



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 Carlos Córdova, USAID/OFDA

A member of the San Rafael Volunteer Forest Firefighter Brigade accepts the top prize for performance in Paraguay's First National Forest Firefighter Brigade Mobilization Exercise, held in 2009 with USAID/OFDA support.

Paraguay Focuses on Preparedness

Since 2001, USAID/OFDA's Regional Disaster Assistance Program (RDAP) has provided training and technical assistance to the Government of Paraguay (GoP) to help strengthen national disaster risk management capabilities and response preparedness.

RDAP projects in Paraguay have centered on developing institutional capacities, especially those of the GoP National Emergency Secretariat (SEN), Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Education and Culture, in addition to the Paraguayan Red Cross, fire departments, and police. Efforts have focused on strengthening post-disas-

ter damage evaluation and needs analysis (DANA), forest fire prevention and control, incident command system (ICS) implementation, school safety, and disaster risk reduction (DRR).

USAID/OFDA works closely with the Paraguay Training Network for Emergencies and Disasters (widely referred to as La RED), which facilitates cooperation and pools resources among emergency response organizations whose training and capacity-building needs are often bigger than their budgets.

The training network, which is **Continued on page 2**

Staff from Asunción Municipality, Paraguay, receive a USAID/OFDA course on implementing the ICS during emergency response operations.



Photo by Carlos Córdova, USAID/OFDA

DISASTER RESPONSE

Helping Flood-Affected Families in Paraguay's Chaco Region

Heavy rains and extensive flooding in early 2012 affected approximately 80,000 people in Boquerón, Presidente Hayes, and Alto Paraguay departments in the Chaco Region of Paraguay.

The flooding damaged or destroyed thousands of homes, rendered many roads impassable, and adversely affected agriculture, health, and education services. The Chaco Region is a vast, sparsely populated, semi-arid region devoted largely to cattle raising; the majority of the flood-affected population were indigenous people who worked as hired labor in the cattle industry.

As floodwaters receded in April and May, **Continued on page 2**



Photo courtesy of ADRA

Flood-affected families in Presidente Hayes receive USAID/OFDA-funded mattresses, mosquito nets, and cleaning supplies.

DISASTER RESPONSE

USAID/OFDA Assists Paraguay with Floods, Fire, and Drought

Since 1990, USAID/OFDA has provided more than \$1.6 million in humanitarian assistance to Paraguay in response to disasters including floods, fire, drought, storms, and extreme cold.

In Paraguay, USAID/OFDA responds primarily to flooding, followed by fire and drought emergencies. USAID/OFDA's largest response in Paraguay to date was to the floods in the Chaco Region in early 2012, with nearly \$750,000 in assistance provided (see related article above). The second-largest response came in 2007, when more than 5,000 fires burned across the country and USAID/OFDA provided \$344,200 for emergency relief efforts and technical assistance to Paraguayan firefighters.

USAID/OFDA Helps Paraguay with DRR

Continued from page 1

run by volunteers, offers USAID/OFDA-developed disaster management courses in DANA, basic firefighting techniques, advanced life support, and school safety.

The GoP Ministry of Education and Culture also collaborates with USAID/OFDA to promote nationwide school safety and disaster risk management in education. With USAID/OFDA technical assistance, in late 2011 Paraguay became the first country in South America to approve a national plan for disaster risk management in the education sector.

USAID/OFDA disaster risk management specialist Manuel Ramirez, who helped education officials develop the National Education Plan for Risk Management, explained that first responders, hazard experts, and other national stakeholders helped draft the plan.

"The plan has strengthened inter-institutional coordination for promoting education in disaster risk management. The Ministry of Education has taken greater responsibility in the area of teacher trainings, as well as incorporating DRR themes into study programs. The plan has also served as a reference for SEN to develop a strategy for its contributions to DRR activities in the nation's schools," Ramirez indicated.

Helping Flood-Affected Families in Paraguay

Continued from page 1

the GoP requested international assistance to help displaced families return to their communities.

In response, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$750,000 in humanitarian assistance to Paraguay, through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) for the local procurement of emergency relief supplies and shelter materials to assist with resettlement efforts.

ADRA immediately delivered emergency relief supplies, including mattresses, mosquito nets, and cleaning supplies, to 650 families in the most severely affected communities.

In the months that followed, ADRA coordinated closely with SEN and USAID/OFDA to design and, using locally procured materials, begin building transitional shelters to benefit approximately 3,150 people.



Photo by Carlos Córdova, USAID/OFDA

ADRA Field Coordinator Rubén Streulli (left) talks to carpenters inside a USAID/OFDA-supported transitional shelter under construction in Nueva Promesa, Tte. Irala Fernández Municipality, Presidente Hayes Department, in response to the early 2012 flooding.

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



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

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Helping to Strengthen Fire Management

Wildfires are common occurrences in Paraguay, where hot, dry conditions coexist with the practice of using fire to clear wooded areas for agriculture.

Since 2001, USAID/OFDA has provided training and technical assistance to Paraguay's Volunteer Firefighters Corps and other response agencies to strengthen forest fire management.

Following the fire emergency in 2007, USAID/OFDA helped the GoP and national emergency agencies identify and address weaknesses in the existing system and facilitated coordination among different government ministries, the private sector, and academia. As a result of these efforts, a comprehensive National Plan for Integrated Fire Management is now in effect in Paraguay.

USAID/OFDA, in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service, also donated essential firefighting tools, communications equipment, and protective gear to Paraguayan firefighters. USAID/OFDA has also supported mobilization exercises for firefighters across the country to share experiences, learn the latest techniques, and improve coordination mechanisms.



Paraguayan firefighters receive USAID/OFDA-funded firefighting equipment in 2007.

Photo courtesy of the U.S. Embassy in Paraguay

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Small Grant Supports DRR in Education

With funding from the RDAP Small Grant Program, the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science, and Culture (OEI) is working with the Dr. Raúl Peña Higher Education Institute (ISE) in Asunción, Paraguay, to promote disaster risk management in education.

ISE specializes in graduate and post-graduate degree programs for future education professionals, including institutional managers, curriculum developers, and teachers.

As part of the USAID/OFDA-supported project, launched in November 2012, ISE will implement DRR strategies to improve campus safety, incorporate disaster management themes into curricula, foster DRR activities in schools where ISE students perform teaching internships, and engage in community outreach programs promoting risk management.

The \$30,000 project will conclude in November 2013.



From left, representatives from OEI, ISE, and USAID/OFDA sign the small grant agreement in November 2012.

Photo courtesy of ISE