

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

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA



With USAID/OFDA support, SP has been helping approximately 1,700 fishers and market vendors in Dominica to get back on their feet after Hurricane Maria by repairing storm-damaged fishing cooperatives. *Photo courtesy of SP*

USAID/OFDA Helps Restore Fishery Livelihoods in Hurricane-Hit Dominica

In September 2017, Hurricane Maria passed across Dominica with winds that reached 175 miles per hour, destroying homes and infrastructure and devastating the local economy. The fishing industry, which employs approximately 2,200 people, was particularly affected, as the storm severely damaged fishing cooperative buildings, tools, and boats. According to assessments conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica (GoCD), and Samaritan's Purse (SP), the hurricane affected the livelihoods of the vast majority of families who depend on the fishing industry, and forced the suspension of 40 percent of fishing-related jobs in Dominica.

“Maria just swept us out,” said Johnathan Alexander, a fisherman from Mahaut, a village on the west coast of Dominica with a population of nearly 2,400 people. “The sea rose, washing debris up against the cooperative’s building, and the river that runs through Mahaut flooded the interior, bringing streams of mud with it. From the roof to the inside of the fisheries’ building everything was damaged,” Alexander added.

With USAID/OFDA support, SP has been working in close coordination with the GoCD Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries Division to repair or replace hurricane-damaged infrastructure at fishing cooperatives across Dominica, improving food security on the island and helping approximately 1,700 fishers and market vendors to get back on their feet after Hurricane Maria. SP assistance includes the provision of materials and skilled labor to repair or replace damaged infrastructure, boat sheds, and small and large-capacity generators, which are used to power cooling systems for fish storage, ice machines, and water tanks. In addition, SP is helping the most vulnerable market vendors replace lost assets used to clean, store, and sell the fish locally.

“The restoration of the fishing industry is vital not only to restore livelihoods but also to stabilize food security in Dominica, where a vast majority of the island’s population relies on fish as a source of protein and a household staple,” noted USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor (RA) John Kimbrough. “The project aims to help repair each association’s infrastructure so that fishermen can recover” *Continues on page 2*

USAID/OFDA Helps Small Enterprises in Colombia Mitigate Disaster Risk

Natural disasters can have devastating effects on small enterprises—such as damaging infrastructure and stock, disabling key staff, and ruining equipment—ultimately impacting day-to-day activities and forcing the businesses to close. However, with proper planning and mitigation interventions, entrepreneurs can take steps to minimize the potential impact of a disaster and ensure their business continuity.

With nearly \$2 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 and 2018 funding, USAID/OFDA has been supporting Colombia’s National Merchants’ Federation (FENALCO) to support disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities in hazard-prone, low-income neighborhoods in the city of Medellín—the second most populated urban area in Colombia—by strengthening small businesses’ capacity to mitigate disaster risk and enhancing their neighborhood DRR leadership role.

The program, entitled “I Manage the Risk, I Strengthen My Business”, which will continue through 2020, aims to help 1,800 entrepreneurs reduce their business’ vulnerability to disasters by assisting them to identify and assess disaster risk,

Continues on page 2



FENALCO Antioquia Executive Director Sergio Soto congratulates the winner of “The Ideal Store” Contest, Marta Arroyabe. *Photo courtesy of FENALCO*

Small Companies in Colombia Continued from page 1



Program participants play an interactive game on how to identify and reduce disaster risks inside a store. Photo courtesy of FENALCO

create safer working spaces, increase their emergency preparedness and response capacity, and develop business continuity plans. In addition, the program intends to ensure the availability of economic resources to speed recovery after an emergency.

The program is helping improve the resilience of Colombian entrepreneurs like Jaime Bedoya, who restructured his hardware store “Depósito El Corazón”—located in Belencio neighborhood, Medellín—into a safer, structurally sound space. “When I opened my store, I thought that the roof was going to fall apart into small pieces, but I didn’t react. After the visit of a DRR expert from FENALCO, who taught me how to identify and manage my business’ risk, I decided to move to another space and transform my store into a stronger and safer space,” Bedoya said.

On October 17, FENALCO Antioquia was presented the “Premio InnovaCiudad Colombia 2018” award at the SmartCity Business Medellín Congress and Expo for the innovative project, which has featured the collaboration of Medellín’s Administrative Department for Disaster Risk Management (DAGR), Mayor Office, and Chamber of Commerce. Program activities included contests on “La Tienda Ideal” (The Ideal Store) and “Tendero Líder” (Shopkeeper Leader), interactive games to educate entrepreneurs on how to identify and reduce risks inside a store, and training on sustainable environmental management techniques for small business owners. In addition, the program has helped small companies develop early warning systems, including the use of alarms and signposting.

“The strengthening of small businesses to plan for and mitigate disaster risk is critical to the ability of a community to bounce back after a disaster,” commented USAID/OFDA RA Phil Gelman. “This project will help strengthen the DRR capacities of hundreds of entrepreneurs in Colombia, reducing their vulnerabilities to disasters.”

Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Tel: +(506) 2290-4133
Email: ofdalac@ofda.gov
Internet: www.usaid.gov



Lina brought only what she could carry when she fled to Brazil from her native Venezuela. To learn more about how USAID is helping her and thousands more Venezuelans who have fled their country’s deepening crisis, please see USAID Photo Story titled: [10 Mangoes and Some Water: One Venezuelan Woman’s Journey to Brazil.](#)

Photo by Schneyder Mendoza, AFP

Fishery Livelihoods in Dominica Continued from page 1

access to an adequate facility to store and process the fish for local consumption and exportation, and repair their boats and fishing equipment,” Kimbrough said.

“The fisher-folk we have been working alongside have had a difficult year after the storm, but their resilience and hope inspire us to continue working to achieve results,” SP Program Manager Denis Okumu said.

Last month, with USAID/OFDA funding, SP completed reconstruction works at the Mahaut Fishing Cooperative. This cooperative produces more than 1 million Eastern Caribbean dollars (US \$370,000) worth of fish annually, representing an important part of the village’s economy, according to SP.

“With the building repaired, the fishing industry in Mahaut is flourishing again. Fisher-folks can now harvest, store, and sell enough fish to support their families. It is as if life has returned to the Mahaut fishery. I send a great thank you; we appreciate what you did for us,” Alexander said.

Rosiana John Baptist, a fisherwoman who owns and operates a family business in Mahaut said, “To tell you the truth, Hurricane Maria took away our business. Without the help of SP and USAID/OFDA, it would have likely taken us years to return to normal operations.”

As of mid-October, SP had completed reconstruction works at the Mahaut and Layou fishing cooperatives on the western coast of Dominica, and was in the process of repairing eight more structures around the island, in the villages of Dublanc, Bioche, San Sauveur, Salisbury, Anse de Mai, Capuchin, Newtown, and Fond St. Jean.

Cumulatively, the U.S. Government has provided more than \$22.5 million in FY 2017–2018 funding to assist populations in the Caribbean affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017.



With a newly repaired building, Mahaut Fishing Cooperative members can harvest, store, and sell fish again. Photo courtesy of SP