



Project CITIES PREPARED AND ALERT FOR SEISMIC RISK IN EASTERN CUBA

CARE and OXFAM have humanitarian response programs in place and contributed with donations in response to Hurricane Sandy (2012), and other disaster situations in eastern Cuba. They also have a regional support group (CARE Emergency Group and OXFAM Regional Humanitarian Group) for technical assistance in cases of disaster and humanitarian response, and risk reduction mainstreaming in development programs (mainly food production). These groups also provide training, tools, and South-South exchange within their networks.

The work of CARE and OXFAM in eastern Cuba (Santiago de Cuba, Guantanamo, Holguin and Granma) and their operation model in collaboration with local partners, has led to good partnerships with municipal and provincial governments, the Civil Defense, and public and academic institutions in the eastern region. This work identifies the need to further strengthen local capacity and disaster preparedness in coordination with the Civil Defense system and the actors involved at different levels. Lessons learned from previous actions of CARE and OXFAM in this field in the region and the country are the bases for implementing the project.

Attention will be paid specifically to the techniques and management experiences accumulated and to the tools developed and implemented during the preceding DIPECHO, by CARE as a pilot program in the 3 Peoples' Councils with the highest seismic vulnerability in Santiago de Cuba.

Gender equality

A singular approach of the project is its inclusive risk management approach (including persons with disabilities and gender) for which it will receive technical assistance from Handicap International due to the value add it offers based on its expertise in inclusivity.

It will provide tools, capacity building and methodology to train mainly technicians from the University of Oriente and CENAIS, as well as facilitators and volunteers from the Cuban Red Cross and PWD Associations in the preparation of seismic awareness materials for persons with disabilities.

The inclusion of the Red Cross in community work and Disability Associations, are significant elements in the approach and in making it sustainable.

Situation

Although in recent years, hurricanes have been hitting the south-eastern region of Cuba (where the Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo provinces are located), this area stands out as the area with the highest seismic recurrence hazard, due to the frequency of earthquakes of high magnitude and intensity compared to the rest of the country.

Following the implementation of the first DIPECHO related to this topic and to lessons learned through the interaction with different local actors and the Civil Defense system, the following seismic earthquake risk management needs were recognized, aligned line with the priorities listed in the Cuba Country Document and validated as still persistent:

- Weaknesses of the Seismic Monitoring and Warning System for more effective decision making;
- Insufficient capacity of decision makers and technicians for inclusive seismic risk management;
- Insufficient response capacity in the region in the event of an earthquake;
- Seismic risk awareness and preparedness of the general population is still low;
- Lack of knowledge for implementing inclusive approaches that recognize the different needs of women and persons with disabilities (PWD) during seismic response.

What would CARE and its partners like to achieve?

The proposal is aimed at strengthening the early seismic warning system in Cuba, particularly in the eastern region, according to the priorities identified by the Cuban Government. It focuses on three cities vulnerable to earthquakes (Santiago de Cuba, Guantanamo and Baracoa) and will contribute to enhance their resilience. The key areas of work are:

- Strengthen the early seismic warning system by increasing seismic risk analysis and monitoring capacity with the completion of a network of seismological stations in the south-eastern part of Cuba and the setting up a network of accelerometers in the

cities of Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo. This will facilitate accurate real-time information on vulnerability and seismic movements, and will favor decision-making within the Early Warning System led by the Civil Defense in Cuba.

- Strengthen and ensure consolidation of the knowledge of local authorities and technicians on earthquake risk management, focusing on raising seismic risk awareness and increasing knowledge based on a multi-risk approach. A diploma course will be created on Comprehensive Risk Management and Community Resilience, with the support of the University of Oriente, which will insert a PWD approach and gender mainstreaming in all courses with the support of Handicap International. Exchanges will continue with other decision-makers and technical teams from the eastern and central regions of Cuba, and with the Caribbean.

- Strengthen the seismic response capacity of stakeholders who are part of the Cuban Civil Defense system, the Red Cross and the fire department, so that their response will meet the needs of different population groups, particularly women and persons with disabilities (PWD). Also included is the pre-positioning of seismic emergency response goods in that region.

- Create greater resilience of women, men, children and PWD by increasing their awareness of seismic risk and being better prepared to face it. In this case we will have the support of the Cuban Red Cross and CITMA's communication platform for community awareness. The materials used, now improved with a inclusive seismic risk management approach, will be those prepared during the previous DIPECHO and validated by the target groups: seismic walking games, board games and coloring books for children, awareness leaflets for achieving preparedness (before, during and after), first aid leaflets, information fliers with recommendations for PWD, community posters, TV and radio spots; also included are the use of other methods obtained as a result of good practices in the region, which will be contributed basically by OXFAM and Handicap International.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Starting date: May, 2015

Ending date: October, 2016

Donors: Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Division
ECHO-Caribbean, CARE France and Oxfam Belgium

Local Partner: CENAIS - National Center for
Seismological Research

Beneficiaries: 80,321 persons (40,964 women and
1,23 organizations