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AMERICA/GUATEMALA - Malnutrition, poverty and drought for thousands of women, children, indigenous and rural population

Antigua (Agenzia Fides) - A medical team will travel to Basque Retalhuleu, 200 km from the capital of Guatemala, on November 15 to carry out more than 150 surgeries over the course of two weeks. For more than 10 years, these professionals spend their holidays bringing their medical aid to those who are deprived of everything. The crisis, the precarious economic growth, unemployment, shortages in every sector, increase in particular for the most vulnerable such as children, women, indigenous and rural people. In Guatemala 50% of the population suffer from malnutrition, the highest levels across America, surpassing even Haiti. It is the third country in the world. In addition, 75% of the indigenous people live in poverty or extreme poverty.
More than 67% of children under 5 years of age are poor and suffer from malnutrition or chronic malnutrition. Of these, 8 out of 10 are indigenous. In the country the most basic services are lacking, and since 2001 the group of professionals have organized together with the Andalusian Ibermed NGOs to carry out research and collaborate with Obras Sociales del Santo Hermano Pedro, run by the Franciscans in the city of Antigua de Guatemala, where the religious accommodate physically and mentally disabled people. As a result of these contacts, in February 2002, the Spanish medical team gave rise to the NGO Denok Osasunaren Alde (DOA) to carry out direct surgeries. In 2003, after getting to know the San Ixtan nutritional Center, they also organized themselves in the field of education, integrating it with teachers of different educational areas. Since then the D.O.A. has been involved in numerous projects associated with the health and educational sphere. In Guatemala, 58% of the population is poor, 27% very poor and 33% of the population does not have access to drinking water. To the conditions of extreme poverty and poor working conditions, a prolonged drought has contributed to worsening the situation that has so far destroyed 80% of the harvest. Only 54.5% of the population receives basic health care.
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