

Earthquakes in Mexico: Six Months after Major Disaster, Our Relief and Recovery for Children and Families Continues

April 2018

“Living in the streets is not good. It is difficult and dangerous. Just to go to the bathroom or wash clothes is very complicated. It is also really unsafe, especially with children. What I appreciate most about Save the Children is that they get along really well with the children, make them laugh and take care of them because children are the most important thing... My kids could not sleep and were very afraid. Save the Children helped them forget through songs, drawings and games, and helped them realize that life goes on.”

— Diana Baltazar Martínez, a mother in San Lorenzo Tezonco, Mexico whose home was damaged in the earthquakes. Many families slept in the streets after their homes were damaged or destroyed for fear of collapsing buildings and a lack of alternative housing.

The Emergency

It has been six months since the powerful September 2017 earthquakes and aftershocks shook Morelos, Mexico City, Puebla and Oaxaca, Mexico and caused widespread destruction. Over 300 people died and thousands more were injured. Powerful tremors damaged or collapsed homes, schools, and other buildings. Families lost loved ones and livelihoods, and children were left without essential childcare and schooling.

Save the Children was there, reaching children and their families with emergency aid. Six months on, the risk of aftershocks persists, and families remain on edge while struggling to recover. Since September, an additional 2,000 smaller-scale tremors have been felt in the region. On Friday, March 16th, a 7.2-magnitude earthquake rattled southern and central Mexico, causing widespread panic. In this unsettling and anxiety-provoking context, our teams remain in



Puebla, Mexico - Children affected by the earthquakes come to our supervised child-friendly spaces to play, learn, relax, make music, create art and seek psychological and emotional support to deal with their traumatic experiences.

Photo: Save the Children

place, determined to keep children safe, healthy and learning, and drive longer-term recovery efforts.

Our donors have responded generously, but Save the Children requires additional support to sustain and scale up our response in Mexico. Contributions will fund our relief today and help with longer-term recovery for earthquake-affected families.

Save the Children's Response

With our 44 years of experience working in Mexico, we are exceptionally well-positioned to deliver essential relief and help communities recover from this tragedy. Our response over the last six months focused on child protection, education, infrastructure repair and clean water and sanitation to meet immediate needs and begin the transition to longer-term recovery. The following are highlights of this work:

Child Protection

To help keep children safe, we have established 175 child-friendly spaces where children can play, relax, participate in educational activities and seek psychological and emotional support under the supervision of trained adults. Over 800 teachers completed our psycho-emotional support training to cascade this knowledge to colleagues and be able to better meet the needs of 21,700 school-age children. An additional 22,900 children received psycho-emotional help and learned ways to cope with their trauma through specialized sessions. Over 2,200 adults participated in psycho-emotional programming to process trauma, gain coping skills and be better equipped to care for themselves and their children. Several communities have started the reconstruction process and in many areas workers and hazardous materials fill the streets. Through targeted information campaigns, our child protection teams have instructed families on how best to keep children safe in these potentially dangerous conditions.

Education in Emergencies

To return children to learning as quickly as possible, Save the Children sets up temporary learning centers (TLC), supports the reconstruction of school and childcare facilities, provides learning materials and encourages a return to school through information campaigns. Our teams established 22 TLC's that offered educational programming to 660 earthquake-affected children. We delivered over 19,100 learning kits to children needing school supplies. Our 180 back-to-school campaigns motivated families to return children to their education. To help prepare for future emergencies, we delivered over 4,700 emergency preparedness booklets to schools and held three risk-reduction workshops for 114 teachers.

Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Non-Food Items

Save the Children provides household kits to families to help them recover and resupply essential items. To date we have distributed 16,500 kits to families in need. In Puebla, we supported the reconstruction of a school for 221 children and made essential

structural repairs to another school, benefiting an additional 350 girls and boys. Recently we obtained authorization for the construction of school dining rooms and, with local partners, began selecting families who will benefit from housing construction.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

To help prevent the spread of disease, Save the Children supports the installation and repair of clean water and sanitation systems, promotes proper hygiene practices and provides hygiene supplies to families in need. Over the past six months, we installed 24 permanent school bathrooms benefiting over 700 children and provided hygiene kits to 5,600 children and 2,100 adults. We held 190 hygiene workshops for 13,090 children, and delivered water filters and garbage containers to multiple schools. Our 341 sanitation and hygiene campaigns reached over 25,000 adults and 35,600 children – raising awareness of the importance of good hygiene and sanitation practices for good health.

Next Steps

Due to overwhelming need, many children still lack safe housing, proper sanitation, essential household supplies, access to education and reliable child protection systems. Girls and boys who are out of school and sleeping in shelters or informal camps face a particularly high risk of exploitation and abuse without proper protective systems in place.

With your support, Save the Children can sustain and scale up our work in Mexico to help children cope with loss, advocate for child protection systems in all shelters and informal camps, support longer-term housing plans, support livelihood efforts and return all children to learning as quickly as possible. Thank you!

Nobody knows when the next crisis will strike. That's why 10 percent of your generous gift goes to helping our emergency teams prepare for and provide critical assistance when and where children need us the most.