

WORLD VISION *Insider*

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Relief Under Way Following Colombia Quake

World Vision provides complete emergency kits for 5,000 families and lays plans for home and school reconstruction.

World Vision staff in Colombia launched an immediate emergency relief program following the January 25 earthquake that claimed at least 1,100 lives. The 6.3 magnitude quake—the deadliest to hit the nation since 1875—has left more than 1 million people in need of assistance—including 200,000 who are homeless.

World Vision's assistance is reaching thousands of needy families. With the protection of armed police to prevent looting, World Vision is distributing emergency kits containing a combined total of 140 tons of food, medicine, and household and personal care items. The kits have been received by more than 5,000 families living in the shattered neighborhoods around Armenia, a city of 280,000 that sustained damage to 70 percent of its buildings.

Weighing approximately 50 pounds each, the emergency kits provide families with a supply of rice, beans, pasta, sugar, chocolate, and cooking oil. In addition, the kits contain personal hygiene articles, water buckets, cooking utensils, blankets, plastic sheeting for temporary shelter, and other household items.

In addition, World Vision has flown in 1.3 tons of medical supplies for distribution to hospital camps and other health units.

In the two weeks after the quake, more than 380 aftershocks hit the region, leveling more buildings and prompting sleepless nights. "Many of the children thought a monster had attacked their home and are afraid it will come back," a UNICEF psychologist told the Associated Press.

Protecting the health of Colombians in the region is of immediate concern in the weeks ahead. Diseases spread by contaminated water and decay pose a significant threat. Medicine such as vaccines are in short supply. Families are also in need of counseling as well as physical assistance in order to recover from the tragedy.

World Vision is committed to raising \$3.1 million to assist the people suffering in this disaster. An initial \$682,000 phase will focus on distributing the emergency kits. In the second phase, World Vision plans to help rebuild two schools and 1,000 homes, and provide psychological support to 5,000 families throughout 1999.

World Vision is working closely with the Colombian Emergency Committee, which includes the heads of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defense, the Red Cross, and the National Firemen's Association.

Focus Shifts to Rehabilitation for Mitch Victims in Honduras

World Vision has transitioned its assistance from relief to rehabilitation for thousands of Hurricane Mitch victims in hard-hit Honduras.

Key to World Vision's relief work has been the distribution of gifts-in-kind (GIK) to Hondurans. Seven World Vision ocean shipments and three air shipments of GIK have been distributed to date, including clothing, medical supplies, personal care kits, toys, and bulk foods valued at more than \$3.3 million.

Long-term rehabilitation is now the focus of the organization's work in Honduras. World Vision's objective is to repair 2,000 houses and reconstruct 1,500 more by June 1999, as well as repair and reconstruct other community infrastructure such as access roads, bridges, schools, community centers, and medical clinics.

To help carry out the reconstruction, World Vision is recruiting local labor from benefiting communities as

part of a food-for-work program. In exchange for help rebuilding houses, schools, and roads, the community members receive food.

Government officials and aid organizations working in Central America hope that reconstruction assistance of this nature will stem the current tide of immigrants northward, who are leaving Honduras at a rate of 300 a day.

World Vision 