.

CHILE, Water Quality Analysis for Hydrometeorological Emergencies: With \$29,918 from USAID/OFDA, the Chilean chapter of the Adventist Development Relief Agency is providing technical assistance, equipment, and training to local volunteers in Petorca Province to assess surface and ground water quality during drought situations while educating local communities on disease prevention through proper hygiene measures.

GUATEMALA, Strengthening Fire Risk Management in Local Governments: USAID/OFDA is providing Foundation PROPETEN with \$30,000 to strengthen local capacity in three municipalities in Petén Department through the acquisition of equipment to help prevent and respond to forest fires.

PARAGUAY, Strengthening Community Capacity in Integrated Fire Management: Through a \$30,000 small grant to local environmental organization Promotores Ambientales San Rafael, USAID/OFDA is providing technical assistance, training, and equipment to strengthen local fire and emergency response capacities and provide education in disaster mitigation to members of three communities near Paraguay's San Rafael National Park.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



Photo by Lucy Harman, CARE/Peru
Community and SENAMHI members inaugurate the installation of an early warning weather forecast station in Puno Region, Peru.

Enhancing Community-Based Early Warning Systems in Peru

As Peru is vulnerable to many natural disasters, including earthquakes, volcanoes, and flooding, early warning system (EWS) programs play an important role in community preparedness and communication before, during, and after disasters strike.

The USAID/OFDA-supported Enhancing Preparedness in Shelter and EWS in Peru (FOCAPREE), implemented by CARE/Peru since 2011, is strengthening disaster preparedness and emergency response throughout the Andean country by increasing the capacity of community stakeholders in risk management, prevention, and preparedness, as well as helping the Government of Peru (GoP) produce guidelines and national regulations for community-based EWS.

For example, in 2012 CARE/Peru provided the GoP's National Institute for Civil Defense and National Meteorology and Hydrology Service (SENAMHI) with operational instruments and scientific equipment for 10 conventional and two automatic weather stations in the Puno Region in southeastern Peru. As a result of the FOCAPEE project's success, the national government has provided SENAMHI with additional weather stations and equipment to further improve meteorological forecast service and EWS capacities while reducing the vulnerability of people living in areas exposed to natural hazards.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



Photo by Dante Torres, USAID/OFDA
Without appropriate risk reduction measures, natural disasters, such as the 2010 earthquake and tsunami in Chile, will continue to cause serious damage in urban areas.

Reducing Disaster Risk in Urban Centers

Continued from page 1

hospitals, and sustainable development principles.

Yet the main objectives of the Making Cities Resilient campaign is on increasing political commitment to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation among local governments and mayors, as well as promoting the resilience of nations and the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action as key elements to achieving sustainable development.

Essential services provided by local governments are often disrupted during and after a crisis. Actors at the community level, including local municipalities, are first to respond when crises or emergencies strike. Urban risk reduction efforts, such as those guided by the Making Cities Resilient campaign, encourages national investment in infrastructure upgrades and improvements, building retrofits for energy efficiency and safety, urban renovation and renewal, cleaner energies, and slum upgrading.

Most recently in LAC region, USAID/OFDA hosted Panama's national launch of the global campaign in Panama City on May 29. Panama is particularly vulnerable to a host of natural disasters, including earthquakes and flooding associated with hurricanes and tropical storms. Since January of this year, the Association of Municipalities of Panama and UNISDR are working together to promote and disseminate the priority actions for DRR in light of an increased frequency and magnitude of disasters and accelerating climate change worldwide.

Phase two of the Making Cities Resilient campaign, launched in 2012 and active through 2015, builds on the successes and lessons learned in phase one of the campaign, which was active from 2010 to 2011. Changes in phase two include a shift to more program implementation efforts, such as city-to-city learning and cooperation, local action planning, and monitoring progress of building resilience in cities. USAID/OFDA continues to support UNISDR in this campaign, as well as other partners in urban risk reduction initiatives in the region.

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