

OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (USAID/OFDA)

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA



USAID/OFDA is supporting a food security program in the western highlands of Guatemala that has helped approximately 800 families adopt more sustainable agriculture practices and reduce the impact of drought on their farms. Photo courtesy of CARE Guatemala

USAID/OFDA Helps Farmers in the Dry Corridor of Guatemala

Drought conditions related to the El Niño climatic event have adversely affected Central America's dry corridor and exacerbated food insecurity for more than 3.5 million people. To help thousands of drought-stricken farmers in Guatemala, one of the region's most-affected countries, USAID/OFDA is supporting programs to develop resilient agricultural practices and restore livelihoods.

USAID/OFDA is partnering with the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) and CARE to help improve food security in El Progreso and El Quiché departments, where prolonged drought, nutrient-poor soil, and deforestation have triggered consecutive crop losses during the past decade, causing food scarcity, malnutrition, impoverishment, and increased migration to already over-populated urban areas.

In September 2015, with \$500,000 in USAID/OFDA support, PADF began implementing a 20-month project called Yo Me Adapto ("I Adapt"). The program aims to improve the lives of approximately 9,000 people in El Progreso's Sansare and Sanarate municipalities by helping farmers grow more drought-resistant crops and adopt more sustainable agricultural practices.

"Our main purpose is to help build the resilience of small-scale producers, who have been threatened by prolonged periods without rain and remain the most vulnerable. By increasing the resilience of farmers and helping them adapt their farming techniques to a changing climate, we can help improve food security," said Fernando Castañaza, PADF Guatemala Senior Project Manager.

The Yo Me Adapto project has established a model farm that showcases climate-smart agriculture equipment, such as a weather station, a rainwater collector, greenhouse tunnels, and a controlled drip irrigation system. The demonstrative farm also functions as a laboratory to test which new varieties of corn, beans, and vegetables better adapt to dry weather.

"In this model farm, we are planting different varieties of corn and beans, which are part of people's basic diet, to determine which seeds are

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Farmers from El Progreso are testing which bean varieties can better adapt to dry weather. Photo by Irene Gago, USAID/OFDA

USAID Provides Food, Water, Shelter, and Other Assistance to Hurricane-Affected Haitians

The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in Haiti continues to prioritize the delivery of emergency food, potable water, protection services, and shelter assistance to communities in southwestern Haiti affected by the devastating Category 4 Hurricane Matthew in early October.

As of November 29, the U.S. Government had provided more than \$79 million for Hurricane Matthew relief efforts in Haiti, including nearly \$30 million from USAID/OFDA and more than \$34 million from USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP). In late November, USAID committed an additional \$15.9 million for humanitarian response efforts in Haiti, including \$14.4 million from USAID/FFP for cash-based food assistance and \$1.5 million from USAID/OFDA to meet health, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs in acutely affected Grand'Anse and Sud departments.

USAID/OFDA is supporting nine partners to implement shelter interventions in affected areas. As of November 7, these partners had distributed plastic sheeting for temporary roofs and transitional shelter construction to more than 36,300 households in Grand'Anse, Nippes, and Sud.

USAID/OFDA is also working with partners to provide health and WASH services in affected areas, including chlorine treatment of water in



Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) staff help distribute food in Sud's Port-a-Piment commune. Photo by Auriana Koutnik, USAID/OFDA

government-run systems and the repair and management of cholera treatment facilities.

Other USAID/OFDA partners are focusing on protection activities, including providing child-friendly spaces in acutely affected Grand'Anse, as well as facilitating coordination among organizations responding to sexual and gender-based violence in affected areas.

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more resistant to drought. We also are guiding farmers on how to improve productivity and make better use of water on their farms," said Luis Arevalo, Agricultural Engineer and Manager of the Yo Me Adapto farm.

Additionally, with the collaborative work of local actors such as Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, University of San Carlos, Fundación Carlos F. Novella, and the Government of Guatemala Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food (MAGA), the project has expanded a network of MAGA-run small rural learning farms (CADERS).

"A CADER is a small piece of land where a group of approximately 25 families develops a community garden to produce vegetables, corn, and beans for their own consumption. They also use this small farm to carry out training activities and test new crops," Arevalo explained.

The USAID/OFDA-funded project has helped equip 20 new CADERS, where government technicians and community leaders promote crop diversification and provide training on soil conservation,



Yo Me Adapto Agricultural Engineer, Luis Arevalo, evaluates different varieties of corn crops at the program's demonstrative farm. Photo by Irene Gago, USAID/OFDA

vermicomposting, reforestation, hydroponic techniques, and water use maximization, among other agricultural skills.

In the western highlands of El Quiché, USAID/OFDA is supporting CARE to implement a \$490,000 disaster risk reduction project over 24 months. The project, which began in October 2015, is helping to enhance the resilience and strengthen the livelihoods of small farmers in the area. CARE is working with community leaders to identify drought-resistant native seeds and improve local agricultural practices. To date, approximately 5,000 people have participated in the project's training program, which aims to improve farmers' capacities to withstand prolonged drought by developing more sustainable agricultural practices.

"This food security project has enabled approximately 800 families from El Quiché to adopt food self-sufficiency for more than four months, and it has helped them mitigate the impact of drought on their farms," noted Juan Saloj, CARE Guatemala Project Manager.

The CARE program has facilitated the development of 23 community savings groups to support individuals who do not have access to formal banking institutions and has established 21 new CADERS. In the coming months, the project will help families develop land management plans, as well as improve soil conservation, orchard monitoring, rainwater harvesting, and post-harvest practices. The project also provides beneficiaries with nutrition education.

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