The extended family system was a highly effective ‘sponge’, absorbing the homeless. This may have been due in part to rapid urbanization in the previous decade which created extensive rural-urban ties.

The private sector played a key role in reconstruction, particularly on the periphery of the city.

The evacuation policy was the basic cause of the waste land that remained undeveloped in the centre of Managua until the 1979 revolution. If families had been allowed to remain within the earthquake ruins, it is probable that rebuilding would have proceeded rapidly. Thus, the obvious benefits of anti-seismic planning and building construction have to be set against the cost and social disruption of such measures.

A consequence of the restriction of development in the urban centre has stimulated suburban decentralization, which radically changed the form of post-earthquake Managua.

Polyurethane igloos arrived too late to satisfy emergency shelter needs.

The USAID wooden huts were ineffective as emergency provisions; they were remotely sited, and inadequate attention was paid to infrastructure.
The US Government donated money to build a total of 11,635 wooden huts as temporary houses for earthquake victims. The first units were completed 14 weeks after the earthquake. They were ineffective: remotely sited, and paid insufficient attention to infrastructure: water supply, sanitation or road access.

Above and Centre: polyurethane igloos arrived too late to satisfy emergency shelter needs. Similar shelters were also deployed in Turkey (Gedez, 1970 and Lice 1975) and Peru (1970). They were finally abandoned as a system following the experiences in Lice (1975).

Photo: Ian Davis

The earthquake left large volumes of rubble to deal with.

Photo: Ian Davis