BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

USAID/OFDA FISCAL YEAR 2010 SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS SECTOR ACTIVITIES IN HAITI

OVERVIEW

EMERGENCY SHELTER

The USAID shelter and settlements sector strategy, issued on January 25, influenced the development of a Shelter Cluster strategy, released on February 10, which guided initial post-earthquake shelter interventions. The strategy prioritized the provision of emergency shelter materials in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake in the form of plastic sheeting and fixing materials to displaced individuals. Shelter Cluster partners, supported in part with USAID/OFDA-provided relief supplies, achieved the goal of providing an estimated 300,000 households with some form of basic shelter assistance, primarily two pieces of plastic sheeting, by May 1.

Beneficiaries of a USAID/OFDA partner CHF International project construct transitional shelters. (Photo: CHF International)

HOST FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, approximately 140,000 families left affected areas to reside almost exclusively with friends and families in departments that were not directly impacted by the disaster, according to the Government of Haiti (GoH). USAID/OFDA supports targeted assistance, including livelihood interventions, for host families and displaced persons residing with host families to alleviate the strain that accommodating extra individuals places on host families and communities and to encourage displaced persons not to return to previously overpopulated earthquake-affected areas.

HABITABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND REPAIRS

A number of USAID/OFDA partners are conducting habitability assessments of buildings in affected areas to identify safe houses for displaced person return. Through the provision of tools and technical expertise, partners are also supporting repairs to damaged houses that can be made safe for habitation following rehabilitation. Initial work indicates that families assisted in this way are willing to return to safe shelter.

TRANSITIONAL SHELTER

Transitional shelter is post-disaster shelter designed to jump-start or accelerate recovery and reconstruction by re-engaging affected populations in the incremental and long-term housing development process present in nearly all countries where USAID/OFDA deploys. To achieve this, transitional shelter features a mix of both emergency shelter inputs like plastic sheeting and more permanent materials. Transitional shelter is more than tents or tarps—conventional symbols of emergency shelter—but less than a permanent house. See below for more detailed information on transitional shelter.

CURRENT AWARDS

As of July 1, USAID/OFDA had provided nearly $80 million to partners implementing shelter and settlements sector programs, including provision of transitional shelters and emergency shelter materials, as well as other safe shelter activities, such as habitability assessments and host family support. The programs target more than 500,000 beneficiaries with transitional shelter, repair, assessment, and hosting activities, and another 600,000 beneficiaries through the distribution of plastic sheeting for emergency shelter. USAID/OFDA programs include the following:

With nearly **$4 million** in USAID/OFDA support, the **Adventist Development and Relief Agency** is providing materials and technical guidance for transitional shelter construction to benefit an estimated 2,500 households in Carrefour municipality, West Department.

With more than **$3.2 million** in USAID/OFDA support, the **American Refugee Committee** is providing emergency and transitional shelters and improving camp management and design for 2,400 households in Fonds Parisien and Delmas municipalities, metropolitan Port-au-Prince.

With nearly **$2.4 million** in USAID/OFDA support, the **Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development** is providing materials and technical guidance to construct approximately transitional shelters for 4,000 beneficiary households in Léogâne, Gressier, Petit Goâve, and Grand Goâve.

USAID/OFDA has provided nearly **$19.3 million** to **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)** to provide emergency shelter materials and shelter kits, as well as to implement cash-for-work activities in transitional shelter construction and in debris removal to clear land for transitional shelters. CRS plans to train 400 teams of skilled laborers to assist 8,000 affected families in building transitional shelters. CRS is also acting as camp manager at the Pétion-Ville Club spontaneous settlement.

USAID/OFDA has provided more than **$9.1 million** to **CHF International** for transitional shelter training and construction—including through cash for work—provision of transitional shelter kits, infrastructure rehabilitation, and host family support. CHF International plans to provide transitional shelters to 6,040 vulnerable households.

With more than **$1.2 million** in USAID/OFDA support, the **Center for International Studies and Cooperation** is providing materials and technical support to host families and displaced persons for improving or expanding transitional shelters and existing houses in Artibonite Department and constructing community emergency evacuation centers, with 5,000 targeted beneficiary households.

With more than **$800,000** in USAID/OFDA support, **Food for the Hungry** is providing emergency and transitional shelter materials and construction training, as well as cash-for-work in debris removal to clear land for shelter construction, to benefit a total of 40,000 households.

USAID/OFDA has provided nearly **$6 million** to **GOAL** to provide transitional shelters to approximately 4,000 affected households in Turgeau and Canape Vert, metropolitan Port-au-Prince.

USAID/OFDA has provided nearly **$3 million** to **Habitat for Humanity** for capacity building for GoH officials to address shelter and settlements planning needs, as well as improving access to safe shelter through training for homeowners and construction professionals.

USAID/OFDA has provided nearly **$2.5 million** to **International Relief and Development** to provide transitional shelters to approximately 3,500 earthquake-affected families in rural Léogâne, as well as to support retrofitting for damaged houses.

With more than **$6.8 million** in USAID/OFDA support, **Medair/SWI** is supporting repairs to damaged houses in the Southeast Department, as well as the provision of transitional shelter materials and training for households to upgrade transitional shelters to seismic- and hurricane-resistant standards. Medair/SWI expects the shelter program to benefit 5,400 families.

With more than **$7.5 million** in USAID/ODFA support, **Mercy Corps** is providing temporary employment through cash-for-work activities for 11,000 displaced and host families to clear land for shelter construction in Hinche and Mirebalais municipalities, Center Department.

With more than **$4.8 million** in USAID/OFDA support, the **Pan American Development Foundation** will conduct 50,000 habitability assessments as part of an existing program, and make minor repairs to benefit 7,000 households.

USAID/OFDA has provided more than **$2 million** to **Premiere Urgence** to provide emergency shelter materials to 3,000 earthquake-affected families and transitional shelter assistance to 250 affected households in Martissant, metropolitan Port-au-Prince.

Information on USAID/OFDA Shelter and Settlements sector activities is available at:
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/sectors/shelter.html

USAID/OFDA has provided **$1.5 million** to the **U.N. Human Settlements Program (UN HABITAT)** to conduct habitability assessments for the reoccupation of structurally safe houses and to support the GoH in identifying suitable land for the construction of transitional shelters.

USAID/OFDA has provided more than **$11.5 million** to **World Vision** for the provision of 5,000 transitional shelters, including through rubble clearing and salvaging, as well as disaster risk reduction training and retrofitting assistance to affected individuals engaged in self-recovery measures to benefit displaced individuals in Pétion-Ville, metropolitan Port-au-Prince.

With nearly **$1.6 million** in USAID/OFDA support, **World Concern Development Organization** is implementing a shelter program that includes household repairs, rubble removal on the plots of destroyed houses, improvements to emergency shelters, and transitional shelter construction to benefit 2,000 families in Delmas municipality, metropolitan Port-au-Prince.

TRANSITIONAL SHELTER: A KEY MEANS OF ACCELERATING RECOVERY

In Haiti, USAID/OFDA has provided funding for transitional shelter construction, with current funded projects targeting an estimated 47,500 households (nearly 240,000 people). Transitional shelters are designed for resistance to hurricane-force winds, seismic risks, and heavy rainfall, with all USAID/OFDA-funded non-governmental organization designs meeting technical specifications and complying with Sphere Project guidelines, which set a minimum living space of 17.5 square meters for a family of five. Partners working in small and irregularly shaped sites may use smaller shelters. Many transitional shelter designs may be built in two to three days and remain standing for three or more years.

In addition, USAID/OFDA partners are providing shelter kits comprising plastic sheeting, rope, fixing hardware, a mosquito net, blankets, and bed sheets, as well retrofitting assistance to households that have engaged in self-recovery but may require small expansions of space and minor bracing upgrades to create a more disaster-resistant and Sphere Project-compliant shelter. That "safe shelter on safe sites" emphasis has proven successful in mitigating the effects of future hazards in other post-disaster situations, most recently in post-earthquake responses in Indonesia (2009), Peru (2007), Indonesia (2006), and Pakistan (2005).

TRANSITIONAL SHELTER CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Land availability and land tenure issues have hindered the construction of transitional shelters in Haiti following the January 12 earthquake. Limited information exists on the supply of vacant and underutilized land, and conventional means of accessing land will likely yield limited results. Those constraints suggest the need for a concerted effort to identify GoH, Diaspora, religious, and private sector land for the development of land sharing agreements to increase the supply of land for shelter, perhaps through agreements linked to rubble removal. In addition, the large proportion of displaced persons who rented property prior to the earthquake poses challenges, as the individuals do not own land where shelter could be located and, in some cases, landowners have decided not to rebuild rented houses.

USAID/OFDA partners are addressing those issues using a neighborhoods-based approach, identifying families wanting to depart spontaneous settlements for neighborhood shelter sites and encouraging nearby landowners to allow transitional shelter construction on their plots. Partners are increasing land availability through rubble removal activities, as well as employing less formal means of clarifying land ownership by requesting verification from neighbors and local officials to ascertain prior land occupancy, as many individuals lack formal titles or legally documented access to land. Finally, USAID/OFDA is considering further promotion of transitional shelter through support of Diaspora planning, architecture, and engineering professionals to assist both implementing partners and the GoH to formulate neighborhood-level plans that can facilitate increased shelter production in new and innovative ways.

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