

# LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

USAID'S OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (USAID/OFDA)

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## OVERVIEW

Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are prone to a range of natural hazards, including hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, volcanoes, and drought. To help mitigate the effects of these hazards, USAID/OFDA supports disaster risk reduction (DRR) programs that bolster local, national, and regional disaster preparedness and response management capacity, including strengthening established disaster management institutions in the LAC region.

The Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP), established in 1989, is an important 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) who provide technical assistance for disaster preparedness and mitigation activities in the region, oversee disaster management training, and help build government capacity for forest fire management, emergency operations center management, and Incident Command System implementation.

Since 2011, RDAP has coordinated the USAID/OFDA Small Grants Program to promote community DRR projects in LAC. The annual grants, which average \$30,000 to support projects for up to one year, strengthen community and host government capacity to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to disasters. After USAID/OFDA approves the projects, the DRMSs provide technical support and guidance throughout the implementation process.

In 2017, USAID/OFDA provided \$210,000 for seven community-level DRR projects in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, and Saint Lucia. All projects align with USAID/OFDA's regional DRR goals, including safeguarding the livelihoods of vulnerable households, establishing disaster-resistant shelters, and strengthening local DRR and preparedness capacities.

USAID/OFDA supported the following small grants projects in 2017:

### **COSTA RICA — REDUCING THE EFFECTS OF VOLCANIC ASH FALL**

The Costa Rican Red Cross is conducting activities to support communities in Heredia and San José provinces to reduce the effects of ash fall from eruptions of nearby Turrialba Volcano. The program includes the production of public health safety information on how to prepare for and respond to volcanic activity.



*Teachers and students work to create safer schools by mapping evacuation routes and designating safe points as part of a school readiness program led by the El Salvador Boy Scouts with USAID/OFDA support.*

## **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC — TRAINING AT-RISK COMMUNITIES**

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is identifying vulnerability to natural hazards—including flooding and illness related to stagnant water—in the Dominican Republic’s Salome Ureña and Villa Blanca neighborhoods and plans to conduct ten trainings on risk management and community resilience targeting key stakeholders, including at-risk families, in the communities. ADRA will also work with community members to develop community risk management plans.

## **EL SALVADOR — COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL RISK REDUCTION**

*Asociación de Scouts de El Salvador* is strengthening disaster preparedness in three schools and two community disaster mitigation and response committees in Colonia Guatemala, Guatemala, and Tutunichapa communities in San Salvador Municipality. The program includes a vulnerability analysis self-assessment, development of a school DRR plan, and the purchase of basic equipment for school safety brigades and community leaders.

## **NICARAGUA — REDUCING RISK AROUND MASAYA VOLCANO**

*Fundación Nicaragüense para la Educación Popular y Ambiental* (FUNDEPAMB) is strengthening monitoring capacities and emergency response systems among communities located around Masaya Volcano, approximately 12 miles south of Nicaragua’s capital city of Managua. The foundation will provide training to 12 civil response teams and conduct an awareness campaign targeting the public and municipal governments to strengthen preparedness measures.

## **PANAMA — PILOTING A RAIN MONITORING AND FLOOD ALERT SYSTEM**

*Universidad Tecnológica de Panamá* is installing rain gauges in the Pacora River basin to feed real-time rainfall amounts into a mathematical model and hydraulic simulator to provide flood warnings to people in vulnerable areas along the river. The university is also developing an alert system for people with hearing and visual disabilities and will test the model for possible future implementation in other locations.

## **PARAGUAY — REDUCING BUSINESS VULNERABILITIES**

*Universidad Columbia del Paraguay* is working with hotel owners in San Bernardino to analyze disaster risk at their facilities, develop criteria and indicators for what constitutes a safe hotel, and create plans to mitigate vulnerabilities. University staff are also providing training to hotel staff in the basics of risk reduction and first aid.

## **SAINT LUCIA — RAINWATER HARVESTING FOR DISASTER RESPONSE**

The Saint Lucia Soufrière community disaster committee worked with community leaders to design and install rainwater harvesting systems at 10 sites that serve as emergency shelters in post-disaster situations. The project established a reliable supply of potable water for future shelter occupants. In addition, the project raised community awareness regarding DRR issues and actions to increase community- and household-level resilience.



*The 2017 small grant project in Saint Lucia provided rain water harvesting systems to 10 emergency shelters the town of Soufrière.*