

The Earthquake in Ecuador: The Peace and Hope that Remains with Me.



Albergue Group 19 from San Cicente-- Session 2 of Workshop on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse towards Children Post-Earthquake.

Today marks exactly two months after the 7.8-degree earthquake hit Ecuador on Saturday, April 16th, 2016. Peace and Hope Foundation, in emergency response, continues to give humanitarian assistance, support efforts for emotional recovery, and the prevention of sexual violence against children post-earthquake. These efforts ensure that hundreds of boys, girls, and women are prepared to confront this type of problem. Disaster prevention and economic recovery and development are two more areas where Peace and Hope Foundation work.

In many cases, these programs and assistance have reached the families in need in the provinces of Manabí and Esmeraldas.

One of these instances of provision happened in Nuevo Pedernales, Manabí.

Nuevo Pedernales is home to **Nieves Gonzabay**, a pastor of the International Evangelical Church, who for over 30 years has



been serving her community from her church. Tragically, during the earthquake, Nieves lost her house. Despite the hardship that the earthquake created for her, Nieves, along with volunteers, assists 200 people daily by providing lunches and snacks, and sharing the Word of God: That God is our perfect love, our promise, and our support. She thanks God for giving them all the strength and faith to go forward.

“It was a moment that was incredibly emotional, and so difficult, everyone was in a place of desperation and we didn’t know where to go”, explained Nieves, sadly recounting her experience of the earthquake. She was never worried about her house or anything she owned, but only her family that was not at her side. She found herself isolated and desperate, and during the earthquake she cried out in prayer, *“Lord, wherever they are, my family, my kids, my brothers, my sisters: protect them.”* Her family is alive, however her home and all of her belongings were destroyed.

Currently, Nieves wants to start working more for herself and her own family, since she has served in the community of Nuevo Pedernales from the day that the earthquake hit, she has realized that the pain, desolation, and reality of the disaster has deeply affected her also. She has served God, shown up, and dedicated herself to working at the community meal center. *“We have been supported by the Christian Committee of Emergencies, and I want to thank Peace and Hope Foundation, for their contributions to the nourishment that God has blessed us with every day,”* added Nieves, who also thanked everyone who has come together to support her.

Nieves concluded by saying, *“Now that we have come this far, I’ve come to start worrying about myself, because I want to fix my house. I want to ask all of my friends, my brothers and sisters, and everyone who wants to help me build my house again, because right now I live in a tent. I know that God will help me. I feel blessed and strengthened every day by the Lord, with the help of friends who have come, and the pastors who have come and given spiritual support. I thank you all, especially Peace and Hope Foundation, who has come alongside me during this time. May God bless you all”.*



Humanitarian assistance consists of food for the meal center, along with emotional and spiritual accompaniment.

Economic Recovery Program



Peace and Hope Foundation has continued supporting the economic recovery in the Provinces of Manabí and Esmeraldas, which has benefitted the families of the shelters, churches, and the communities affected by the earthquake. They support people who make condensed milk, sweetened coconut, bite-sized candies, and banana chips, and with these

products, they can make kits, called “Support Snacks” to give to other families in need. These small businesses also support themselves and those running them, training the community members to have their own businesses and develop their trade.

Humanitarian Relief



To the affected areas, assistance has consisted of: Nutrition and hygiene kits, providing water filters and giving food daily through the meal centers in the places affected by the earthquake in Manta, Portoviejo, Bahía de Caráquez, Canoa, Pedernales, Nuevo Pedernales, and Chamanga. Peace and Hope Foundation has been able to distribute 27,440 meals, 1,780

water filters, 2,700 nourishment kits, and 2,500 hygiene kits.

Psychological Support



In the prevention of sexual abuse against children: workshops are directed to groups of boys and girls who have been found living in formal or informal shelters. We have been assisting boys and girls in the local shelters in the following cities: Manta and Portoviejo (244), Bahía de Caráquez (182), Pedernales (170) and Canoa (59).



Post-Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Accompaniment: Directed to teachers, tutors, church leaders and community leaders. We've trained 20 leaders in Manta y Portoviejo, and 60 leaders in Pedernales.

Individual Post-Disaster Situations: We've been able to assist 25 people in Manta y Portoviejo, 10 in Bahía, and 17 in Pedernales.



These actions have been carried out in partnership with churches and Christian missionaries, including the Christian Committee of Emergencies (CCE), the Union of Pastors and Evangelical Leaders of Portoviejo (UPL), and with the Inter-institutional Network

of Evangelical (REDI).

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