



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

GUATEMALA - Displaced Persons

Date: July 1, 1982 (FY 82)

Location: Guatemalan highlands and Jalpatagua (near the Salvadorean border)

No. Dead: None

No. Affected: 3,766

Damage: Depletion of emergency construction supplies

The Disaster

Months of civil strife in the Guatemalan highlands caused approximately 250,000 people to flee their homes. Many of them had neither food nor shelter. Throughout the spring and summer of 1982, the National Reconstruction Committee of the Guatemalan government provided construction materials, such as sheet metal nails and wooden supports, from its stockpile and private donations. By July, however, the high demand for materials had exhausted the supply and 512 families (3,072 people) remained without shelter. The onset of a delayed rainy season made the housing shortage even more acute.

An earthquake off the coast of El Salvador on June 18 further compounded the emergency shelter problem. This earthquake severely damaged the town of Jalpatagua, situated near the Salvadorean border. The destruction left 132 families (694 persons) or 42% of the population, homeless. Though temporary housing in tents and municipal buildings was arranged and food supplies were provided by the National Emergency Committee, heavy rains in the area created the need to obtain more substantial shelter.

GUATEMALA - Displaced Persons

Action Taken by the Government of Guatemala (GOG)

To meet the emergency needs of the displaced persons, a food for work program was sponsored by the World Food Program while the National Reconstruction Committee supplied shelter construction materials. By early summer, the overwhelming number of needy people caused the GOG's stockpile of building materials and tents to be depleted. On July 1, 1982, the GOG, through the Executive Director of the National Reconstruction Committee, officially requested the assistance of the U.S. government to meet minimum shelter requirements for the displaced persons.

Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government (USG)

In response to the GOG request, Ambassador Frederick L. Chapin determined that the lack of emergency shelter for displaced persons had reached disaster proportions. Accordingly, he used his Disaster Assistance Authority to donate \$25,000 to the relief effort. This was used for local purchase of such shelter materials as sheet metal, nails, and wooden supports. These supplies helped provide housing for 100 families.

TOTAL \$25,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

Berhorst Clinic, Partners of the Americas, and the Summer Institute of Linguistics - joined forces to draw up a plan of action to address the needs of displaced persons.

Gospel Outreach - designed a "Cities of Refuge" project to provide necessary housing, food, and medicines in three pilot villages (San Martin, Santa Cruz del Quiche, and Nebaj) on an emergency basis. This project was supported by members of various Christian organizations. The value was not reported.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

None reported.