

Responding to Ecuador's earthquake



Town of Pedernales, northern Ecuador, after the earthquake

On the 16th April an earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale hit northern Ecuador. The official figures show 660 people lost their lives, nearly 5,000 were injured and 30,000 lost their homes. The wider impacts are enormous with 560 schools and the homes of 700,000 people damaged. Rebuilding and re-establishing livelihoods will take years.

There has been incredible solidarity from fellow Ecuadorians, seen in the convoys of vehicles taking food, water, shelter, medicines and clothes to the most affected provinces. International support is also arriving.

Paz y Esperanza has been at the centre of mobilizing the local church with a quick and effective response – aiming to meet people's immediate needs of food, shelter and clothing, but also seeking to provide ongoing psychological and pastoral support.

Within 4 days staff visited the worst hit areas of Manabí and Esmeraldas, distributing water and water purifiers, food and toiletries.

They also met the local churches and organisations to assess the wider needs, giving them support to seek funding and find people who would travel there and give up weeks of their time to support those whose worlds have been turned upside down.

Washington Reyes is a student and part of a group from his church *Iglesia Centro Cristiano de Milagro* that has gone to Canoa, a town where 80% of the jobs depended on tourism.

“Each new day is a miracle from God. Today Paz y Esperanza arrived to help us with the food kitchen so we could feed more people. They encourage us and strengthen us spiritually and now they are helping with psychological support in this hostel”. (Washington Reyes)

With the local church they have set up a hostel and support 100 people who have lost everything – including houses and jobs.

Paz y Esperanza were able to respond so quickly partly due to the work of the Evangelical Network of Social Ministries, which acted as a coordinating body for Christians nationally who wanted to help. This was a group that PyE helped set up a few years earlier.

Through the Ecuadorian Interior Ministry and with churches they have also set up programmes for psychological support and prevention of sexual abuse with families living in temporary accommodation, reaching 150 people already, mostly children.

PyE has also been able to draw on their international experiences from the 2007 Pisco earthquake in Peru and will be working with communities to help them be prepared for any future disasters. They are bringing the experience of building earthquake-resistant houses in Peru from bamboo.



Photo: Paul and Jo Epton, going to Ecuador on June 4th

A huge thanks to those who have already supported the Ecuador earthquake appeal. PyE UK raised £600 in a few days, which enabled PyE Ecuador staff to travel to the worst affected areas.

To donate to the earthquake response visit <https://www.justgiving.com/ecuador-earthquake>

PAUL AND JO EPTON - VOLUNTEERING WITH PyE ECUADOR

On 4th June Paul and Jo are travelling to Ecuador to volunteer for a year with Paz y Esperanza. Until recently, Paul was working for New Life Church in Scunthorpe and Jo was at a local firm of solicitors.

They both have a heart for fighting injustice and Jo has recently studied International Human Rights Law. Paul is passionate about working with those who are marginalised.

Paul will be working in the integral mission programme and Jo in access to justice.

Please pray for them as they settle into this exciting new time in their lives. We will bring an update directly from them once they have their feet on the ground!

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- PyE staff and local churches as they respond to the immediate needs of those affected by the earthquake
- Paul and Jo Epton as they go to Ecuador on June 4th to work with PyE
- Ongoing financial support for PyE Ecuador
- Second round of Peru's Presidential elections on June 5th

BOOK A SPEAKER for your small group or church, to equip you to stand alongside those silenced by oppression and injustice across Latin America.

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