

START NETWORK | PARTNERSHIPS IN GUATEMALA

The Start Fund: Catalysing unique collaborations for cold spike response

Alert 583 raised

In February 2022, a spike in cold weather was recorded in Guatemala and low temperatures were expected to persist until the end of March. The cold spike affected agriculture and crop growth leading to increased food insecurity among the most vulnerable. Respiratory diseases amongst children were exacerbated by the temperatures and healthy nutrition for women and children was at particularly high risk. This crisis hit badly in Altiplano Occidental and Meseta Central regions where the majority of at-risk populations live. **Approximately 3,700 families (14,800 individuals)** were affected and needed basic items and services in order to recover from food shortage, disease, and malnutrition. NGOs in the region worked with local communities to assess needs and raise an alert to the Start Fund for emergency support.

Meeting the Start Fund niche

- ❖ A **small – medium crisis**: 14,800 people needed emergency assistance.
- ❖ An **under-the-radar crisis**: whilst it was recognised by the government as an emergency, there lacked enough institutional capacity to respond and reach the most vulnerable.

Project selected

On 25 February 2022, CADENA (a Start Network INGO member), in consortium with ASECSA (a Start Network local member) and ADAM (a local partner), were selected to respond to this crisis, receiving £140,000 from the Start Fund. Agencies provided food baskets, blankets, clothes, bed sheets, agriculture kits (seeds and tools) and nutritious food kits for children, women and the elderly. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) workshops were conducted with communities to support increased resilience and early action ahead of crises. In addition, CADENA provided health services with medical consultation.



Provision of nutritional kits in Guatemala.
Photo Courtesy: Billy Estrada

Impact

13,747 INDIVIDUALS REACHED BY THESE INTERVENTIONS

2,299
FOOD PACKAGES

Distributed

13,534
COLD WEATHER PACKAGES

1,847
NUTRITIONAL KITS FOR CHILDREN, PREGNANT AND LACTATING WOMEN

Reach

44% CHILDREN 5,988
56% WOMEN AND GIRLS 7,742
0.7% WITH A DISABILITY 98

Out of 120 survey respondents

100% Felt treated with respect and dignity
100% Were very satisfied with the assistance



Really for me, life is very difficult... The crisis has been very hard, first the COVID and then the frost, which is why work in this area has dropped a lot... In a crisis situation, this type of help brings us important relief. It's one time, but it helps a lot. It was very good that they included medicines, because children get sick.
Single mother, Los Altos



Strength and learning through collective action

In consortium, these 3 NGOs were able to collaborate, applying each of their unique strengths to reach communities. ADAM, a well-known organisation by affected communities, had a large amount of trust which strengthened community engagement; ASECSA knew local languages and culture which built a sense of community. CADENA worked with the most affected communities through local leaders to ensure locally appropriate decision-making and oversight of the project. Each organisation reported that working together through the Start Fund, they were able to learn from one another and they would carry forward these learnings to their future work. For example, CADENA learnt about indigenous groups and practices and ASECSA developed their understanding about fund processes. By working in partnership, these NGOs were able to work with communities that they are trusted in, reach the most vulnerable, and share resources ensuring appropriate and better humanitarian action for those who needed it, when they needed it.

ASECSA

Founded in 1978 by the Regional Committee for the Promotion of Community Health, the Association of Community Health Services (ASECSA) is a non-governmental, non-profit association made up of a network of 58 community health organisations. ASECSA's work has an impact especially on the rural-indigenous and poor population with little access to health services.



The best benefit is that we were able to do something greater by working together, we served more families and we also learned one Agency from the other.

Director of Humanitarian Operations, CADENA



This particular consortium has many possibilities for the future due to the programmatic areas and the strengths of each agency, which was complementary in this project.

Regional coordinator, ASECSA

A male living in a house of five whose primary livelihood is based on agriculture



“Our family, like many in this area of Sinai, is dedicated to agriculture, which is what we know how to do. Our economy depends on the sale of our crops. The pandemic closed [the country] for several months, we could not go out and the products began to be scarce. Then, in August, October, and November, a lot of hail fell, and it damaged our crops. We are very grateful for the help.... The food they gave us, and the blankets will be very well used... We will have fewer food expenses for a few weeks”



Agricultural work in Guatemala
Photo Courtesy: Billy Estrada

A female living in a house of five whose primary livelihood is based on agriculture

“I live with my father, but he got sick and can’t work as before. In my family, we raise some animals to sell, such as chickens and pigs. This is how we try to survive. The pandemic affected us a lot because we couldn’t leave the house and we must go out and sell. After the frosts were stronger and affected the children, they got sick. I am very grateful because this type of project almost never comes here. I would have liked more families to benefit, but they only chose 10. Here everything has gone up in price, corn, beans, oil, and beans, which are what we eat every day. When I got home with the groceries, everyone was happy, because it was enough. My girl was happy, and I gave her a blanket.”

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