



Final Report: Fuel Relief Fund Ecuador Earthquake Response

June 13, 2016



Fuel Relief Fund sources and provides free fuel to individuals and communities in need after major disasters. We also are an independent operational support partner of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UH OCHA), and help fuel the life-saving work of aid agencies; powering vehicles and generators, providing first-response needs including medical aid, food, water, light and shelter. We have been at every major disaster over the past nine years including the earthquakes in Haiti, Japan and Nepal. Every

dollar raised for our relief efforts is used to provide fuel to affected communities.

A devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Northern Ecuador on Saturday, April 16. Our team of Fuel Relief Fund volunteers was on the ground in Ecuador on Thursday, April 21, distributing fuel to individuals and families in hardest-hit areas of Ecuador's Manabí Province. We decided to deploy to Ecuador based on the humanitarian impact of the earthquake and



assessment of our own capacity to assist local communities. *Figure 1 Fuel Relief Fund Distribution – Manabí Province, April 23, 2016*



Our primary aim for the response effort was to reach 10,000 households in the affected areas with fuel relief. As with each of our response efforts, the type of fuel we provide varies according to local context and need. By Saturday, after meetings with local officials, the United Nations, and other key humanitarian agencies on the ground, we identified that immediate needs included safe water and capacity to cook for individuals and families in affected remote areas. The earthquake and lack of access to fuel it created exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, and created new risks for already-impooverished local communities. Children, the elderly, single mothers and other vulnerable groups were most at risk.



Ecuadorians rely on propane tanks to cook, with refills delivered regularly by state-subsidized gas trucks that roam all parts of the countryside. Further, fuel is required to cook Ecuadorians basic staple foods of rice and beans. Price gouging and a lack of availability of propane destroyed families' abilities to access and purchase propane, and

without a means to cook and boil/ purify water, this situation compromised their food security, and threatened to severely impact their health and wellbeing. Further, a lack of propane had negative economic impacts on households and local markets. With time spent searching for fuel to meet basic needs, livelihoods – including many who worked in the services and tourism sectors – were threatened. The earthquake also damaged the propane delivery infrastructure and transportation systems, and caused water sanitation systems to be in disrepair. With the fuel we provided, families were able to heat local well and other water sources while water treatment plants were being repaired.





Our volunteer team worked with the local administration and volunteers from the affected communities throughout the entirety of the response. The volunteers - were youth who worked tirelessly to distribute fuel to their community neighbors. Our team located the closest sources of propane and a viable transportation route to the affected areas. The local administration provided several vehicles to strengthen our efforts. By the end of our first week, with the generous support of our donors, we were able to distribute nearly 5,000 10-gallon propane tanks! The distribution focused on those individuals and families that needed fuel in the Manabí Province and neighboring communities which were heavily affected by the earthquake. Many of the communities where we distributed fuel had not received any relief aid, and ours was met with exuberance. With an average household size of four, that fuel supported up to 20,000 Ecuadorians in need. As we made our way slowly through small communities which suffered so much devastation, it is hard to describe the joy (above photo). This was only matched by the tireless work ethic and spirit of the 20 volunteers who worked with us.



By the end of our second week in Ecuador, we had distributed enough fuel to reach another 3,625 families, bringing the total number of people reached in two weeks to 34,500. During our second deployment, made possible by the generosity of Global Giving donors, we distributed another 5,045 10-gallon propane tanks, providing fuel for 20,180 people. We are excited to share that by the end of our mission, we exceeded our goal of reaching 10,000 households with



fuel relief: we reached a total of 13,670 households. This means that 54,680 people received fuel relief in our three-week deployment – enough fuel to provide for an average household’s needs for one month.

During our time in Ecuador, so many people and families touched our hearts. For instance, when officials said that Bahía, Ecuador, would need to be totally rebuilt, locals said they intended to stay and rebuild it. That is the spirit of Ecuador that we came to know and love. In another instance, as a mother stood by her young son’s bedside, he cried out how grateful he was for 'pure water' that his mother used to wash his wounded leg, crushed by a falling wall in



the earthquake. Without fuel, his mother would have been without a way to purify water to cleanse her son's wounds. We were also humbled by the energetic support of the local administration of Jaramijó, who presented us with an award for ‘excellent service to the people of Ecuador’ after completion of our fuel distribution.

Because we rely on volunteer support and in-kind gifts for the majority of costs, we accomplished all of this relief with \$50,000. That means that each dollar we raised provided fuel for one individual – nearly half of which are children – to eat, drink safely, and bathe in warm water.

After the Ecuador response, we conducted two learning reviews, one internally, and one with our partner UN OCHA. We identified a number of areas including improving preparedness through

systematization of fuel supply chain management practices, which will strengthen future response efforts. We are now integrating the learning from these two reviews into our standard operating procedures. We are also developing a beneficiary feedback tool to use



during future responses, which will allow us to incorporate views of recipients of fuel relief, further strengthening our programming model.

We are grateful for the support of our donors and partners in providing emergency fuel relief necessary for Ecuadorian families while the local governments work to rebuild roads and infrastructure, and restore capacities to meet basic household needs.

Thank you for giving generously to support the Fuel Relief Fund Ecuador Response!