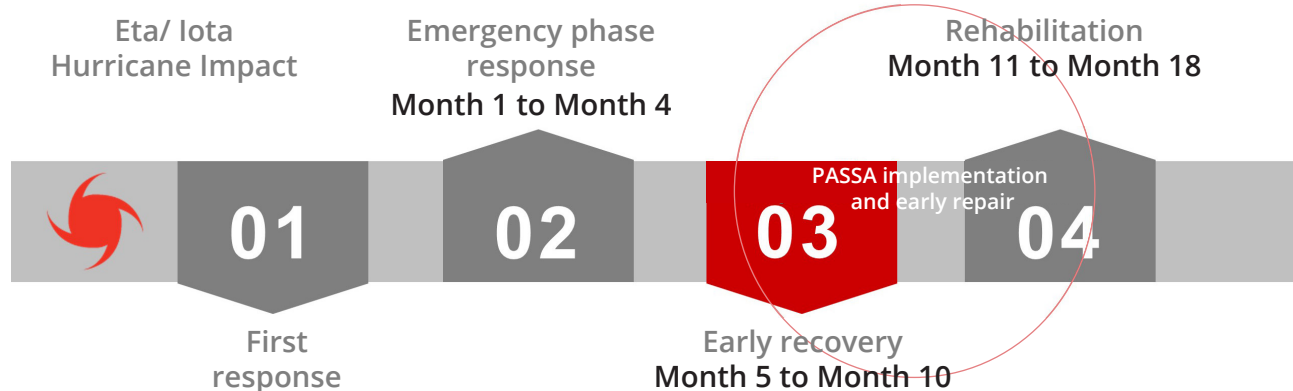


SAFE HOUSING, RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Introduction

This study aims to share the experience gained from the implementation of the Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness workshop and the Housing Repair Programme conducted as part of response to Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Honduras.

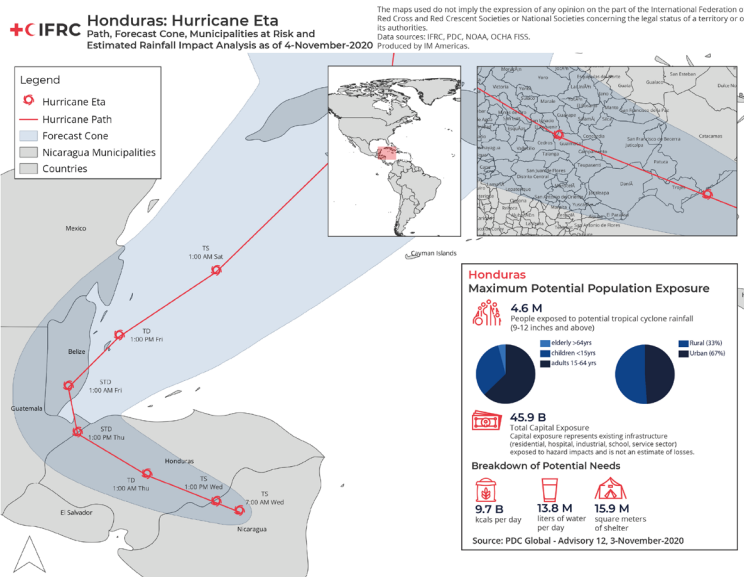
Timeline of Honduran Red Cross Actions in Response to Hurricanes Eta and Iota



Context

The storms and flooding that followed Hurricanes Eta and Iota in November 2020 damaged homes and led to the loss of belongings and property. Housing and community buildings in communities exposed to flooding from the Chamelecón and Ulúa rivers were seriously damaged or destroyed, forcing families to move to shelters, to the sides of highways, to move in with host families or rent rooms under precarious living conditions.

According to data collected in early December 2020, it was estimated that some 300,000 people were forced to move to temporary shelters and accommodations, of whom



93,000 were housed at official collective centres. Sheltered families reported unsanitary conditions in collective centres, as well as a lack of food and basic supplies and low disease prevention and biosafety measures. The lack of official figures regarding displaced families and the places where families sought refuge, as well as the speed with which people moved, made it difficult to plan activities.



The type of housing in the Sula Valley ranges from wooden houses raised on stilts (originally built by the banana companies, many families have enclosed the lower level with cement blocks to gain extra space) to single-story houses. In rural communities, the most common building materials are concrete blocks, wood and bamboo, and zinc sheet for roofing.

Home ownership: A few families live here informally; however, most of the families with no property belong to cooperatives or groups of small farmers who settled here more than 14 years ago on land that belonged to banana or sugar companies. These are currently in the process of being legalized.

What is the Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness?

The Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA) is a methodology developed by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

PASSA aims to build local capacity to reduce housing-related risks by raising awareness and enhancing skills for joint analysis, learning and decision-making at the community level. Its purpose is to raise awareness of vulnerabilities and risks related to the built environment and foster safe and locally appropriate settlement and shelter practices.

PASSA provides communities with tools for improving their living environments, building safe housing and designing better communities through a participatory process. It is a powerful approach that can be employed when working to enhance community resilience.

Honduran Red Cross (HRC), in close collaboration with and with support from the IFRC and Habitat for Humanity, launched a PASSA pilot component within the framework of emergency response to hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2021. The PASSA pilot component was implemented in the communities of San José and El Buen Samaritano in the municipality of La Lima, Cortés. The goal was not only to increase safe shelter



awareness and work on improving existing housing, but also to understand and advocate for the inclusion of PASSA, adapted to the local context and needs, in future Honduran Red Cross projects.

Adopting an integrated approach to tackle complex risks

Implementing PASSA helps communities identify shelter-related threats and vulnerabilities, as well as recognize and analyse the causes of the vulnerabilities that affect communities in the Sula Valley, namely the floods caused by tropical storms. It also enables communities to adopt safe community management practices intended to address problems related to housing, neighborhoods and/or communities.



The knowledge regarding the risks in San José and Samaritana (located along the banks of the Ulúa and Chamelecón rivers) generated through the implementation of PASSA helped build vulnerability assessment capacity, which in turn enabled the identification of actions to prepare for and respond to floods. Some interventions and emergency response and planning are community-centred, with participation by existing networks and institutions such as community boards, water management boards, health committees and civil society.

Honduran Red Cross benefitted from the transfer of knowledge that PASSA has afforded as an integrated process in the implementation of safe shelter programmes within the National Society. A total of 26 people, including volunteers and staff, have been trained as PASSA methodology facilitators. This ensures a holistic vision for community actions focused on implementation of a comprehensive plan that ensures safe housing and resilient communities for future interventions.

Safe shelter awareness and implementation

To ensure implementation of the PASSA project in the Sula Valley, a workshop was held to provide PASSA facilitator training to volunteers and staff working in areas related to housing, risk reduction, water and sanitation and community development, and to college-level interns majoring in Architecture and Engineering. The workshop was delivered with support from the IFRC in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity.

The workshop focused on providing 26 volunteers and key staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate and guide families in understanding and implementing PASSA. After the workshop, a Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) was conducted in order to implement PASSA at the community level.

All eight PASSA steps were planned and implemented at the community level in the second half of 2021. To ensure proper understanding, key stakeholders, such as local authorities, architects, volunteers and masons, were included in the orientation for the approach and in its implementation.

Frequency and impact of hazards: During this PASSA activity, the community of El Buen Samaritano provided recommendations to avoid future flood risks and recognized the importance of having a safe roof:

1. Containment Banks: El Buen Samaritano residents were concerned about the lack of maintenance provided to its embankments, which had been built with earth prior to the flooding. These embankments protected the community from the Chamelecón River and its relief channels; however, after the floods, they realized that these embankments needed to be improved. In response, the HRC supported the community's petition, together with the mayor's office and other communities, to reinforce the embankments.

2. Roof reinforcement: Securing roofs was one of the community's priorities, not because of the high winds but rather the high-water levels. Flood waters rose more than two meters inside homes, forcing families to climb onto their roofs to remain safe during the floods.

8 PASSA activities

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1 Historical Profile | 5 Solution options |
| 2 Community mapping and visit | 6 Planning for change |
| 3 Frequency or impact of hazards or threats | 7 Problem Box |
| 4 Safe or unsafe accommodation | 8 Follow-up plan |

Community and family selection criteria

The criteria below were used to identify communities and families to be selected for PASSA:

- Communities affected by Hurricanes Eta and Iota
- Communities located in flood-prone areas
- Families housed in temporary accommodations or shelters who returned to damaged homes
- Families who own their homes and have the documents to prove it
- Families with homes requiring non-structural improvements
- Families who committed to actively participate in the meetings related to the implementation of shelter projects at the community level.
- Families with no members engaging in income-generating activities and that received no benefits (pension, social benefits) during the emergency and early recovery phase following Eta/Iota

The following families were prioritized:

- Families with women who were pregnant and/or nursing
- Families with children under 18
- People with disabilities (according to the [Washington Group on Disability Statistics](#))
- Elderly people
- Families with one or more members experiencing health issues
- Single-parent households (widowed, single, divorced/separated)
- Households with five or more members
- Households that experienced a change in family conditions (e.g., **injury or death of a family member**) as a result of Hurricanes Eta and Iota

After the selection process, trained personnel provided guidance on the PASSA methodology to families in San Jose and Buen Samaritano via a pre-PASSA induction activity. Families were given an overview of the context in which PASSA is implemented, the implementation objectives, the work methodology and the skills transfer.

Once communities had identified their vulnerabilities and capacities via the VCA, the eight PASSA activities were carried out at the community level.



Owner-driven housing repair programme

As part of the IFRC Eta and Iota Appeal, the Honduran Red Cross delivered US\$ 368 via a cash voucher assistance (CVA) to each family participating in the housing repair programme. This plan, driven by the homeowners themselves with technical advice from HRC, focused on repairing housing that had suffered non-structural damage after Eta and Iota.

The programme contemplated a comprehensive intervention in which, in addition to the housing component, families would receive funds to cover basic needs as well as hydro-sanitary and water storage systems via the WASH component.

Owner-driven housing repair programme process:

The families are responsible for carrying out the housing repairs, with technical support throughout the process from the HRC to ensure the quality of the works.

1. Project socialization in communities
2. Damage assessment and vulnerability and capacity assessment in communities
3. Family selection
4. Collection of documents by families for registration
5. Signing of agreements with families
6. PASSA Training
7. Cash transfer
8. Housing repair
9. Works monitoring
10. Delivery of certificate of completion of works.

Repairs to the Aguilera family's home

Francisca Aguilera's family, from the community of El Buen Samaritano, is one of many families in Honduras' Sula Valley who participated in the housing repair programme via a CVA to make non-structural repairs to their home.

Francisca attended the PASSA training, as she is the head of her household. Using the training and funds that she received, she and her family decided to build a concrete floor and repair the roof that had been damaged by the Eta and Iota floods.

Francisca and her family were able to complete the repairs to their home by contributing own funds to pay for skilled labour. Francisca says, ***"For the improvements to my home, we hired a bricklayer to***

lay the floor and repair the walls and a carpenter to install the ceiling beams. We all stayed home during the repair process to help with whatever was needed. It took us 30 days to make the repairs with what the Red Cross gave us, and that has helped improve my family's living conditions and mitigate the effects of the floods. Now we continue to make improvements to our home, and we are grateful for the support we have been given".



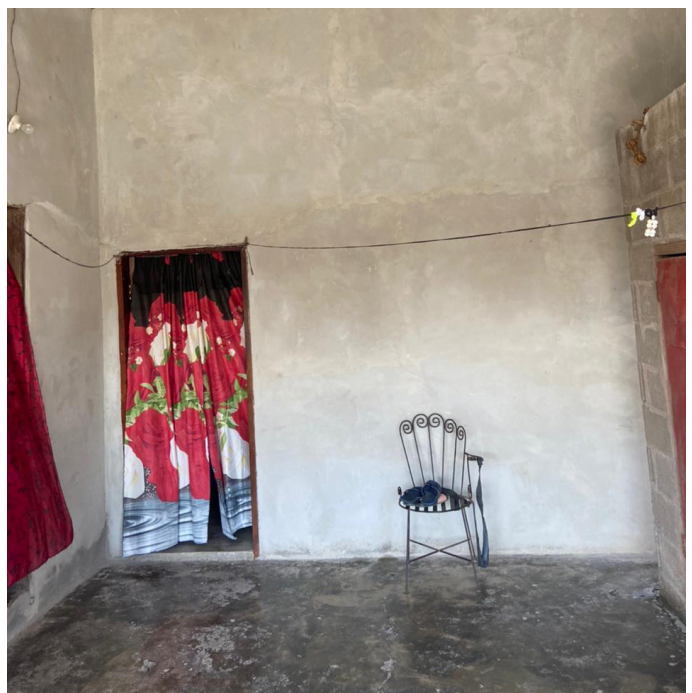
Learning gained from PASSA in Honduras

According to post-distribution monitoring:

- 65 per cent of families used the funds to repair floors and roofs.
- Most interviewed families depended on agriculture and the jobs generated by banana and African palm plantations in the Sula Valley area for income, which were affected by Eta and Iota. This led to a lack of income among community families.
- All families had attended PASSA awareness and training sessions.
- The use of cash transfers for the housing repair programme was well received by families, who were responsible for purchasing materials and paying for skilled labour
- It is recognized that PASSA was part of the exit strategy of the communities since the main risks were identified and work was carried out at the community level with the construction of embankments to prevent future flooding, and some families carried out more repair and reinforcement work on their homes.



Wall reinforcement in the community of El Buen Samaritano.



Floor construction in the community of El Buen Samaritano