

# GUATEMALA



**2.4M**  
PEOPLE  
IN NEED



**735K**  
PEOPLE  
TARGETED



**6.3M**  
REQUIREMENTS  
(US\$)

Recovery from COVID-19 has been challenging in Guatemala. As a result of the prolonged socio-economic impact of the pandemic, the average poverty rate nationwide has increased by almost 5%. This rise in the poverty level further exacerbates pre-existing vulnerabilities and erodes the limited safety nets available to vulnerable populations.

Year after year, recurrent disasters and humanitarian crises aggravate the historic social gaps that result in high levels of vulnerability, multidimensional poverty, and overall deprivation of essential services among hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans. According to the World Risk Report 2020, Guatemala is the tenth country with the highest level of exposure to disaster worldwide. Globally, it ranks 28th regarding vulnerability according to the 2021 INFORM's risk index and 62nd in the Global Climate Risk Index 2021.

In 2020, Guatemala faced a record-breaking and devastating hurricane season with extreme rainfall, catastrophic winds, and deadly landslides, from which the country has not yet recovered. Unfortunately, recurrent extreme weather events, such as Hurricane Julia that hit Central America in early October 2022, progressively but deeply eroded a weak health infrastructure and local health systems.

Well into 2022, the operational and functional capacity of the health services network is still recovering from the severe damages caused by tropical storms Eta and Iota at the end of 2020, with more than 180 health facilities still in need of repair. Sustained mass migrant flows and increasing violence and social disturbance negatively impact the health system and pose additional challenges to delivering essential health services, particularly to the most vulnerable populations.

Almost three years into the COVID-19 response, vaccination coverage in Guatemala is still far below target. Only 38.2% of the Guatemalan population has a complete vaccination schedule against COVID-19 as of 28 October 2022. This low coverage leaves

Quando sea tu momento  
# Vacúnate



**UN estimates that approximately 5 million people in Guatemala require humanitarian assistance.**

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a large portion of the population vulnerable to new infections and hospitalization and continues to strain the limited resources of the Guatemalan health system.

The UN estimates that approximately 5 million people in Guatemala require humanitarian assistance, including urgent medical care. Pregnant and lactating women, children and people with disabilities, and individuals settled in the areas previously affected by hurricanes Eta and Iota are among the most vulnerable.



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### » Ensure access to and delivery capacity of critical and essential health services

Recover and increase the operational and functional capacity of critical and essential services in health facilities impacted by health emergencies and disasters, including COVID-19, focusing on children, adolescents, women of childbearing age, pregnant women, adults, people with disabilities, and migrants.

### » Scale-up emergency detection and response capacities in the health sector

Increase the capacities of health authorities, local institutions, and communities to anticipate adverse events, rapidly detect major health threats, and effectively respond to needs during health emergencies and disasters.



## RESPONSE STRATEGY

The response strategy of the health sector in Guatemala aims to protect and save the lives and dignity of severely affected people through effective and coordinated humanitarian response efforts embracing a human rights approach and intersectional and differential perspective respectful of age, gender, diversity, and cultural and linguistic relevance.

It seeks to promote sustainable solutions that contribute to exercising the right to health and foster self-sufficiency, empowerment, and resilience of affected people. It aims to focus on protection, intersectionality, and diversity inclusion and use a comprehensive approach to the emergency cycle from humanitarian action recovery to resilience and development.

PAHO's actions in 2023 will continue to prioritize territories that COVID-19 has most impacted, extreme weather events including tropical storms Eta and Iota, and more recently, Hurricane Julia, disruptive social phenomena including violence and mass migratory flows as well as the increasing burden of communicable diseases such as dengue.

The identified interventions will restore and increase the capacity of local health networks to meet existing health needs, increase surge capacity to deal with outbreaks and post-traumatic stress derived from health emergencies and disasters, and ensure the continuity of essential health services during a sexual and reproductive health adverse event.

Priority actions will also focus on persons with disabilities, elderlies, and migrant populations and on improving the exercise of the right to health and access to health care for those in need, based on a rights-based and culturally relevant approach.

PAHO will continue to strengthen coordination mechanisms at the national and sub-national levels, including the health cluster, and promote strategic alliances and working agreements with local non-governmental organizations and Civil Society Organizations that can contribute to achieving its objectives. Community engagement and empowerment will also be encouraged to support ownership, appropriateness, and sustainability of actions.



## EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Priority objectives for 2023 include the strengthening and reestablishment of capacities for the provision of critical and essential services in facilities impacted by disasters and emergencies, including rehabilitation works, recovery of lost supplies and equipment, and growing human resource capacity, as well as strengthening capacities of the health institutions and communities to anticipate and respond to health emergencies and disasters.

Emphasis is on strengthening primary health services and improving capacities for early detection of infectious hazards. To do that, the priority response activities identified include:

- **Updating and implementing** the country's multi-hazard health emergency plan and emergency response protocols.
- **Rehabilitation of targeted primary health care facilities** in affected areas to ensure the operational capacity of prioritized health facilities and operation safety through increased access to safe water and waste management.
- **Provision of supplies, equipment, material, and tools for epidemiological surveillance**, establishing situation rooms in prioritized health facilities, operating water collection systems, and monitoring and controlling safe water quality in selected health care units.
- **Capacity building of health personnel on epidemiological surveillance**, standards and protocols for sexual and reproductive health, clinical management of sexual violence, maternal and child health, nutrition, and disability. These improved capacities will focus on rights, cultural relevance, gender, psychosocial first aid, emergency mental health care, emergency information management and reporting, risk analysis, management, and timely response to health emergencies and disasters.
- **Strengthening community capacities for first response, and health prevention and promotion**, including sexual and reproductive health and infection prevention and control.

**Emphasis is on strengthening primary health services and improving capacities for early detection of infectious hazards.**

## IMPACT STORIES

### More than 8 000 people in Sepur Zarco, Guatemala, benefit from the new Temporary Emergency Care Module

The community of Sepur Zarco, located on the departmental border of Alta Verapaz and Izabal, now has a Temporary Emergency Attention Module (MAET) that will allow the continuation of first-level health services after the devastation caused by tropical storms Eta and Iota at the end of 2020. The floods forced the loss of essential grain crops, the collapse of roads, and severe damage to homes and the medical consultations mobile unit structure.

Faced with this emergency that endangered the community, the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), within the framework of the project "Health response to the impact of tropical storms ETA/IOTA," installed a MAET that will ensure the operational capacity and continued access to health services for the population of Sepur Zarco. The project was made possible with funds from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

Additional assistance for the installation of the MAET came from the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS), the organization Un Techo Para Mí País Guatemala, and the community of Sepur Zarco, who, through their community leaders, expressed gratitude for the support provided, recognizing that it will benefit everyone by improving health and living conditions for the community.

Made of wood with a metal roof, the MAET may be dismantled by health workers when it is no longer required and relocated to another location where it is needed. Unlike the two rooms of the previous mobile unit at the site, the MAET has nine rooms: an office, an area for cures and injections, a nursing station, a pharmacy ware



**PAHO's interventions will allow the continuation of first-level health services after the devastation caused by tropical storms Eta and Iota at the end of 2020.**

house, a sterilization area, a waiting room, a lobby, and a service area that includes a laundry room. There are three restrooms, one for health personnel and two for patients. It also has electrical power and plumbing for water.

The MAET schematic plans were included, as part of the project, along with a guide for disassembly, relocation, and recommendations for proper maintenance to ensure a longer useful life. Delivered with the MAET was a group of supplies, equipment, and furniture for health care. Each environment was identified using signs to facilitate the services' location provided.

Read the full article [here](#).

## HOW TO SUPPORT THIS APPEAL

**Generous donations from the international community allow PAHO to deliver its technical cooperation and deploy its operational and logistics support to address existing and emerging public health challenges impacting the countries and territories of the Americas.**

The financial requirements outlined in this appeal are pivotal to providing lifesaving health assistance and protective services to communities affected by emergencies without leaving anyone behind. PAHO ensures it will distribute funding most efficiently and where needed, in coordination with public health authorities, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations, and other humanitarian partners.

Here are some ways private or public organizations and individuals can contribute to this donor appeal.



### DONATING DIRECTLY TO THIS APPEAL

Financial contributions from governmental aid agencies, multilateral institutions, foundations and philanthropic organizations, and other public and private sector partners are among the most valuable and effective forms of support for health emergency response. The main characteristic of a financial donation is its flexibility to support an agile response. The resources obtained can be used quickly and efficiently, responding to the most acute needs and ensuring that the funded actions fully align with the local priority public health actions.

Donating organizations are invited to contribute cash to support one, several, or all priority actions highlighted in this appeal. To donate to PAHO, please contact Julie Mauvernay ([mauvernj@paho.org](mailto:mauvernj@paho.org)).

Individual donations can also make a difference and help save lives by supporting the delivery of essential supplies and critical assistance to people in need. Individuals can contribute to PAHO's Health Emergency Appeal by mailing checks to PAHO, 525 23rd St NW, Washington, D.C., 20037.



### DONATING IN-KIND RESOURCES AND SERVICES

PAHO encourages the private and public sectors to align response efforts to this Appeal's priority lines of action. Donations from corporations must comply with PAHO's guidelines and roadmap for engagement with the private sector.

To make an in-kind donation of goods and services, please contact Julie Mauvernay ([mauvernj@paho.org](mailto:mauvernj@paho.org)) or [donate@paho.org](mailto:donate@paho.org) to guarantee coherent priorities, minimize gaps and duplication in the health response, and ensure quality assurance of the goods offered.

PAHO appreciates and thanks in advance its donors for their generous contributions to support the delivery of its humanitarian health assistance throughout the Region. PAHO will report contributions to this Appeal on its webpage to acknowledge and give visibility to donors' generosity, report on funding received, and identify remaining financial gaps.

**Help us provide lifesaving health assistance and protective services to communities affected by emergencies, without leaving anyone behind.**