

DM2009 Project Summary

Project Number: 3349 Booth Number: 73

Healthy Wells and Latrines Keep Water Drinkable for Vulnerable Communities

COUNTRY: El Salvador

ORGANIZATION: Oxfam America

FUNDING REQUEST: \$199,567

OBJECTIVE: To provide safe drinking water and increase community resilience to extreme climate events in 14 vulnerable coastal communities of Zacatecoluca, El Salvador.

RATIONALE: Communities on El Salvador's Pacific Coast are among those most vulnerable to climate change, facing both increasing periods of drought and the increasingly intense and frequent flooding of local rivers. This, paired with widespread poverty levels, limits these communities' resilience and capacity to adapt to extreme climate events. When flooding occurs, the water supply becomes extremely contaminated because of the overflow from semi-functioning latrines and other contaminants washing into traditional hand-dug wells and underground aquifers. When water supplies are contaminated, populations cannot resume livelihood activities in a timely manner and therefore risk greater economic decline and food insecurity. If communities return to using contaminated water sources, the likelihood of illness is immense, leading to missed workdays and lost wages, and a deepening of the cycle of poverty. These factors place an enormous burden primarily on women, children, and the elderly.

INNOVATION: This project proposes a comprehensive, low-cost approach to maintain healthy drinking water supplies during climate events through the provision of 14 healthy wells and 32 sealed composting latrines. This infrastructure, combined with community education and public sector engagement, will help mitigate the negative effects of increasing climate events. The project will increase awareness and knowledge of drinking water management, hygiene, and the potential effects of climate change on the lives and livelihoods of the selected communities.

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