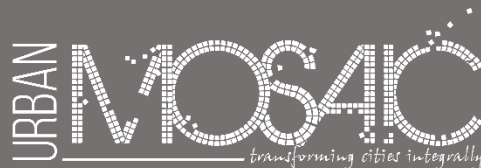


# MEXICO EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

Helping Affected Communities  
in Oaxaca, Morelos and Los Reyes La Paz

A Project Coordinated by



in collaboration with



## INTRODUCTION

---

Thank you so much for coming alongside us to help victims of the recent earthquakes in Oaxaca, Morelos and Mexico City. As we shared in our initial mailing, we began our disaster relief efforts by first listening to local leaders and addressing their most urgent concerns in tandem with them. As you will see in the report below, this approach has allowed us to build local good will and got us to a place where we will be able to make a very lasting impact in the affected communities we're working in, thanks to all of your help!



As we continue to work in earthquake relief efforts in Tlaquilttenango/Jojutla in Morelos, Niltepec in Oaxaca and in Los Reyes La Paz, one of the slum communities we have an ongoing presence in, we have some very good news! **With your help it seems likely that we will be able to help at least 10,000 earthquake victims via the rebuilding of at least 600 homes, giving temporary access to water to over 6,500 slum dwellers, and providing psycho-emotional and spiritual support to at least 1,000 women, men and children suffering from the aftermaths of the earthquake. That's a pretty substantial impact, when you think of the fact that we're not a disaster relief organization and that we started our entire earthquake relief efforts with just \$1,000 USD in our pockets.** Let us share with you how all of this is coming about, because it exemplifies how faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains!

## THE NEED

---

**In Tlaquilttenango 1,886 homes have become partially or completely uninhabitable after the earthquake, affecting over 20% of the city's total housing stock. In Jojutla, over 2,500 homes have been severely affected, which means that more than 25% of homes have been damaged. In Niltepec, 1,254 homes have become partially or fully uninhabitable, implying that close to 70% of the community has been critically damaged. In addition, more than 5,500 families in Los Reyes La Paz remained without water for the past 2-3 months, given that the municipal water system broke and most private water providers (water trucks) now offer their services to more easily accessible middle-income communities that have been affected by the water shortage versus the difficult-to-access slum communities on the hill sides. This situation will only be remedied within the next four months, according to ODAPAS, the municipal water department, leaving thousands of families stranded without water for months.**

**The less visible impact of the earthquakes can be seen in the general psychosis of a population that has been traumatized, not just by the recent earthquakes, but also as a result of growing violence, kidnappings, robberies and abuse at the hand of authorities and narco-gangs that hold the population in Morelos, Oaxaca and Los Reyes La Paz in fear.** Though Mexicans are resilient, and solidarity has figured prominently in the first couple of weeks after the earthquake, the long process of physical and emotional reconstruction is just about to begin. According to Martha Cabrera, a Nicaraguan psychologist who worked with multiply wounded and traumatized communities in her country: *"When a person does not or cannot work through a trauma right away, its social consequences, the most frequent of which are apathy, isolation and aggressiveness, are only revealed over time.... [Particularly in men] the only way they find to express their pain is through violence and aggressiveness, because that's the only way men have learned to express their emotions and shake off their traumas."* That does not bode well in an environment where violence has already become so commonplace.

## OUR RESPONSE

---

### #1: Demolition of Homes at Risk of Collapsing

On petition of local authorities in Tlaquiltenango, Morelos, we helped with the demolition of homes that became uninhabitable and in danger of collapsing after the earthquake. Mobilizing a local business owner to voluntarily use his own retro-excavator, plus renting up to five heavy machines for a total of 12 days to that end, we were able to demolish 207 houses that were in the most critical condition. When taking into account that the current average demolition rate by a private contractor in the region costs between \$1,600 to \$3,000 USD, your combined donations of \$16,000 USD towards that end, helped us save earthquake victims at least \$331,200 USD in demolition costs. Thank you!

### #2: Offering Practical Help to Earthquake Victims

In collaboration with different partners whom we mobilized, we were able to distribute over "1,000 food & pantry baskets" to affected families in the region. We furthermore helped inspect over 100 homes and public buildings with the help of structural and seismic engineers from Engineering Ministries International, helping us deepen our relationships with local authorities. Finally, we helped 11 families in Los Reyes La Paz, who lost their homes, get solid water-resistant tents to live in.

### #3: Providing Psycho-Emotional First Aid

In a region already hurt by drug violence, kidnappings and narco-gangs, the recent earthquakes added another layer of trauma to an already vulnerable population. If not attended, this trauma will definitively produce more aftershocks in the general population. Consequently, we worked on three fronts to address this trauma:

- We immediately mobilized some of Urban Mosaic's staff members **to provide emotional first aid to over 150 families**, whose homes were being demolished by the machines we rented. One resident, [Guadalupe] shared the following after having been visited: *"Thank you so much for all your support, I felt hopeless for the lack of support and for feeling that no one listened to me. The gratitude that I feel today is immense, not only for your help with the demolition. Thank you for your care. Thank you for your kindness. Thank you for the message of hope from the great teacher Jesus. My soul is in debt and I hope to honor your unconditional support."*
- At the same time, in collaboration with a partner organization of ours, PICI Mexico, **we were able to visit local shelters and provide awareness training to another group of earthquake victims on the dangers of human trafficking**. In an area where human trafficking has become common such preventative education is crucial.
- **We furthermore equipped over 173 church leaders** in four different four-hour trainings in collaboration with OC International and PICI Mexico to provide adequate emotional first aid to earthquake victims, taking to the streets and shelters to visit with families, immediately applying what was learned. We are currently in the process of forming a coalition of ten churches in Jojutla, seven churches in Tlaquiltenango and four churches in Nilttepec to implement a coordinated visitation campaign to visit at least 1,000 of the affected families and provide adequate follow-up to those who are interested during the coming 4-6 months.
- **Finally, we were able to provide an initial 3.5-hour training to 56 municipal staff in Tlaquiltenango, helping them gain tools to understand trauma**, vicarious trauma, compassion



fatigue and how to care for themselves and deal with the stress of the earthquake in their constituents. Potentially we will be able to do something similar with municipal staff in Jojutla.

#### **#4: Providing Water to 1,600 Families living in Mexico City Slums**

We are also seeking ways to purchase six water tanks of 22 thousand liters each to provide a temporary water supply to two urban slum communities (Lomas de San Isidro and San José las Palmas) where Urban Mosaic has an ongoing presence. As a result of the earthquake, these communities have not had private and municipal water trucks deliver water for close to four weeks and the situation is getting very critical. Our goal is to place the water tanks on publicly accessible spaces; the municipality will daily fill up the water tanks and the distribution to 1,600 affected families (over 6,500 people) will be overseen by members of citizen committees that will be organized and trained by Urban Mosaic.



#### **#5: Reconstruction of at least 600 Destroyed Homes**

As a result of our good relationship with Habitat for Humanity we have been able to negotiate that much-needed reconstruction of homes will happen in Tlaquiltenango and Nilitpec. Habitat will get monies from government and private sources and provide technical assistance for the physical reconstruction of 150 homes during in a pilot phase, and at least another 450 homes in a follow-up phase. Urban Mosaic, in the meantime, will lead the entire reconstruction process with the affected families. Given the way we normally go about community transformation, our goal is not to simply build homes, but to lead residents in a broad-based community development process that will leave solid leadership and citizen structures in place. The reconstruction process will look as follows:

- **Formation of Coalition of Local Churches**

We've been able to form a coalition of seven local churches in Tlaquiltenango, another coalition of ten churches in Jojutla and a final coalition of four churches in Nilitpec who have started to participate in the ongoing reconstruction effort with the affected families – providing emotional, practical and spiritual follow-up and guidance. Churches that have joined these coalitions will be trained by us and receive ongoing coaching and guidance as to how they can most effectively participate in walking alongside affected families and seeking the Shalom of their city. Our goal after one year is to leave a solid coalition of churches in place in each of the three cities that have learned to walk together, trust each other and work together.

- **Formation of Family and Citizen Committees**

We have carefully chosen 150 families for the pilot initiative (and in a second phase another 450 families), applying a socioeconomic study and prioritizing those families who not only lost their homes, but also a small shop or workshop through which they made their living. All the families chosen that will participate through us in the reconstruction of their homes will be formed into small family committees of 10-15 families each. These committees will receive coaching, leadership training and guidance in how to build earthquake resistant-homes. They will have to invest sweat equity not only in their own home, but help each other in the rebuilding of all of the 10-15 homes of their committee. This process will allow those involved to assume deeper ownership in the rebuilding of their



homes, while creating greater social cohesion and friendships among neighbors – a critical aspect in overcoming trauma and reconstructing the social fabric of these communities.

- **Formation of Transparency Commissions**

In tandem with the family committees, Urban Mosaic will work with local residents to form transparency commissions that will be trained to oversee how government resources are used in the reconstruction effort. Disasters always lend themselves to be exploited by corrupt politicians, who divert much-needed aid from getting to those most in need. Through our legally-recognized transparency commissions, we will be able to help local residents demand and oversee public accounting of government investments in the reconstruction of homes etc.

- **Advocacy on a Municipal Level**

In Tlaquitenango and Nilttepec we have already been able to get initial approval from both mayors to introduce a legislative project in their municipal agendas. The goal is that these two municipalities approve and enforce new building codes that will require residents to build earthquake resistant homes. While such legislation exists on a federal level, most municipalities don't enforce them, nor do they provide municipal guidelines on how to build solid homes. Together with Habitat for Humanity we will be able to provide the technical assistance, so that these two municipalities can offer and enforce such guidelines. Once these municipal building codes go into effect, Tlaquitenango and Nilttepec will be among only a handful of innovative municipalities in the country that have such legislation.

## THE RESULTS

---

What follows is a brief listing of initial results that we were able to carry out with your help! **Your investment in us so far has already saved earthquake victims over \$331,200 USD in demolition costs and positioned us to be the conduits of much larger outside investments for the reconstruction of at least 600 homes.**

**In addition, we've been able to equip 173 church leaders in basic emotional first aid practices** to help them come alongside church members and neighbors who were deeply affected by the earthquake. Together with them and our staff, at least 500 earthquake victims have already received basic emotional first aid.

**We're in the process of forming three church coalitions (in Tlaquitenango, Nilttepec and Jojutla) with a total of 20+ churches** who we will train and coach to offer mid-longer-term assistance and follow-up to victims of the earthquakes (in close coordination with our reconstruction efforts).

**We have built good relationships with municipal authorities in Tlaquitenango, Jojutla, Nilttepec as well as Los Reyes La Paz,** which will allow us to work more effectively in the coming months.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

---

**As we deepen our efforts in each of the four affected regions, would you consider continuing to walk with us. Your help during the first month was amazing! Thank you!** But as you surely know, reconstructing cities devastated by natural disasters is a process, takes time and lots of resources. What we've shown so far is that your investment in us leverages many more local and other resources. In fact, here is how you could get involved with us in the next few months.



Each home that we help rebuild will cost Urban Mosaic \$250 USD that will go towards covering the costs of organizing and coordinating the entire reconstruction process outlined above (in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity, local area churches, municipal authorities, family committees and transparency commissions).

We have calculated that **for each dollar we receive in donations, we will be able to leverage at least 20 USD in municipal and private monies** that will go directly towards the reconstruction of homes. That does not even yet include the sweat equity of the families, the volunteer labor and the non-tangible cost savings we will be able to leverage through our work.

**So, if you want to sponsor the construction of one home for \$250 USD, you will help us leverage an additional \$6,000 USD in local and national resources that will directly go towards the construction of that home.** Added to that come federal funds in the amount of \$4,750 per house from the Mexican National Emergency Fund (FONDEM). **That's a great way to multiply each dollar you're giving.**

So, would you be open to consider sponsoring the rebuilding of one home, or two, or more? Your gift, will not only help rebuild the homes of families who lost everything. In addition, these families will experience a better recovery from trauma, the social fabric in the affected cities will be improved, interested families will receive spiritual counsel, and local churches will be equipped to work together as they seek the Shalom of their cities.

## HOW TO GIVE

---

**Invest \$250 USD towards the rebuilding of one home, which will leverage approximately \$6,000 USD that will go towards the construction of that home.**

**GIVE ONLINE** at [www.urbanmosaic.net/donate](http://www.urbanmosaic.net/donate) and give to our earthquake relief fund!

**DONATE BY CHECK OR MONEY ORDER** payable to Urban Transformation International. Include a note on the memo line to specify that you want to give to our earthquake relief fund. MAIL TO: Urban Transformation International, P.O. Box 983, Clifton NJ 07014

**TEXT MESSAGE** "GIVE" to 717-219-5174

**BE A PART OF THE MOSAIC!**

