

## PfR Guatemala country factsheet

**Country:** Guatemala

**Project Area:** El Quiché (Santa Cruz, Sacapulas)

**Organization(s):** Guatemalan Red Cross, Wetlands International

Key data about the project area (area of the beneficiaries):

**Population:** El Quiché 921,390 (CA), 85% of the population is indigenous.

**Geography:** Quiche is a multi-threat area, is located in a seismic zone and is very sensitive to the effects of natural disasters such as Tropical Storms.

**Main livelihood sectors:** cultivation staple crops

**Beneficiaries #:**

**Beneficiary groups:** indigenous people, focus on women, youth and elderly (the latter also for their indigenous knowledge)

### **What types of hazards occur in project site?**

seismic zone, Tropical Storms, drought

Quiche is a multi-threat area, is located in a seismic zone and is very sensitive to the effects of natural disasters such as Tropical Storms, which damage crops on a large scale and destroy infrastructure, roads and bridges in the region.

### **How are these hazards exacerbated?**

*By human activity? (including ecosystems degradation)*

lack of knowledge and means to prepare for and respond to disasters, low literacy rate

In Quiche deforestation is one of most important problems, as well as poor environmental management. Poor agricultural practices degrade the soil and make them more vulnerable to hydro-meteorological and climatic phenomena.

The organizational capacity of communities is low, there is a lack of knowledge and means to prepare for disasters and respond to emergencies in an effective way.

*(?) Politics?*

low organisational capacity community, poor environmental management, history of civil conflict

Solutions to the above problems are complicated by high levels of illiteracy among indigenous groups, low of access to health services, imbalance in gender relations, and a dysfunctional legal system that is unable to protect the cultural, economical and social rights of indigenous groups.

Governance at national, local and community levels is deficient and there are no programmes for DRR and conservation of biodiversity in agro-forestry systems, forests and wetlands. Government policies encourage the production of commercial crops, and do not favour the production of staples. The government institutions responsible for livelihood development, disaster risk reduction and ecosystem management do not have the technical, financial and human capacity to implement government policies. Coordination between these institutions is quasi-absent.

*(?) Economics?*

mining activities, poor agricultural practices

The globalized economy favours the expansion of monocultures for agro export, and prevents indigenous cultural autonomy in planning agricultural production and the control over water sources and other basic resources. The traditional products of peasants and indigenous people are not marketed nationally or internationally. Domestic trade is a "paperless" and without formal contracts. The majority of the population has very few opportunities for generating an economic surplus to be reinvested in their own human and social development.

*Climate change?*

Projected changes for Central America show that unusually warm days and nights are likely to increase while unusually cold days and nights are likely to decrease. Heat waves and heat spells are also likely to be more frequent and longer in most of the region.

Models predict a median annual average temperature increase of 3.2°C for Central America, with a range of 1.8 to 5°C possible by 2080-2090 (A1B scenario). Rainfall is predicted to decrease at an annual median average of 9% with a range of -48% to +9% possible by 2080-2090 (A1B scenario). Extreme rainfall events have also become more frequent in recent years and tropical cyclones' intensity is expected to increase.

IPCC global projections also predict an increase of 0.18 to 0.59m in sea-level rise by 2200 but several other sources indicate that it could rise by as much as 1 meter.

### **How are people's livelihoods affected?**

*Human*

*Social*

*Physical*

lack of access to drinking water, poor sanitation provision.

*financial*

*Natural*

Reliance on few staple crops, such as maize and beans.

Increasing disaster occurrence, affecting hundreds of small farmers whose production is based on two products: corn and beans.

### **What are the solutions offered by the alliance?**

*Preparedness*

*Early warning*

*Mitigation*

*development*