

FINAL REPORT

Evaluation of USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance Grants (OFDA) to Private Voluntary Organizations for Humanitarian Assistance in Honduras in Response to Hurricane Mitch.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report is a programmatic evaluation of the 11 grants given by the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) to 7 Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) for humanitarian relief in Honduras in response to the Hurricane Mitch disaster. There were 7 initial grants of \$100,000 each, and then 4 larger follow-on grants. The grants focused primarily on immediate disaster relief, food, housing, water/sanitation, and health, but there was also an agricultural component. Overall, the OFDA grants were extremely successful, timely, and appropriate to the needs following Hurricane Mitch.

The 7 PVOs who had the grants used their already developed local networks to obtain effective results. Local governments demonstrated that they were capable of taking leadership roles. The immediate emergency needs for food, shelter, medicine, and health care were met adequately and in a timely manner. There was good overall cooperation among local communities and national and international organizations with almost no duplication of services.

USAID's uniformly rapid response in providing funding in the first phase facilitated the effective action of the PVOs. This rapid response generally continued in the second phase with the exception of CRS and more recently Save the Children where disbursements have taken up to a month. The OFDA funding helped with temporary shelter and (in the second phase of the grants) supported more long-term housing solutions – including about 3000 (planned) housing units. Effective action has been taken, although with some delays, towards repairing water and sanitation systems. Local health systems linked to the PVOs received grant support to help stave off epidemics and treat those affected by the disaster – with good results. There were no serious epidemics of disease after the disaster. Reconstruction projects (roads, schools) received some support, as did agriculture (tools, seeds). The Emergency Title II Food for Work program, although not directly supported by OFDA funds, worked synergistically with this project to produce very positive results.

There were logistical difficulties in the procurement and distribution of some materials. Skilled workers were hard to find. Not all mayors were leaders, but this project demonstrated the overwhelmingly positive impact of strong local networks and institutions. The positive response of local people and of communities to the post-Mitch rebuilding is frankly amazing. People are working – everywhere. The whole generally positive experience of having worked together in the face of disaster, of having seen tangible results, has brought a new positive “can-do” spirit to many Honduran communities, a spirit that is still alive and could be used to spark new change and development. They have enthusiasm and energy.

In addition to the cooperation shown by the villagers and city-dwellers throughout Honduras, the cooperation and coordination between the seven PVOs and with the larger PVO, NGO, and international cooperation community are remarkable. The consistent dissonant notes sounded in this regard by the PVOs had to do with the World Food Program (WFP), FHIS and, to a lesser extent, COPECO (in the south) and the central government.

The combination of materials and Food for Work seems to have been particularly potent in motivating people to action. It helped immensely that local networks, including PVOs, already were strong and functioning, and that local institutions, especially many mayors, took a leadership role. The OFDA funding was a key ingredient to the positive outcome of this project. Also of note is the very common situation of a combination of inputs from multiple sources in support of specific projects, especially water and housing projects.

However, Hurricane Mitch destroyed much infrastructure in Honduras, including cropland, agricultural development, businesses, and roads, and if the economic outlook of Honduras does not improve, unemployment will soar. Also, it will be highly unlikely that the self-confidence and the positive community spirit which came from the rebuilding efforts will be sustainable.

The successes, problems, lessons learned, areas for improvement, as well as short and long-term recommendations are covered in detail below (Sections V and VI). But, in brief, the major recommendations are:

- Provide major agricultural support immediately, especially with seeds for planting and the rebuilding of the agricultural infrastructure.
- Take advantage of the positive momentum, the current positive work spirit, to spur development; if this spirit dies, it may not be recoverable.
- Continue to strengthen local governments and the organizations of civil society at the local level.
- Encourage and expand community-based integrated maternal and child health
- Explore options for solving the housing problem
- Finish the work that has already been started, either in this project or in a follow-on

The specific activities and outcomes, along with individual comments, for each of the 7 PVOs working in this project are covered in individual Annexes (see Annexes 1-7 below).

II. BACKGROUND FOR EVALUATION:

USAID/Honduras awarded 11 OFDA grants to 7 PVOs for humanitarian assistance activities in Honduras in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in late October/early November 1998. Honduras experienced unprecedented destruction to its basic infrastructure, agricultural production, commercial and industrial entities, and water and sanitation systems, as well as the loss of thousands of lives and the destruction of tens of thousands of homes because of Hurricane Mitch's high winds, torrential rains, mudslides and flooding.

The 7 PVOs chosen for the project were Aldea Global (PAG), CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), HOPE, Save the Children (STC or ASCH), World Relief, and World Vision. Each of these PVOs was awarded an initial OFDA grant of \$100,000 in direct response to the disaster. Four of the 7 PVOs were later awarded follow-on OFDA grants of between \$232,000 and \$2,133,000 to carry out further relief activities which were/are scheduled to terminate between March 31, 1999 and July 31, 1999. The activities funded were in the areas of general disaster relief, food, housing, water/sanitation, health, agriculture, and, to a lesser degree, income generation, road and small bridge re-construction, and school reconstruction. The initial activities were mostly in the form of emergency disaster relief (food, shelter, clothing, water), whereas the follow-on grants were largely for reconstruction, rebuilding of infrastructure, and housing.

III. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION:

The objectives of this evaluation are to: (1) "evaluate progress to date, successes, obstacles, lessons learned, and areas for improvement" in these 11 OFDA grants; (2) "make recommendations for high priority activities, different approaches, and improved performance during the rest of the extended grant period;" and (3) "make recommendations for high priority follow-on public health activities within the manageable interest and comparative advantage of each PVO, if more [USAID] funds were to become available..." as well as suggestions for other non-health related follow-on activities.

Barry Smith started working on this evaluation on 3/19/99 and was joined by Robert LeBow from 3/22/99 to 4/3/99 and again from 5/5/99 to 5/8/99. During the course of this evaluation, the team (mostly individually but occasionally as a team) has:

- Had discussions with each of the 7 PVOs and USAID at the central level in Tegucigalpa
- Collected and reviewed reports from each of the 7 PVOs
- Developed a scope of work and a questionnaire for each of the 7 PVOs
- Administered and followed up on the questionnaires

- Carried out field visits (utilizing a total of 14 person-days of time) to the following sites:
 - *Aldea Global*: Siguatepeque, Concepcion, Los Anises, Meambar, Pueblo Nuevo, Las Lajas, La Libertad, Joya Quemada (all in Comayagua)
 - *CARE*: Rio Abajo, Nueva Esperanza, San Miguel, and a school (Tegucigalpa); Concepcion del Sur and La Libertad (Santa Barbara); Choluteca, La Trinidad, Yusguare, Marcovia and Namasigue (Choluteca)
 - *CRS*: Oropoli (El Paraiso); Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (Francisco Morazan); La Union, Salama, Silca (Olancho); San Francisco, Namasigue (Choluteca)
 - *HOPE*: Molino #1, El Chile CESAMO, destroyed barrios near river (Tegucigalpa)
 - *Save the Children*: San Lorenzo, La Puente, El Jobo, Pespire, Yusguare, San Isidro, Aldea El Ricon (Choluteca); Sabanagrande, Texiguat, Capulin, Barajana, Nueva Armenia (Francisco Morazan)
 - *World Relief*: Manchen barrio (Tegucigalpa)
 - *World Vision*: Choluteca, Las Cabezas, and El Trapiche (Choluteca)

Field visits were planned to the north as well, but were not carried out because we were informed by CARE and CRS that activities in that area were minimal in April because of delays in getting materials for construction and agriculture. The sites were chosen partly by the PVOs and also partly at random by the evaluators.

IV. FINDINGS/OUTPUTS TO DATE:

Our information on outputs is based on our field visits, our central and regional office visits to the 7 PVOs, and the responses to our questionnaire. We have included 7 Annexes (see Annexes 1-7) which describe in detail the outputs of each of the 7 PVOs, as well as our field notes (Annex 8). The interpretation – and comparison among the different PVOs – of their respective outputs is somewhat difficult to interpret because:

- The specific outputs, e.g., housing units or types of food distributed, are not equivalent among the PVOs
- The project is still in process for some of the PVOs, so financial data are not always comparable or up-to-date
- There may be some inconsistency in the data regarding money actually spent versus funds programmed for certain projects.
- It is often difficult to distinguish which specific outcomes can be attributed to OFDA funds, as projects often have had multiple sources of funding

We have divided the areas of outputs into 5 categories: food, housing, water/sanitation, health, and “other.”

1) FOOD:

Although we were asked not to go into great depth on food, the food efforts often formed an integral part of other efforts, especially with the Emergency Title II Food for Work (FFW) Program. Food, health care and shelter were the immediate post-Mitch concerns. Right after

Mitch, USAID, CARE and CRS met with World Food Program (WFP) to delineate areas of responsibility by municipality for food aid. Initially, food was supplied through direct food distribution with OFDA funded food purchases by CARE, PAG, World Relief and CRS. HOPE also used OFDA funds for food. Most of the OFDA-funded food was given out in the immediate post-hurricane disaster period, with the exception of World Relief, which continued distributing free food up to 3/31/99. It appears that almost 40% (about \$250,000) of the first group of 7 grants was used for direct food aid (see graph #1). The food distributed by HOPE, CARE and CRS was supplemental to new emergency PL 480, Title II food resources which became available in late November. That is, it consisted of coffee, sugar, salt, etc. Both PAG and World Relief provided basic grains as well as supplemental items.

The Food for Work (FFW) program, largely administered through CARE and CRS, did not receive direct OFDA funding support, but FFW did form an integral – and highly successful – part of supporting the other efforts (housing, water/sanitation, reconstruction) that were funded by OFDA. Without FFW, it is doubtful that the other programs in this project would have been as successful or would have enjoyed such strong community support.

In all cases, PVOs drew upon their existing community networks to carry out the food programs, both in the direct food aid and in the FFW support. We noted that FFW efforts were administered out of the mayors' offices in rural areas. We observed that FFW – CARE, STC, CRS, and PAG are using it extensively – was highly effective. FFW has allowed people to participate fully in a variety of reconstruction projects. OFDA funds were used to pay for cooking and eating utensils, most notably through CRS, CARE, World Vision, and HOPE (a total of about \$300,000) in both phases of the funding. On our field visits, we did observe the OFDA cooking utensils in use.

2) HOUSING:

Adequate housing in Honduras was a problem even before Mitch. Mitch made the problem much worse and much more acute, not only because of the destruction of many thousands of houses, but also because much land was rendered uninhabitable. In the weeks immediately after Mitch, several of the PVOs (notably HOPE, CARE, STC, and PAG) used OFDA funds to supply materials (such as sheet plastic) for shelters as well as essential items for people living in the shelters. HOPE concentrated its major efforts with OFDA funds on 23 shelters in the Tegucigalpa area and on facilitating the movement of the people in those 23 shelters to a macro shelter (Molino #1) when those people had to be moved from their temporary locations in schools.

More significant housing efforts under the OFDA grants, however, are happening in the second phase of the grants. Aldea Global, Save the Children, and CRS are directly funding housing projects with OFDA help by supplying materials for construction complemented by community-based labor supported by Food for Work (FFW), mostly provided through CARE and CRS. CARE is supplying FFW support for housing projects elsewhere as well. Each PVO has a different housing model, with different costs and different construction. Aldea Global's model is 33 square meters with compressed earth block walls, cement floors and galvanized roofing sheets, at an estimated materials cost of \$800-\$1000. Save the Children's model in the San

Lorenzo area is 25 square meters with a tile roof, a cement floor, and bahareque walls supplied by the owner, at a materials cost of \$333. In Oropoli, the CRS model house is 39 square meters, with cement/earth block walls, galvanized roofing, cement floors, and an attached latrine, with an estimated materials cost of \$1100. In contrast, the CRS “minimal roof” project in Colon, which has been delayed because of the late arrival of galvanized roofing materials – and which we did not visit because it had been delayed, seems another lower cost approach. In all the housing we observed, there were reinforced concrete corner posts. And in most – but not all – of the housing construction we saw, the labor was supplied by the community with FFW compensation.

We observed several OFDA-funded PAG, CRS, and ASCH housing projects in varying states of completion (see the Annexes, field notes and Graph #2 for details). And we visited housing projects like “Villa Linda Miller” near Tegucigalpa where CARE FFW incentives were being used for labor.

Housing activities are broadly divided into two groups: houses being repaired and houses being constructed. The activities reported (from our questionnaire) by the three OFDA-funded PVOs doing housing projects are as follows:

	<i>Houses Being Repaired</i>		
	<i>Planned</i>	<i>Finished</i>	<i>Still to be Completed</i>
<i>Save the Children (ASCH)</i>	212	83	129
<i>CRS</i>	3773	0	3773
<i>Aldea Global (PAG)</i>	391	?	391

	<i>New Houses Being Constructed</i>		
	<i>Planned</i>	<i>Finished</i>	<i>Still to be Completed</i>
<i>Save the Children (ASCH)</i>	1918	920	998
<i>CRS</i>	479	0	479
<i>Aldea Global (PAG)</i>	535	18	517(?)

The housing projects we observed that were near completion were some ASCH projects, such as in La Puente, near San Lorenzo. At other sites we visited (Oropoli, Los Anises, Las Lajas, Texiguat, Sabanagrande, Concepción Sur, Yusguare and sites around Tegucigalpa), we saw cleared land and the beginnings of a few houses. In Capulin, Sabanagrande (STC), all of the dozen houses were completed with stoves and cement floors. Aldea Global’s project in Los Anises had 7 houses either finished (2) or under construction (5) out of a total of 48 planned. At Oropoli (CRS), the land was cleared and plotted out with stakes, but only two foundations had been started for a projected 71 houses. Similar situations were seen in Concepción Sur (CARE), Joya Quemada (PAG), and Texiguat (STC). Only three of the PVOs have direct OFDA funding

for housing materials (Save the Children budgeted at \$661,671, CRS budgeted at \$518,826, and PAG with only \$30,000). However, OFDA funds from this grant were also being used at most housing sites in the form of basic tools from CARE (budgeted overall at \$800,000) and CRS (overall budget around \$250,000). FFW is also being used extensively for labor.

Except for some ASCH projects, housing projects appear to be in an early stage, often because of delays in obtaining materials or problems in acquiring suitable lands. The demand for housing is high, but there has been much difficulty obtaining land, especially when the original land became uninhabitable. Some mayors have been very proactive and, in those cases, finding land was easier and the projects themselves were running much more smoothly.

The housing projects are quite ambitious, mostly depending on community labor and good technical support. They are the largest remaining part of this project, and their completion has been delayed for a variety of reasons, necessitating (reasonable) extensions of the project termination date. Reasons for the delays include:

- Difficulty finding/purchasing adequate land
- Technical problems with equipment, e.g., the compressed earth block machines that PAG has been depending upon
- Inadequate supply of technicians, such as masons
- Delay in materials, such as the galvanized roofing in Colon (CRS)
- Logistical problems getting materials to difficult sites
- Adequate labor: there can be a lack of men to do the labor

Yet we have seen incredibly enthusiastic support by the people in communities for doing the housing projects. They are working with motivation and even pleasure. The projects are bringing the many diverse elements of communities together. From the formation of local development committees to the coordination of work among the various PVOs and local institutions, the work on the housing projects has, in some cases, been almost inspirational. It has also provided new opportunities for leadership and participation for women.

As can be seen from Graph #2, the least expensive houses (those of ASCH) have had the highest degree of completion (confirmed by what we actually saw on our field visits). The question can be raised whether the other projects are too ambitious, too costly, and thus more problematic. Perhaps relying on technologies that can break down is more risky. In fact, the PAG housing projects are now challenged to be able to complete goals by the target date of July 31 because their earth compressor capacity (which they are depending upon for the walls of their houses) has been cut drastically. They had 2 machines: one has been recalled by its renter, and the other broke down, was repaired locally, and now only functions at half capacity. Rainy season is almost here, and the bricks must be made of dry earth. Yet, each housing project must conform to local needs and demands as well as local resources. For example, the simple ASCH design would not be accepted in a peri-urban project in Tegucigalpa.

A very positive fall-out of the housing effort in the San Lorenzo area and elsewhere (we directly observed this phenomenon) has been the acceptance and delight (and subsequent demand) for cement floors where the floors had been earth before. This acceptance/demand for cement floors is a positive public health result of the project. Acceptance/demand for improved (Lorena style)

stoves which create less pollution and give better fuel economy has not yet been strong, although these stoves are part of most of the construction projects.

One positive factor that has helped create enthusiasm for the housing (and other) efforts has been the effective utilization of established community workers who were trained in previous (and ongoing) PVO projects. Agricultural and health “extension agents” were doing the coordination in rural areas of Comayagua where PAG had been working. In San Isidro (Choluteca), where ASCH was working, the agricultural volunteers in each village from the LUPE project (funded by USAID) were the key people doing coordination of housing, school construction, and the repair of water/sanitation systems.

3) WATER AND SANITATION

One of the most basic (and key) programs of the PVOs in Honduras – in the past as well as with this project - is repairing systems damaged/destroyed by the hurricane – has been water and sanitation. OFDA funds in this grant (see Graph #3) have been used by Save the Children (55 systems), Aldea Global (190 systems), CRS (146 systems), and World Vision (22 systems) to repair damaged systems. OFDA funds for water/sanitation were budgeted for all the projects at about \$750,000, and there were additional funds supplied – even to the same PVOs – from other sources for water/sanitation repairs. As of April 1999, the OFDA funded repairs of water systems stood at:

	<i>Water Systems Rehabilitation (OFDA-funded)</i>		
	<i>Total # of Systems</i>	<i>Repaired</i>	<i>In Process of Repair</i>
<i>Save the Children (ASCH)</i>	55	6	49
<i>CRS</i>	146	54	92
<i>Aldea Global (PAG)</i>	190	135	55
<i>Vision Mundial</i>	22	3	19

In addition, ASCH, CRS, and PAG are involved in providing/repairing latrines. In responding to the questionnaire, ASCH said it has constructed 750 latrines (with 1076 planned), CRS 214 (with 449 planned), and PAG 450 in process (with “many” planned). The PAG latrine construction is currently stalled for lack of funding. It is not clear what portion of the latrine work was paid for with OFDA funds. HOPE used OFDA funds to help provide water and sanitation for 23 shelters in Tegucigalpa.

Extensive repairs of the water/sanitation system are being undertaken throughout Honduras. SANAA has been active, and FHIS has given commitments, but frequently has seemed not to have kept its commitments. We observed that many water systems have been repaired, fully or (often) partially, but many repairs have been delayed, usually because of a delay in getting tubing and in finding trained masons to do the necessary masonry work. There was insufficient tubing in Honduras and much had to be imported from Mexico. Despite these delays, the

materials are being obtained and the work is in progress. There was a highly-qualified water/sanitation crew in place at Pespire with ASCH, but their work was being delayed by the factors mentioned above.

Immediately after the hurricane, PAG, World Vision and HOPE (with the support of OFDA funding) all participated in efforts to distribute packets of chlorine to families for the purification of water. This effort undoubtedly helped to avoid epidemics of diarrheal disease, although a mini-study by World Vision showed that only 40% of people who had the packets used them. For whatever reason – maybe health education campaigns had already successfully sensitized people to the dangers of unsafe water – there were no major outbreaks of cholera or other diarrheal diseases, a success story in itself.

4) HEALTH

Four of the PVOs (Aldea Global, Save the Children, HOPE, and World Vision) have had ongoing Child Survival projects in Honduras. These have included extensive health education programs with the use of community health volunteers and/or health extension agents or promotores. This established framework was key in the response to Mitch. They were ready for preventive measures during the emergency and for taking care of the illnesses that resulted from Mitch. In fact, the system worked so well (or maybe their populations had already been sensitized to using safe water, etc.) that there were in fact no serious epidemics after Mitch – a measure of success. An epidemiological study done by World Vision compared pre-Mitch morbidity with post-Mitch morbidity, and even found a decrease in infectious diseases!

Save the Children, Aldea Global, and World Vision were especially involved in bringing national and international medical brigades to the affected areas, and our impression was that these brigades were effective during the emergency. ASCH brought in 35 brigades, while World Vision and Aldea Global each brought in 12. OFDA funding helped with the brigades. Some brigades will continue to come. There doesn't seem to have been a shortage of medications, during the emergency or now. Some OFDA funds were used for medicines in the first stage, but many other organizations donated medicines, usually appropriate ones – and mostly manufactured in Honduras. We observed adequate medicines in Meambar, La Libertad, Las Lajas (all in Comayagua) and at El Chile CESAMO in Tegucigalpa.

In the area of mental health, especially with stress related to the disaster, there were some organized efforts made by HOPE and World Vision, and it was generally acknowledged that more efforts were needed in this area. There were some OFDA funds devoted to vector control. World Vision reported that it had sprayed 5202 homes. We were told there were only a few isolated cases of malaria and dengue. There was no outbreak of cholera. Diarrheal disease was not a significant problem. There was some temporary increase in respiratory infections, skin diseases and conjunctivitis. There was good coordination with the Ministry of Health, although most health activities took place (and were planned) at the local or regional level. We directly observed MOH benefit from OFDA funds in (1) HOPE's involvement with the rehabilitation of the El Chile CESAMO in Tegucigalpa; (2) rehabilitation of the San Lorenzo hospital with Save the Children; (3) expansion and /or rehabilitation of the Meambar and Las Lajas health centers

with the help of PAG and FFW and in the physician support being provided by PAG in La Libertad.

The value of local networks and already trained health promoters or agents at the local level was clearly demonstrated in the aftermath of Mitch. The PVOs' established presence in the communities probably played a key role in the avoidance of epidemics and in the ability to meet the acute health needs of the affected communities.

5) OTHER ACTIVITIES

Some other areas that were helped by OFDA funding include (1) income generation; (2) agriculture; (3) school reconstruction; (4) general cleaning and reconstruction; (5) the repair of small bridges; and (6) road reconstruction. These were each identified as an area of concern and/or expertise by one or more of the PVOs receiving the OFDA grants. Some OFDA funds were used to support HOPE's ongoing program in women's micro-enterprise loans. CARE had the largest amount of general agriculture-based funds from the grants: seeds budgeted at \$281,250 and agricultural tools at \$468,750 (25,000 sets). We did see some of these efforts being carried out, notably in Aldea's projects near Siguatepeque.

We noted some delay in the provision of tools and seeds. CARE had difficulty purchasing such a large quantity of tools in Honduras. As a result, many tools did not get out to communities until late. We noticed in some towns in Choluteca that between 50% and 75% of the purchased tools were still sitting in municipal warehouses. It was also noted that in many communities where there had been no distribution of the CARE tools, people had managed to get the work done anyway.

PAG was early to distribute seeds and even convinced farmers in Comayagua to sow an extra crop ("postrera") when their original crops were destroyed by the effects of the hurricane. PAG also helped establish some irrigation systems to help the crops survive the dry season. The net result may have been a positive modification of agricultural practices allowing for greater yields. CARE has OFDA money for seeds, and reported that corn seeds were finally distributed the week of May 3. CARE was unable to find bean seeds so none have been distributed. The corn seeds obtained include a portion of hybrid seed which cannot be used for seed in subsequent years. CARE is going to mix the seed when it distributes so that each farmer will have at least some of local seed. Farmers are sorely in need of seeds – and right now – since many lost their last crops. Although we saw great enthusiasm and community togetherness in responding to the disaster, if agriculture does not receive much increased (and timely) support in the form of seeds and the rebuilding of agricultural infrastructure, the enthusiasm will probably not last long.

We observed some school reconstruction in Choluteca and Francisco Morazan, both part of Save the Children's \$360,000 OFDA funds for school reconstruction. Other agencies, including FHIS, are also doing school reconstruction. We also observed the FFW program being used by CARE in Tegucigalpa, CRS in Olancho and PAG in Meambar for general clean-up projects. Many other areas are using FFW for general clean-up.

There were also some funds in the OFDA grants for the reconstruction of roads and bridges. Aldea Global had the equipment, including two D-7 tractors, and used it effectively, with \$55,000 of support from OFDA, to open 169 km. of roads north of Comayagua. CRS also used OFDA funds (about \$13,000) to help repair 14 small bridges. The need for road reconstruction and revision of river banks is a huge overall project for Honduras, beyond the scope of this project. It is amazing, however, that PAG was able to accomplish as much, and as quickly, as it did with roads.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

The project seems to have been very successful in 3 ways: as a relief project, as a learning experience, and as an impetus for Honduras to improve itself. The hurricane itself, although a disaster of huge proportions, provided a grand opportunity for positive change in Honduras. The OFDA funding created a situation where, in combination with Food for Work support, people and communities became highly motivated to work towards improving their situation. Supplying materials for construction and FFW at the same time was “an explosive combination” for positive action, in the words of CRS’ Executive Director.

We noted a generally extremely positive attitude at several levels: the PVOs, local government and leaders, and the communities in general. Strikingly, there was little visible involvement of the central level except through FHIS, and a very strong participation at the local level. None of the feared major epidemics happened. There was generally good cooperation and coordination at all levels with minimal duplication of services. And there is now a positive spirit from the whole post-Mitch experience that could be used to good advantage in future development. Despite some minimal questionable spending (tools, e.g.), the OFDA funds appear to have been used very effectively, especially in combination with FFW. Keeping in mind that it is often hard to differentiate the specific effects of the OFDA funds from other sources of support, the following, in outline form, are our impressions arranged as Successes, Obstacles, Lessons Learned, and Areas for Improvement:

1) Successes:

- General positive, even enthusiastic, response to the disaster relief efforts by nearly all parties
- Effective combination of using funding for materials together with FFW
- The creation of a positive attitude towards change in Honduras, an attitude that was not present pre-Mitch, along with the building of some momentum for change
- Increase in self-confidence in the community, strengthened communities
- Rapid, effective transition from relief efforts to rehabilitation
- Made municipios more aware and conscious of the needs of surrounding aldeas
- The community networks already established by the NGOs worked
- No epidemics of infectious disease following the disaster
- Much good leadership came out:
 - NGOs (PVOs)
 - Many alcaldes

- The community in general
- The rapidity of the response from USAID
- The timely, appropriate, and coordinated responses from the NGOs
- Positive action on working towards solving the housing problem
- Improvement in housing construction practices
- Closer cooperation between organizations functioning within communities
- International and national cooperation, little duplication, pieces fell together
- Awakening of international interest in Honduras (from the hurricane, not related to OFDA)
- Adequate and timely food, medicine, and shelter, despite the obstacles
- Opening up of increased opportunities for women
- Improvement in some agricultural practices
- Possible expanded role women

2) Obstacles

Project Specific

- Logistical difficulties in the procurement and distribution of materials and supplies
- Difficulty in obtaining land for housing
- Limited trained human technical resources, e.g., masons
- Food “give-away” projects undermined the FFW programs
- Unevenness in the response of some mayors
- Disaster response efforts were not always well organized
- Mental health interventions were not adequate overall

In General

- Limited resources for the magnitude of the problem
- Finding adequate sources of credit, especially for small producers
- General economic decline as a result of Mitch
- Worsening of housing and unemployment as a result of Mitch
- Need for increased government expenditures with likely more stress on the public system as well as probability of decreasing government revenues
- FHIS seems to be exception to general coordination and cooperation
- With increased housing problem, danger of shelters turning into long-term camps
- Little effective central coordination

3) Lessons Learned

- By going through NGOs (PVOs), USAID got aid out in a very timely and effective manner
- Coordination of materials support and FFW has great potential for stimulating further development

- There is strength at the local (municipal) level, although this strength does depend on the leadership capabilities of the individual mayors and/or community leaders, and on the amount of community organization.
- Existing NGO infrastructure/connections led to effective action, especially at the local level, and especially in preventive health measures
- Given minimal support and leadership, Honduras is capable of enthusiastic support and a “can do” spirit leading to positive action and change.

4) Areas for Improvement

- Strengthen local government and community-based efforts
- Strengthen local networks in USAID projects in general: in agriculture, health, etc.
- To be considered: Support greater leadership roles for women
- Continue support for local-level networks with NGO collaboration
- Continue Food for Work as an effective strategy; consider modifying program to make it partially cash for work in some circumstances
- Develop new sources of credit for small producers, especially in agriculture, to allow economic recovery
- Include mental health as a component of existing and future health programs
- Consider options for helping resolution of the housing problem, perhaps fund a study defining the problem
- Work needs to be done on the riverbeds and watersheds to help avoid future disasters and to recover lost farmland
- Improve coordination at the national level
- Take advantage of the momentum, the positive spirit of the many successes of the post-Mitch experience, to use this time as an opportunity to inspire significant positive changes in Honduras. Timely encouragement of the positive spirit could bring very positive results.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) “For high priority activities, different approaches, and improved performance during the rest of the extended grant period”: *(In order of priority)*

- In a timely manner (immediately) get needed seeds out to farmers.
- Start planning for the major rebuilding of agricultural infrastructure: use primarily the local level to do this planning.
- Complete the remaining project obligations to the maximum possible with water and housing projects; arrange for follow-on funds that will allow completion of the programmed objectives.
- Increase funding of or shift funds to PAG to allow completion of their housing projects and latrine projects in a timely manner; they cannot produce compressed earth blocks for walls fast enough due to machinery failure.

- Consider facilitating completion of ambitious housing projects with more appropriate tools and technical support, e.g.: jackhammers, trucks, saws as well as use of FFW where it is not yet being used.
- Strengthen integrated services for maternal and child health, by integrating AIN (Integrated Child Health Care) type and reproductive health services at the community level if there are additional health funds available.
- Consider less expensive housing options if they are feasible and acceptable.
- Experiment with a mixture of Food for Work and Cash for Work for project labor. Suggest matching minimum wage of 50 lempiras a day with 28 lempiras in food and 22 in cash.
- Use remaining funds for analyzing the mental health experiences in the hurricane relief, with the goal of planning some more integrated approach to mental health if another such disaster should occur. Perhaps one of the NGOs could do this study.

2) “For high priority follow-on public health activities within the manageable interest and comparative advantage of each PVO, if more [USAID] funds were to become available...” as well as suggestions for other non-health related follow-on activities: (In order of priority)

- Top priority: strengthening, rebuilding of agriculture, starting with the urgent supplying of seeds for this season; then, rebuilding of the infrastructure, using local networks (e.g., the LUPE model).
- Creating opportunities for employment: rebuilding agriculture is one, rebuilding other sectors can be next. This could be done through a public works program combining food for work, cash for work and materials and administered through or in coordination with municipal governments.
- Finishing the projected water and housing projects, with modifications as appropriate.
- Continued strengthening and expansion of the local level network of health promoters and MCH services, using the model of AIN and the local-based systems already being used by the NGOs in the present project. Specifically:
- For HOPE: Expanded resources to further develop its urban and peri-urban health promoter/primary care efforts – a good learning project meeting the specific needs of the growing peri-urban area. [Incidentally, we strongly feel that HOPE should not be penalized for not keeping up with its goals in its ongoing USAID funded Child Survival Project as many of HOPE’s resources were diverted to crucial post-Mitch relief efforts.]
- For WORLD RELIEF and WORLD VISION: Similar to HOPE, expansion and strengthening of their health promoter program, again with an integrated AIN approach to MCH.
- For ASCH (Save the Children): Increased support of their maternal health program, again pushing it towards a more integrated MCH approach. Support for local efforts, especially.

- For PAG: Strengthening and expansion of their MCH program with their system of health promoters and strengthened primary care – again with an integrated approach; also would build upon their system of agricultural extension workers.
- In all the above health-related endeavors: strengthen the ties between the local health workers and the various local-level institutions, including the mayors.
- Expand systems of potable water to villages which do not yet have ready access to potable water; use the local NGOs to accomplish this goal.
- Help develop an improved and more integrated disaster relief program for Honduran communities, including creating linkages among NGOs for disasters.
- For CARE: as noted above, experiment with mixed Food for Work and Cash for Work programs combined with materials for specific projects
- Continue to work to meet the needs for housing by building on the experiences learned in this project, by using a combination of materials support with FFW/CFW.
- Incentives to strengthen local-level government, make resources available at the municipal level in any projects funded by USAID.
- Related to rebuilding agriculture and preventing new disasters: river bank rehabilitation.

Specifically with regard to public health programs, we are urging continued and expanded support of integrated maternal and child health programs centered in (and directed by) local communities. We have since seen good evidence that the model works well in the post-Mitch experience. USAID should also give added support to strengthen the infrastructure for the delivery of primary and maternal/child health integrated services at the health center level. Use of PVOs has been highly effective at both the community and the health center level. Their work should be expanded to other areas in need in Honduras. USAID should take advantage of the current opportunity to build on the positive community spirit that has been stimulated by the OFDA Mitch project.