



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 Auriana Koutnik, USAID/OFDA

Members of the Tecpan Municipal Disaster Management Committee in Guatemala discuss the positive outcomes of a USAID/OFDA-funded DRR project.

USAID/OFDA Publishes New DRR Plan

USAID/OFDA recently published its Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Plan for 2012-2014, which provides strategic guidance for USAID/OFDA-supported DRR activities in the region.

Support includes technical and financial assistance for partner-implemented projects as well as training and technical assistance activities carried out through the USAID/OFDA-funded Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP).

The new DRR plan, which updates the previous LAC DRR Strategy for 2009-2014, includes a few noteworthy additions.

First, the plan includes a new

emphasis on implementing DRR in urban settings. This focus is based on lessons learned from the Haiti earthquake response as well as the assumption that continued population migration to the region's cities will increase their vulnerability to future natural hazards, especially earthquakes.

South America, for example, has various "mega-cities," metropolitan areas with populations greater than 10 million inhabitants.

Second, the LAC DRR plan aligns USAID/OFDA goals more closely with internationally recognized humanitarian community pri-

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Members of a Community Disaster Response Team (CDRT) in St. Lucia offload supplies from a helicopter after Hurricane Thomas in late 2010. USAID/OFDA funded the American Red Cross DRR program that trained this and other CDRTs.



Photo courtesy of the St. Lucia Red Cross

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

USAID/OFDA Donates USAR Equipment to Guatemala

On March 16, USAID/Guatemala and USAID/OFDA representatives donated USAID/OFDA-funded urban search and rescue (USAR) equipment to Guatemala's National Disaster Management Coordinator (CONRED), for use by the country's two USAR teams.

The equipment, valued at approximately \$25,000, includes electric generators, saws, power drills, hammers, and radio transmitters.

Through the RDAP, USAID/OFDA has worked with Guatemalan authorities to strengthen national USAR capabilities since 2004.

USAID/OFDA is also supporting a regional USAR exercise scheduled to take place in Guatemala City from April 19 to 22.



Photo courtesy of CONRED

Members of Guatemala's USAR teams receive the USAID/OFDA-funded equipment donation.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

USAID/OFDA Publishes APS; Extends Deadline until April 23

USAID/OFDA has published an annual program statement (APS) seeking proposals from partners that aim to operationalize a neighborhood approach to reduce urban disaster risk in the LAC region.

Through the APS, USAID/OFDA seeks to reduce disaster risk in informal and marginalized neighborhoods by supporting sustainable, participatory planning methodologies and the implementation of risk mitigation measures.

The deadline for initial grant applications has been extended until April 23.

For complete information, search for Funding Opportunity Number APS-OFDA-12-000004 on the web site www.grants.gov.

Plan Outlines USAID/OFDA DRR Activities

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ities, particularly the U.N. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction's Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015.

Third, the new plan emphasizes the importance of incorporating protection of vulnerable populations and gender-sensitive approaches and activities into USAID/OFDA-funded DRR programs.

Like the previous document, the new DRR plan calls for USAID/OFDA to prioritize DRR activities in the LAC region in the following areas: safeguarding livelihoods assets; preventing shelter loss; and building disaster management capacity.

The overall goal of the new plan is to reduce risk through enhanced institutional and community capacities to respond to and mitigate the effects of disasters, strengthen the resiliency of vulnerable communities, and reduce exposure to hazards. In this region, the most frequent natural hazards include floods, tropical storms, earthquakes, landslides, forest fires, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis.

In addition to increasing capacities for DRR in urban settings, specific USAID/OFDA activities in the new plan include supporting institutional strengthening, leveraging private sector resources, strengthening early warning systems and coping mechanisms for culturally unique populations, and pre-positioning emergency relief supplies.

USAID/OFDA also seeks to safeguard household livelihoods, improve community emergency response plans and shelter identification, promote hazard-resistant shelter and settlements, and provide DRR technical assistance and training.

Additionally, the plan calls for the LAC team to support DRR in primary and secondary education and institutionalize higher education in DRR. As part of these efforts, USAID/OFDA is supporting a Latin American forum on DRR in higher education, organized by the Latin American and Caribbean University Network and the Specialized University of the Americas in Panama. The event is scheduled from August 28 to 30 in Panama City.

The LAC DRR plan can be found on the USAID web site at the following link: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/sectors/files/fy2012/lac_drr_plan.pdf.



Photo courtesy of Fundación Integra

Fundación Integra representatives, preschool students and staff, parents, and other guests celebrate the completion of a nine-month USAID/OFDA-funded DRR project to strengthen emergency preparedness at more than a dozen preschools in the Los Ríos Region of Chile.

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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Caribbean CSRC-LL Instructors Certified

The RDAP recently trained and certified 11 instructors of the USAID/OFDA-supported Collapsed Structures Rescue Course, Light Level (CSRC-LL), during a training held at the Jamaica Police Training Center in collaboration with Jamaica's Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management. Five of the new instructors are from Jamaica, five are from St. Lucia, and one is from Grenada.

With these new instructors, the Caribbean now boasts a total of 20 certified CSRC-LL instructors, according to USAID/OFDA Disaster Risk Management Specialist Clive Lorde, who coordinates RDAP efforts to help strengthen national USAR capabilities in the Caribbean.

Four of the new instructors have been selected to instruct alongside more experienced Caribbean USAR trainers in future USAID/OFDA-supported courses in the region.

The next USAR training activity will be a CSRC-LL for two dozen participants from the Bahamas, Belize, and Guyana, scheduled to take place in the Bahamas from April 23 to 28.



Photo by Clive Lorde, USAID/OFDA

Trainers and participants of the CSRC-LL instructor certification in Jamaica.

COMING UP

Bolivia Firefighter Mobilization Exercise

USAID/OFDA is providing technical assistance to Bolivia for the Third Forest Firefighter Brigade Mobilization Exercise, scheduled from April 13 to 15 in Santa Cruz.

Higher Education Forum in Costa Rica

USAID/OFDA is sponsoring a higher education forum with staff from Costa Rica's four state universities and various private institutions, to discuss the role of higher education in DRR. During the event, scheduled for April 17, USAID/OFDA plans to present authorities copies of the USAID/OFDA-supported book "Education and Risk Management: An Experience Worth Sharing."

Regional USAR Exercise in Guatemala

USAID/OFDA is providing technical and financial support for a regional USAR exercise in Guatemala City from April 19 to 22. Teams from Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Panama plan to participate.

USAID/OFDA Workshops for MDROs

USAID/OFDA is planning three workshops with U.S. mission disaster relief officers (MDROs) in the LAC region to discuss USAID/OFDA disaster management capabilities. A workshop for MDROs in South America is scheduled from April 24 to 25 in Quito, Ecuador; a workshop for MDROs in the Caribbean is scheduled for May 8 and 9 in Bridgetown, Barbados; and a workshop for MDROs in Central America and Mexico is scheduled for May 15 and 16 in San Salvador, El Salvador.