

B.19 Peru - 2007 - Earthquake

Overview

See Shelter Projects 2008 for more

Summary

On August 15th, 2007 there were two major quakes separated by nearly one minute. It was followed by a 3m tsunami that caused some damage along the coast line. The earthquake killed nearly 600 people and injured more than 1,800. 48,000 houses were destroyed, and a further 45,000 houses rendered uninhabitable. In total 140,000 households were affected. The majority of the affected population lived in towns. The three case studies in this book were responses by non-governmental organisations. One rapidly distributed construction materials using existing community structures, one built shelters providing some cash for work on the shelters, and one used contractors to build shelters with the shelter owners. All of these projects worked with those who already owned land.



Earthquake location

The area most affected is situated in a desert area with high temperature variations and little or no rainfall. In the more mountainous areas affected, cold was a severe problem.

Access was significantly easier in the towns in the coastal area, and responses were correspondingly swifter and larger. Much of the response in the first weeks was from within the country.

Response

The major focus of most responses was to support people to build on their own land. This left gaps for the landless who did not qualify for many assistance projects. For the landless, some projects provided shelter materials that could be later transported as land became available.

The shelter responses included:

- distribution of blankets, plastic sheeting, cook sets and other shelter items
- distribution of tents
- support with the construction of standard shelters through cash for work, training and carpenters,
- support with rubble clearance in coordination with the local authorities

Government response

The government of Peru based their response on a plan developed by the Colombian government. Actions were divided into four stages, each with its own setup and responsibilities (emergency – transition – reconstruction – termination). After 8 months, the transition gave way to reconstruction.

Fifteen days after the earthquake, the central Peruvian government created a reconstruction agency called FORSUR. FORSUR had a mandate to rebuild houses and infrastructure.

Five months after the earthquake, the Peruvian Ministry of Housing began distributing bonds

for approximately 2,000 USD to affected families who had land titles to their properties. These bonds were to help people to purchase materials to rebuild homes. Families without land titles do not have access to this state program.

Rubble

By January 2008 only one quarter of the rubble, a total of 2.066 million cubic metres of 7.8 million cubic metres, had been removed. Rubble removal did not advance as quickly in rural regions further inland.



Some programmes supported people to build lightweight shelters so that landless people could benefit from assistance programmes
Photo: IFRC