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

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

USAID/OFDA Supports Urban Disaster Risk Reduction in Peru

Recognizing that a higher percentage of people live in cities in the Latin American region than anywhere else in the world, USAID/OFDA began increasing support for urban-oriented disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities in the region in 2012. Since then, USAID/OFDA's urban DRR portfolio has adopted a flexible approach to programming in areas where the greatest concentration of people live and work.

In Peru, USAID/OFDA-supported partners are implementing DRR projects in several urban neighborhoods within the capital city of Lima to enhance community safety and emergency preparedness, with the added benefit of increasing economic resilience, providing recreational spaces, and beautifying communities.

In 2011, the Government of Peru established the National Disaster Risk Management System (SINAGERD) to give regional and municipal governments the responsibility for implementing DRR in their jurisdictions. Under SINAGERD's authority, municipal governments establish an internal working group to mainstream DRR efforts, as well as a civil defense structure to oversee disaster preparedness and response planning. In addition, the central government created a number of financial incentives to support municipalities' efforts to expand DRR activities. SINAGERD's framework and the existence of earmarked resources make Peru's legal structure for DRR unique in the Americas.

In late 2014, USAID/OFDA funded DRR projects in three Lima districts to assist municipal authorities and civil society to meet SINAGERD's requirements to receive government DRR funding.. The projects' overarching objective is to model DRR approaches and interventions that municipal authorities can replicate in other highly vulnerable neighborhoods in Lima. Implemented by Save the Children in the Carabayllo District, Cooperazione Internazionale in the Rímac District, and the Center for Disaster Studies and Prevention (PREDES) in the Independencia District, USAID/OFDA projects aim to strengthen the capacities of municipal authorities and neighborhood organizations to operate within the SINAGERD framework and available financing mechanisms through sustainable participatory planning processes.

Residents of Independencia, Peru, work on the hillside above their community as part of the DRR reforestation project to stabilize the hillside. *Photo courtesy of PREDES*

A Participant of the DRR program shares information on actions residents can take to reduce risks in their communities. *Photo courtesy of PREDES*

In Independencia, PREDES reforested the district's barren hillsides, which reduced landslide risk by stabilizing loose soils on steep slopes, beautified the area, and enabled the district to slow the indiscriminate, unregulated expansion of informal settlements on hillsides. In addition, Independencia is seeking to convert newly forested areas into recreation sites, which authorities expect will generate increased economic opportunities for neighborhood residents.

Save the Children's work in Carabayllo focused on economic development initiatives consistent with DRR, including appropriate zoning and land use considerations and wider access to training in safe production and commercial practices. The project trained market vendors on safe food handling, risks associated with sub-standard electrical connections, and the importance of clearly marked escape routes and fire safety precautions in

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markets. As

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a result, vendors at the El Establo market who took the training collectively invested approximately $20,000 in their 176-stall market to repave the entrances and exits; build handicap access; install fire extinguishers and emergency exit signs; and implement emergency evacuation plans and drills. The improvements resulted not only in a safer market, but a much more pleasant shopping environment.

In Rímac District, Cooperazione Internazionale worked closely with the district government to create a database with 69 layers of geo-referenced information that district planners can apply interactively for DRR planning and decision-making. The database is compatible with the database of the National Center for the Prevention of Disasters (CENEPRED), Peru's national agency in charge of DRR. Compatibility ensures that Rímac authorities can upload information to, or download data from, CENEPRED's database. The system developed for Rímac will serve as the model for the rest of the country, with CENEPRED supporting municipalities in improving their data management capacities.

For USAID/OFDA, these three urban DRR projects in Lima demonstrate that a "one size fits all" approach does not exist when it comes to changing the manner in which municipal authorities incorporate DRR into their governance strategy.

USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor Phil Gelman, who helps oversee USAID/OFDA's urban DRR portfolio, commented, "It is interesting to see how, despite the fact that the three projects are all promoting institutionalization of the same legal framework, each one has identified a different leverage point for engagement."

The project planted more than 300 trees as an environmental and risk reduction measure to stabilize the soil, create a rock fall damper, and provide a measure of urban control. *Photo courtesy of PREDES*

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Floodwaters impacted residents in Lambayeque, Peru. Photo by *Giuliana García, USAID/OFDA*

USAID/OFDA Provides Humanitarian Assistance to Communities Affected by Flooding in Peru

Heavy rainfall in Peru since February has resulted in the worst flooding of the last two decades, with rivers overflowing and landslides reported in 24 of Peru's 25 regions. As of March 30, the Government of Peru (GoP) National Civil Defense Institute (INDECI) had reported that, since December 2016, torrential rains had resulted in the deaths of 98 people, with 20 others reported missing; destroyed or severely damaged more than 30,000 homes; and displaced approximately 133,000 people. Additionally, flooding and landslides have severely impacted infrastructure across much of the country, destroying more than 220 pedestrian and vehicle bridges and thousands of kilometers of highways and rural roads, isolating many communities.

The agriculture sector has also been adversely affected, with heavy precipitation causing flooding, mudslides, and hailstorms that have destroyed approximately 19,000 hectares of croplands and more than 770 km of irrigation canals, according to INDECI.

In response to the widespread humanitarian impact, USAID/OFDA has approved $500,000 in funding to non-governmental organization (NGO) partners, including $200,000 to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), to help fund an initial $800,000 emergency appeal to meet humanitarian needs related to health care, WASH, and epidemiological surveillance, $150,000 to CARE/Peru, $100,000 to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), and $50,000 to Save the Children to distribute non-food relief supplies and meet WASH needs in affected communities.

"This is certainly the most damaging flooding that I have witnessed in Peru in my 14 years working in the region. Forecasts for continued heavy rainfall for several more weeks, will likely aggravate the current flooding. At this moment, we are working closely with local and national authorities to help assess damages, identify priority needs, and help coordinate the USG response," reported USAID/OFDA Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan.

The USAID/OFDA-supported Center for International Disaster Information recommends ways to help those affected by the disaster in Peru. Visit: **www.cidi.org**

Learn how to help

USAID/OFDA staff meets with community leaders to discuss the response effort. *Photo by Dante Torres, USAID/OFDA*