

Corporate Responsibility

Constructing a future for the village of Chocos

Overview

On August 15, 2007, much of the region south of Lima was shaken by an earthquake that destroyed and damaged many of their stone and sun-dried brick homes. Roche Peru with its 170 employees responded with emergency assistance, but also promptly recognised the need to identify a longer-term initiative. They decided to assist a small mountain village, San Cristóbal de Chocos (also known as Chocos), in a tangible and sustainable manner through rebuilding homes, restoring the local school and communal facility and construction of a dam. The project involved not only financial support but many hours of volunteer work by the employees.

About the project

Analysis of local needs following the disaster disclosed many problems, the most important being destroyed and collapsed homes, poor maternal and child health and lack of enough water to grow food for local consumption or to sell at markets on the coast. There was also a need to improve the crop quality as well as maximising livestock production. As a committed corporate partner to the village Roche supported the people of Chocos in reaching the project goals of improving health, nutrition and food security, rebuilding and reinforcing houses, reducing the risk of further earthquake devastation, enhancing natural resources, and poverty reduction through improved quality of life.

Phase 1 of the work aimed to provide inhabitants with know-how, technical supervision and materials needed for them to rebuild their homes and to restore the local school and communal facility that are the centre for public activities in the village. This also included the design and construction of a dam to collect water for agriculture as well as for drinking.

Phase 2 helped provide a municipal vehicle, up to 100 special livestock, 2,000 square meters of road paving, 3,000 square meters of roof tiles, tons of nails and more than enough wheelbarrows, tools and school materials for the year.



Key facts and figures

- The region 200 km south of Lima, Peru, was shaken by a strong earthquake that reached 7.9 degrees on the Richter Scale.
- The natural disaster destroyed most sun-dried brick houses, leaving 500 dead, 2,000 injured and 100,000 people homeless.
- The mountain village of Chocos, situated 2,820 meters above sea, was badly affected; 31 homes were destroyed, 40 near collapse and 50 homes needed urgent repairs.
- Chocos has a population close to 400 inhabitants. Their main economic activity is farming, with almost all crops used for local consumption.

“After the earthquake, we, the people of Roche, felt the motivation to do something to help. We asked ourselves: How can we really make a difference? That’s why we decided to go to the mountains, to the regions where aid would probably never arrive.”

Rolf Hoenger, General Manager Roche Lima, 2007

Background

While the areas most affected by the earthquake were the coastal cities around Pisco and Cañete, the nearby Andean valleys were also partly destroyed. The local housing had a range of deficiencies that made it especially vulnerable, such as low-resistant materials, no anti-seismic strengthening structures, unstable walls and weak roofs. Aid from the major private institutions and the Peruvian government for reconstruction was prioritised in the densely populated coastal towns, far from the small Andean communities like Chocos.

The homes needed to be reconstructed or repaired and they urgently needed to secure their water supply as scarcity of water not only impacted their livestock but also meant only a single crop during the short rainy season, leading to food shortages. The project of a dam was planned several times but never came to fruition. In 2008, through the support of Roche along with manual labour from the village, the construction of the dam was finally completed.

Roche became a corporate partner with the village of Chocos in 2007 by funding phase one of the reconstruction of the village. In



2008, Roche employees worldwide supported the project further by donating to the Re&Act campaign “Giving Together – Constructing a Future” that ran from May to July. In line with the company’s philosophy of making a sustainable difference, the focus was on helping Chocos prosper beyond its pre-earthquake subsistence.

Results

Water:

Construction of a dam, inaugurated in December 2008, creating year round water supply by capturing the rainy season flow of a small river. This was followed by installation of a water tank within the municipality and consequent irrigation.

Housing:

From 2008 to 2010, construction or re-construction of 41 homes to anti-seismic standards.

Infrastructure:

Playground for children in the main plaza completed in 2008. Community eating place completed in 2009. Since 2008 Roche Lima delivers school supplies to the children of Chocos every year.



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