Transitional Shelter in El Salvador

Report Submission Date:	November 7, 2012
Program Title:	Transitional Shelter in El Salvador
Country/Region:	El Salvador
Program Duration (Number of Months)	8 months
Program Start Date:	January 09, 2012
Report Time Period:	January 09, 2012 – August 08, 2012

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Acronyms

AMC	Municipality of Caluco
GES	Government of El Salvador
HAS	Habitat Water and Sanitation
LEAP	Learning through Evaluation with Accountability and Planning
PDA	Program of Development areas
NGO	Non-Governmental
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
TSES	Transitional Shelter in El Salvador
VT	Transitional Housing
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VM	World Vision
WVES	World Vision El Salvador
VMEU	World Vision U.S.

I. SUMMARY AND PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Through funds provided by USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), World Vision responded to the devastating impact of Tropical Depression12-E by providing transitional housing to families impacted by the storm. Project activities reached 130 families and focused on two areas: 1) Construction of safe transitional homes (with each unit including a t-shelter, latrine and shower) and 2) Risk Management Training. Direct beneficiaries included 130 families (631 people) in 4 municipalities in the department of Sonsonate. Specifically, *Transitional Shelter in El Salvador* reached 72 families in Caluco (Los Manantiales ADP), 24 families in Armenia (Jubileo ADP), 21 Families in Acajutla (Nuevo Amanecer ADP) and 13 Families in San Julian (San Julian ADP). The beneficiary targets disaggregated by age and gender are as follows:

Beneficiaries of *Transitional Shelter in El Salvador* Project								
Gender	**< 1 año**	**between 1 to 5 years old**	**6 to 12 years old**	**13 to 18 years old**	**19 to 30 years old**	**31 to 59 years old**	**More than 60**	**Total**
Male	6	41	69	49	68	93	13	339
Female	4	30	50	49	62	78	19	292
Total	**10**	**71**	**119**	**98**	**130**	**171**	**32**	**631**

The overall program goal was accomplished successfully, as 130 families received durable transitional shelters, including a latrine and shower, and plastic sheeting. See sections below for detail on program implementation successes, challenges and lessons learned. Attachment 1 includes a program success story reflecting the high level of beneficiary engagement and investment in the project.

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVE, ACTIVITIES, BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Goal: To provide transitional shelter to families impacted by Tropical Depression 12E

Objective: To provide shelter to families affected by Tropical Depression 12E

About 12,520 people were directly affected by Tropical Depression 12-E, most of whom were living in poor conditions prior to the storm. Most of the families impacted had tried to repair their homes with poor results due to their lack of construction knowledge and access to safe and durable materials, instead using perishable and damaged materials, thus leaving homes at the same or even increased risk of damage.

a. Plastic sheeting

With the assistance of OFDA, World Vision provided a total of 65 rolls of canvas for coverage of 631 transitional shelters with showers and latrines.

b. Construction of 130 transitional shelters, with design improvements for safety and durability

World Vision's technical shelter team improved the original designs of the homes with community input, specifically by doing the following: 1) Placing metal corner and "stabilizer" made of wood, for greater stability of the wood frame; 2) Application of an additive curator to avoid damage of the wood, to achieve durability of it against the weather and against termites; 3) Application of an additive "setting

accelerant" in the concrete base housing, to expedite the process of setting and minimize execution time of the process constructive; and 4) Elongation of canvas to cover the concrete base and coating it with mortar to prevent both water leaks and access to rodents.

A successful project practice included the workshop held between World Vision and the local builders, who collectively identified structural weakness to minimize the element of waste and maximize the impact of the t-shelter's wooden structure.

In addition to the construction of transitional shelters, latrines and showers, three trainings and workshops were held on risk management, housing maintenance and cleaning latrines. One representative of each beneficiary family attended the workshops. During these trainings, participants received manuals on shelter maintenance and key risk reduction and support materials for further reference.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned in T-Shelter Implementation:

- Receiving canvas in a timely manner is necessary to ensure timely construction. It must be obtained and distributed well advance from OFDA to avoid delays in the construction process.
- The improvements to the design and use of the global USAID canvas should be systematized by the donor and must be made known to all implementers of such projects. This is important for effective implementation of the projects. It would be good to be able to schedule training for the proper use of plastic canvas, given the versatility in the use of this material.
- The review and approval of design changes on the donor end should have a time limit for completion, as the prolonged process resulted in significant program delays between the disaster's occurrence and beneficiaries' receiving t-shelters.
- Construction practices workshops are essential to correct, clarify and adjust the construction processes. Also, skilled labor should participate in the workshops.
- The experiences and project modifications should be compiled and systematized, to be applied by old and new implementers of transitional housing.
- The concrete foundation is essential to long-term security for families, as it is the foundation upon which many beneficiaries improve their t-shelters with permanent materials. It is also important to consider that having a concrete floor not only improves home cleanliness, but the longer-term health of children.
- When working in a relocation site with a population as large as Caluco's beneficiaries, the benefits of a shelter program are not limited to ownership of a t-shelter itself, but also can improve access to economic opportunity if the settlement is strategically located.
- One important design flaw in these t-shelters: The lack of a division between rooms to create space and privacy for adults and children.
- More opportunity for training is critical in this type of project; it is important that beneficiaries take advantage of training opportunities and participate in the workshop process, especially those focusing on prevention and mitigation of risk.

c. Construction of latrines and shower modules

With the construction of showers and latrines for each of the 130 t-shelters, 130 families received improved access to mechanisms essential to adequate personal hygiene and the sanitary removal of waste. To facilitate proper long term use and maintenance of the latrines and showers, three workshops were held in coordination with the health units the municipality in each geographic area of implementation, in order to link beneficiaries with the entities which can then go to the project, as it is the responsibility of teach VMES people. Each workshop was attended by a representative from each beneficiary family, whom received support material hygiene and sanitation messaging.
Many women reported now having better and safer places to perform cleanup activities.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned in Construction of Latrines and Showers:

- According to soil type and location of aquifers, latrines should be constructed only in those areas that hydrological conditions permit; otherwise a latrine composter should be used.
- The implementation of the showers and composting toilets are essential components of t-shelter housing units to reduce the environmental hazard caused by pit latrines. It is important to note that the type of latrine built should suit the ground conditions, and these types of WASH interventions should allow some flexibility to implement appropriate alternatives (for example, composter latrines).

d. Partnerships

To achieve program goals, World Vision also partnered with IOM to distribute more than 100 hygiene kits to program beneficiaries, and WV El Salvador provided 130 kits of shoes and clothes to displaced families.

III. CHALLENGES

Project Delays

Initial delays in the construction process resulted from OFDA's delay in approving the final design. While the project was slated to begin January 3rd construction did not begin until March 12th. Delays in the approval of the architectural design and delivery of the canvas were the main reasons for requesting the extension of time of the project, May 8 (initial completion date) to August 8 (no-cost extension end date). Starting with the municipality of Caluco, as this community housed the majority of t-shelters, World Vision worked with six groups comprised of three builders from the Sonsonate area, and approximately 12 beneficiaries in each group. Simultaneously, the community of beneficiaries recruited a person in charge of material storage. From Caluco, each following week World Vision started a new construction site in each project municipality (Armenia, San Julián and Metalío respectively), completing a series process of construction.

Another element that delayed timely program implementation was the process of receiving the canvas sheeting from OFDA. After more than a month of communicating with OFDA staff in El Salvador and DC, on April 17th the canvas was able to be obtained from the Scouts Association of El Salvador, one month after the start of the construction process. The same day, the canvas was distributed in the four municipalities in the department of Sonsonate in project implementation sites, allowing housing construction to be completed.

Caluco:
As part of the negotiations with the municipalities involved in the project, the Municipality of Caluco initially agreed to build the latrines of the 72 houses located in the municipality as their community contribution to the project. However, after months of no action on the part of the Municipality, World Vision had to intervene in early August as the project had ended and 57 of the 72 latrines had not been constructed, rendering the transitional shelters uninhabitable. Thus, World Vision El Salvador and World Vision United States each contributed 50% of the total cost of construction to complete the latrines, which were finalized by the third week of August. Currently, the Municipality of Caluco is developing a project for the introduction of potable water, electricity and drainage system for gray water for the 72 families.

IV. OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC INVESTMENT

Through the program intervention, local investment positively benefitted impacted families and the local economy. Through this intervention, 1% of project funds corresponded to investment in local trainings and workshop, 8.37% of the funds were invested in skilled local labor (payment of builders and bricklayers) and the remaining 30.96% purchased materials at local hardware stores. It should be noted that WV did not hire workers under 18 years to comply with World Vision's child protection policy.

In Caluco, many of the 72 families living there are engaged in self-initiated income generation activities. Many families relocated their businesses to Caluco, or opened new stores, tailor shops, food stands, etc.

V. GENDER AND SUSTAINABILITY

To ensure community buy-in and long term capacity building, a significant number of the beneficiaries engaged in the construction process of their own homes were women. During the construction process, the majority of the beneficiary labor contributions came from women, who after the project reported feeling empowered and motivated to continue working on improvements to their homes, without waiting for the men (often abroad seeking economic opportunity) to return and perform these activities. Many beneficiary women shared that the large scale inclusion of women in the project was key to empowering them with skills and motivation to build and maintain their homes with their own hands. Many reported feeling committed to further improve transitional housing with their own hands in other projects of mutual aid work.

Partnerships with municipalities and other government entities are important to generate local buy-in and long term sustainability of relief projects, as was the case of the municipality of Caluco. While the community did not deliver on the latrine component, the local government did make contributions to improvements of roads, social work support community infrastructure facilitator to develop and hold workshops. This alliance must be strategic and not just exploited during project implementation, but also must endure for other upcoming projects.

VI. CONCLUSION

Despite the many challenges, initial design changes and approvals, the program achieved its goal of successfully providing safe transitional housing, latrines and shelters for 130 families (631 people), located in 9 sites located in four municipalities in Sonsonate. World Vision learned valuable lessons from the effort to build transitional housing in a short period of time and began applying these best practices in September 2012 during the second phase of construction funded by UNOCHA.

A program evaluation carried out by an external evaluator was conducted in July and provides more detailed analysis and reflection of program implementation.

VII. INDICATOR TRACKING TABLE

Transitional Shelter in El Salvador					
Activity	**LOA Target**	**Final Results**	**Percentage**	**Total Beneficiaries reached**	**Comments**
1 Number of received transitional housing, low global standards and guidelines FOG	130 transitional shelters	130	100%	130 hhs-631 beneficiaries: 339 men and 292 women	
2. Total percentage of affected population who received transitional housing assistance	5.19%	100%	100%	130hhs-631 beneficiaries: 339 men and 292 women	
3. Total USD amount and percentage of the approved budget was invested in the local economy affected	$116,000 (48%)	$85,214.15	35.6%		Because WV found that not all building materials could be purchased in the area, 35.6% of the approved budget was invested in the local economy as follows: 0.98% of the grants funds invested locally corresponds to locally run trainings and workshops hired, 8.37% of total comprised skilled local labor (Bricklayers) and 30.96% corresponds to purchases of materials at hardware and other stores in the area.
5. (WV Indicator) Number of transitional housing built with global standards.	130 hhs	130	100%	130hhs-631 beneficiaries: 339 men and 292 women	130 homes built have standards set by the manual m2 area for emergency care, as well as materials that protect families from the weather
6. (WV Indicator) Number of beneficiaries trained in basic maintenance for transitional housing, maintenance and proper use of latrines.	130 beneficiaries	130	100%	130 beneficiaries (65 men and 65 women)	WV developed and facilitated workshops to train beneficiary families on the use and maintenance of their houses, latrines, good hygiene practices and disaster risk mitigation measures.

Annex 1. Photos of Transitional Shelters

Building Resilience and Transitional Shelters for Disaster-Impacted Communities

In October 2011, Tropical Storm 12-E wrought severe damage and destruction on millions in Central America. Over the course of a week, the slow-moving storm "hovered over the region…(and) dumped nearly 60 inches of rain - far more than the devastating hurricane Mitch delivered in 1998." Nearly 150,000 people were affected by the storm, a strong impact for a country of about 1.7 million people. As a result of the storm's floods and subsequent landslides, 18,445 housing units were reported as damaged or destroyed.

Miranda's destroyed home (June 2012)

With funding from USAID, World Vision constructed 130 transitional shelters for families whose homes were severely damaged or destroyed by the storm. Each shelter includes a safe outdoor kitchen space, latrine and shower to ensure proper sanitary conditions for households. The shelters are built both on current household sites and new tracts of land as necessary. Additionally, beneficiaries receive training in basic construction safety and skills, as well as key disaster mitigation messaging. Eligibility to participate in the six-month program was agreed upon between World Vision and the local communities, and selection criteria included:

- Loss or very heavy damage of shelter due to Tropical Depression 12E
- Poverty level – families receive lower than minimum wage
- Willingness to incorporate and participate in the project by providing auxiliary labor
- Prioritization of families with greater vulnerability conditions (children, handicapped, elderly, female-headed households)

"I can build a house now," says Norma, a mother whose family received a transitional shelter home in a community called La Puerta. She noted that during the program's training workshops, "It was initially difficult having to carry all our own wood. The (local) builder was worried that there were more women than men." But she is proud to say that the women proved themselves to be strong over time, and gradually managed to participate in the construction of their homes.

From her perch on her neighbor Pedro Antonio's porch, she gestures up to her own new shelter standing higher up the green hillside. "It's more meaningful to build your own house." The small rock garden in front of it reflects the pride Norma takes in maintaining her family's new home.

Lessons learned from past humanitarian disaster responses suggest that successfully implementing a transitional shelter response—whether in contexts as different and complex as the 2005 Indian Ocean Tsunami or the Haiti Earthquake in 2010—requires a program appropriately scaled and responsive to the complex issues of land ownership in a given disaster situation. In reality, transitional shelters end up functioning more like permanent structures for vulnerable families. Project beneficiaries like Norma observe that the project has successfully met her family's needs, not only because she feels secure living in a safe shelter on land belonging to a local cooperative, but because the project has empowered her with knowledge to maintain a safe home over time.

Shelter with a beneficiary-constructed garden

Importantly, World Vision's transitional shelter program incorporates building materials that can be reutilized at a later stage, a critical component to empowering families to safely adapt their shelters over time to more permanent structures that meet household needs. In El Salvador, the majority of homes destroyed by the storms in the coastal areas were built of perishable materials such as cardboard, galvanized metal sheets, wood, straw, palms, mud, plastic, and other waste materials that present a high risk for households. Locally known as "champa," these units evolve over time as residents add space and permanent materials. After disasters, a lack of resources limits the ability of poorer families to afford a sturdy structure, and many are forced to rebuild with these inexpensive waste materials that are both hazardous and short-lived.

"The walls were breaking and became heavier and wetter," said Miranda, another woman whose family was one of 16 households to receive a shelter in La Puerta, sharing the situation last October as rainwater drenched her home. "As it became more damaged, I got worried for my children." The remains of the collapsed mud structure lays in ruins some 50 yards from her new home. Today she echoes the same sense of accomplishment as Norma, expressing pride in her newly acquired construction skills, and a deep feeling of gratitude for receiving a home that has a concrete foundation and is resistant to wind and seismic activity.

Beneficiary pride and ownership of the shelters is made evident by many meticulous gardens beautifying the communities. Many beneficiaries shared the current impact of the disaster risk reduction trainings on their lives as they prepare for another rainy season. Pedro Antonio, Norma's neighbor and a community leader driving community buy-in of the project, grabs the World Vision training manual from his new home and flips through its contents, pointing out key risk reduction and shelter maintenance measures.

"Poco a poco, vamos preparando," he says. Meaning "little by little, we're preparing for the next big thing."

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