



LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

RDAP SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

AUGUST 2013

OVERVIEW

Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are highly prone to a range of natural hazards, including earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, landslides, volcanoes, and drought. To reduce the effects of these hazards, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) supports disaster risk reduction (DRR) programs that promote local, national, and regional self-sufficiency in disaster preparedness and management, and which build upon and strengthen the capacity of established institutions in the region.

The Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP), established in 1989, is the primary vehicle for USAID/OFDA’s support of disaster risk management in LAC. Through RDAP, USAID/OFDA maintains a network of disaster risk management specialists (DRMSs) to provide technical assistance for disaster preparedness and mitigation activities in the region, overseeing instruction in disaster management concepts, training methodology, and related technical disciplines.

In April 2011, RDAP launched the Small Grants Program to promote DRR projects at the community level. The grants, which average \$30,000 and support projects for up to one year, contribute to host governments’ DRR priorities and support innovative initiatives and pilot projects that develop community capacity to prepare for, mitigate the impact of, respond to, and recover from disasters. Grants are awarded on a rolling basis to local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the region, identified by DRMSs as having the potential to increase disaster response and preparedness capabilities in their communities. Once USAID/OFDA approves proposed projects, DRMSs provide technical support and guidance throughout the implementation process.

To date, USAID/OFDA has provided approximately \$640,000 in small grants funding to 20 community-level DRR projects in the Bahamas, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, and St. Kitts and Nevis. All projects align with USAID/OFDA’s regional DRR goals to safeguard the livelihood assets of vulnerable families, prevent shelter losses, strengthen local DRR and preparedness capacities, and ultimately save lives in the event of future disasters.

USAID/OFDA is supporting the following projects through the RDAP Small Grants Program. Unless otherwise noted, the projects will conclude by March 2014.

THE BAHAMAS—UPGRADING COMMUNITY SHELTERS FOR EMERGENCIES

The Bahamas Salvation Army is upgrading two community centers in Nassau for use as emergency shelters, including repairs to sanitation facilities, walls, and floors, as well as converting storage areas into men’s and women’s showers and changing rooms. The upgrades will assist the Salvation Army in providing clean and secure shelters for neighborhood residents during disasters.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000

BELIZE—STRENGTHENING DISTRICT EMERGENCY RESCUE AND RESPONSE

The Belize Disaster and Rescue Response Team is training 75 volunteers in search-and-rescue practices, disaster response techniques, and monitoring and evaluation, as well as procuring equipment to help strengthen emergency response teams in Belize’s six departments.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000

BELIZE—IMPROVING EMERGENCY SHELTER AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Belize Red Cross upgraded community centers in Flowers Bank, LEMONAL, and Rancho Dolores villages in the Belize River Valley and equipped each center with a back-up generator to ensure power supply during and after a disaster. The Government of Belize Ministry of Works and National Emergency Management Organization have certified that the buildings comply with hurricane and flood shelter standards. The project, which concluded in November 2011, also provided residents in the isolated May Pen village with a storm-resistant VHF radio communication system for use during emergencies.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000

BELIZE—STRENGTHENING SCHOOL SAFETY TRAINING AND EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

An additional grant to the Belize Red Cross strengthened the capacities of 19 schools in Cayo District to better respond to minor accidents and emergencies. The project, which ended in June 2013, assisted the schools in developing emergency plans—including the formation of specialized brigades dedicated to first aid, fire safety, psycho-social support, and evacuation—as well as drafting general safety guides.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000

BRAZIL—STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO DROUGHT

Through two separate RDAP small grants, Caritas has strengthened rural resilience to drought and decreased migration to urban centers by training community leaders and establishing alternative income sources for families in the drought-prone municipalities of Crateús, Quiterianópolis, and Tamboril in Ceará State. Community leaders learned effective water management techniques, including the construction of rainwater collection systems and storage areas in their communities. The Caritas project, which concluded in June 2013, also helped establish a cooperative that uses recycled plastic bottles to make brooms, generating additional income and increasing the community’s economic resilience.

RDAP FUNDING\$60,000

CHILE—WATER QUALITY ANALYSIS DURING HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL EMERGENCIES

The Chilean chapter of the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) is providing technical assistance, equipment, and training to local volunteers conducting water analysis and sampling in drought-affected communities in Petorca Province. ADRA is also hosting workshops for families regarding disease prevention and proper hygiene measures, including hand-washing.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000

CHILE—DRR CAPACITY BUILDING IN HISTORIC COMMUNITIES IN SANTIAGO

Supported by the Foundation School of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Chile, community leaders in two historic neighborhoods in Santiago evaluated risk mitigation and evacuation strategies for local populations vulnerable to earthquakes. The neighborhoods—home to 1,200 buildings and approximately 6,000 residents—also benefited from strengthened capacities for post-disaster response and initial damage assessment and needs analysis (DANA) reporting. The project ended in August 2013.

RDAP FUNDING\$44,690

CHILE—EMERGENCY PLANNING, EQUIPMENT, AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PRESCHOOLS

Fundación Integra assisted 13 preschools in the Los Rios Region plan for disasters. The project, which ended in May 2012, benefitted children and staff members by identifying and preparing evacuation routes, installing independently powered emergency alarm systems, and providing first-aid kits.

RDAP FUNDING\$34,043

COSTA RICA—EARLY WARNING SYSTEM FOR FOREST FIRES

USAID/OFDA partnered with *Fundación para la Cooperación Costa Rica–United States of America* and the Government of Costa Rica National System of Conservation Areas to implement an early warning detection and response system in three remote communities near La Amistad International Park. The project, which ended in March 2012, also supported forest firefighter trainings and communications, as well as the procurement of firefighting equipment for the Tres Colinas, Potrero Grande, and La Puna communities.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC—REFORESTATION AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Fundación Integra Niños Felices de América implemented a project in the El Chavón neighborhood of La Chapea Glen in Los Alcañizos Municipality. The project, which concluded in May 2012, helped reforest the La Chapea watershed area and improved the neighborhood’s infrastructure, as well as sensitized community members to the importance of environmental restoration and reducing pollution in the region.

RDAP FUNDING\$46,488

ECUADOR—REDUCING RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

EcoCostas worked with government leaders from coastal districts in San Cristobal Island, Galapagos Province, and Manta, Manabí Province, to strengthen resilience in low-income communities vulnerable to natural disasters, such as landslides and floods. The EcoCostas project, which ended in June 2013, also designed emergency plans and provided disaster risk management training to community leaders in the same coastal districts.

RDAP FUNDING\$38,000

GUATEMALA—IMPROVING LOCAL FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT

Fundación ProPetén is supporting local fire management authorities in three municipalities in Petén Department by increasing organizational and operational capacity. In addition, the small grant is enabling *Fundación ProPetén* to procure equipment to help prevent and respond to forest fires.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000

GUATEMALA—EMERGENCY RESPONSE EQUIPMENT AND FIRST RESPONDER TRAINING

SHARE Guatemala procured emergency radio communications equipment and provided technical training to municipal and community leaders in 30 primarily indigenous communities of Tecpán Municipality, Chimaltenango Department. The project, which concluded in November 2012, also provided equipment and first responder training—including performing a full-scale emergency simulation to test communications equipment, procedures, and protocols—to nearly 300 volunteers from community disaster response committees.

RDAP FUNDING\$21,740

PANAMA—SCHOOL SAFETY AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The Social Promotion and Development Program assisted regional education leaders and local school supervisors in identifying schools at risk of natural disasters, as well as improving the resources available for disaster management and response, in 12 rural communities in Bocas Del Toro, Veraguas, and the Ngäbe-Buglé indigenous reservation. The project, which concluded in August 2013, also helped develop a disaster response strategies training guide, coordinated simulations, and compiled risk management plans for at least 30 schools in the communities involved.

RDAP FUNDING\$35,000

PARAGUAY—DRR IN HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Dr. Raul Peña Institute of Higher Education is helping build the DRR capacity of aspiring school teachers, who are then deployed on two-month assignments to educate students throughout Paraguay on DRR techniques. In addition, the small grant is helping the institute integrate DRR into its curriculum for future use.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000

PARAGUAY—COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING FOR FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT

Promotores Ambientales San Rafael is strengthening local fire emergency and response capabilities and providing disaster mitigation courses to members of three communities near San Rafael National Park. The project includes integrated fire management training and equipment to combat forest fires.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000

PERU—IMPROVING NATIONWIDE DANA REPORTING

The organization Firemen & Health Hope helped standardize the post-disaster DANA process throughout Peru. The project, which ended in June 2013, adapted the Government of Peru National Civil Defense Institute’s virtual platform—National Information System for Prevention and Response to Disasters—to the DANA system, as well as developed a DANA course model to provide training to regional instructors.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000

SAINT LUCIA—RAINWATER HARVESTING TO ALLEVIATE WATER SHORTAGES

An RDAP small grant, the first in the Caribbean region, supported the Laborie Disaster Preparedness Committee (LDPC) in Saint Lucia in strengthening community resilience by establishing a rainwater harvesting system to alleviate water shortages. The project, which ended in June 2013, installed rooftop rainwater collection systems and 18 water storage tanks in public schools, churches, and a health center in the Laborie area. The LDPC also held public meetings in various communities to inform residents about the project and provide guidelines for how the system will function during emergencies.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS—SCHOOL SAFETY TO REDUCE VULNERABILITY

The St. Kitts and Nevis Red Cross Society is incorporating the USAID/OFDA-designed School Safety Program into all public schools in St. Kitts and Nevis. Project goals include the production, replication, and distribution of a School Safety Program training video that outlines emergency and school safety plans; the organization of emergency drills for all students and faculty; the purchase and distribution of emergency equipment to 30 vulnerable schools; and the development of a national disaster risk management policy for the education sector.

RDAP FUNDING\$30,000