



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ChildFund Responds to Earthquake Victims in Guatemala**

*The development organization will commit up to US\$250,000 to aid in home reconstruction and provide psychosocial support for children.*

**Guatemala City, Guatemala.** – Nov. 20, 2012 – ChildFund International, a child development organization that has worked in Guatemala for more than 45 years, will commit up to US\$250,000 to support disaster relief for the most vulnerable communities affected by the 7.4-magnitude earthquake that struck Nov. 7.

Disaster-relief efforts will be provided in coordination with Guatemala's National Emergency Committee (Conred). Response will focus on assisting rural indigenous communities in the affected states of San Marcos, Quetzaltenango and Sololá.

ChildFund International will support communities as they repair and rebuild the houses of 550 families who lost their homes. The organization will also provide psychosocial support to more than 12,500 affected children, ages 4-15, and support the reconstruction of infrastructure including schools and community water and sanitation systems. These efforts will benefit more than 25 communities in three Guatemalan states.

"For children, emotional stress is one of the most devastating effects of the earthquake," said Mario Lima, director of ChildFund Guatemala. "ChildFund will be offering its expertise in providing psychosocial support to children affected by the disaster to help them cope with post-traumatic stress, address their fears and engage them in recreational activities so that they gradually recover confidence to go on with their daily lives," Lima added.

"I felt that we were going to die," says María, a 12-year-old girl from the community of San Andres Chapil in San Marcos Guatemala, who lost her house. "I saw how my house was falling down. We were lucky it was during the day; if it had been at night, only God knows what would have happened."

María has nine brothers and sisters and is one of the 1.3 million people affected by the earthquake. María's first wish is for her family to be safe and then she would like to have her house rebuilt as before.



During the next four months, ChildFund will help children like Maria and their families recover from the disaster. By working hand in hand with local partner organizations that have firsthand knowledge of the communities and their specific challenges, ChildFund will assist thousands of people struggling to get back on their feet.

ChildFund also will continue to raise funds to assist the most vulnerable, especially children with urgent needs during this emergency.

### **About ChildFund Guatemala**

ChildFund has been working in Guatemala since 1964. The organization's mission is to empower communities living in extreme poverty and to improve the well-being of infants, children and youth. ChildFund Guatemala currently works with 18,244 children, benefiting more than 30,000 people in 296 communities and nine Guatemalan states through 19 local partner organizations.

For additional information or to schedule an interview with our staff on the field, please contact:

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ChildFund International is a global child development and protection agency serving more than 17.8 million children and family members in 31 countries. For more than 70 years, we have helped the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable children survive and thrive to reach their full potential and become leaders of enduring change. As a member of ChildFund Alliance we create supportive environments in which children can flourish. [To sponsor a child in need, visit the ChildFund website.](#)