



ECUADOR EARTHQUAKE 2016



Figure 1 – an example of a locally designed ShelterKit shelter

On 17th April 2016 a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Ecuador. In partnership with Habitat for Humanity and Fundacion Progad (a locally registered agency) ShelterBox assisted 2,588 earthquake affected families in the province of Manabi in areas surrounding the city of Puerto Viejo.

The earthquake led to a total of 35,198 buildings being classified as “unsafe” or “for limited use”. Even families with a house considered suitable for limited use were afraid that aftershocks would cause further damage, or worse, lead to fatalities. Families worried their possessions would be stolen, and staying on or nearby home sites became imperative. Some households stayed with other families who were lucky enough to have a stable structure to live in, but most people had little choice but to sleep outside their home.

Although families built shelters with salvaged items, these only offered minimal protection from the rain or the intense heat of the sun. There were also problems associated with a lack of privacy with some households only washing at night when passers-by could not see them.

ShelterBox’s provision of shelter items and technical training enabled families to improve structures, making them watertight, better ventilated and more private. Most importantly families were provided with the means to stay on their land but away from the dangers of unstable building. This helped reduce stress and anxiety.

Aid type	Quantity Distributed*
Aid Pack – mosquito net, water carrier, solar light	292
ShelterKit	2590
Family water purification	1695
Households sheltered	2588



Figure 2 – an example of a Progad led training on how to use the ShelterBox aid items for families receiving aid

Building Capacity

ShelterBox partnered with Fundacion Progad – an Ecuadorian organization who works closely with communities on development projects. They had no previous experience working in disaster relief, however, they have very close community ties. ShelterBox provided training for their staff on our aid, and how to do assessments, distributions and help promote community recovery.

Progad had engineers and architects on their team who were able to take our ShelterKits and design locally appropriate shelters with them. With their community ties they were able to effectively assess who needed aid, and provide in depth training on how to use the kits to build the shelters they designed.

Their local knowledge also helped in finding a granting organization which provided bamboo posts for the shelters free of cost. Progad and ShelterBox teams built shelters for families unable to build their own.

Through this community based approach, ultimately it was the community managing their own early recovery which is a great indication of success for building local capacity and resilience.

Key Learning Points

Emergency shelters constructed using a ShelterKit were upgraded by beneficiaries as access to money and materials allowed. The distribution of ShelterKits and training enhanced the process of sheltering after disaster.

The positive outcomes of this intervention were clearly linked to the technical and sector knowledge of the response team members. Building on this success ShelterBox Operations should continue to develop expertise within the volunteer and staff base.

The decision to target rural areas where few other humanitarian actors were operating played to ShelterBox's strengths. Response teams should consider this when developing response strategies.

An effective implementing partner was critical to the many successes associated with this project. ShelterBox should explore establishing partnerships with in-country organizations for vulnerable countries in preparation for future operations.

The provision of training alongside the distribution of aid contributed towards the outcomes of the response. When the ShelterKit approach is viewed as recovery focused teams should place a greater emphasis on training and capacity building over speed of delivery (unless an immediate risk to life/wellbeing is clearly identified).

When implementing a ShelterKit approach ShelterBox response teams should consider the need for locally appropriate tools that could be procured in country and community managed.

Shelters constructed using ShelterKits did not prevent mosquitos from entering dwellings. When exposure to vectors is a known issue the inclusion of mosquito nets should be considered as standard unless evidence suggests otherwise.

Value for Money

This deployment scored very high in terms of cost of the response and timeliness of delivery. Effective training of Progad meant less response team members were required which helped to keep costs down. The local grant for building materials also saved costs.

In terms of quality, this deployment also scored quite high, though some beneficiaries reported their shelters did not keep mosquitos out. The structures had open ends to help with ventilation for the very hot rainy season. Due to misinformation from our initial needs assessment only 10% of houses received mosquito nets. In the future all beneficiaries will receive mosquito nets in areas where mosquito borne diseases are prevalent.

Beneficiaries reported that the ShelterKits improved privacy, the security of their positions and personal safety, and reduced stress. They also felt the training provided to use the aid was thorough.



Figure 3 – some families used the tarps to repair already existing structures and weather proof roofs