

FIGURE 7.4 Temporary dwelling of plastic sheeting used as a residence while family builds a new home using a metal frame, Tabacundo, Pichincha Province.

In most small Andean communities, the population of Indian descent typically uses the traditional social practice of the *minga*, or ad hoc work group, to complete community projects. A specific project is selected and a work group, sometimes involving most of the people in the village, is formed to complete it. In Tabacundo, the *minga* tradition was being used in the reconstruction of housing. For example, a *minga* work group was observed making adobe bricks using a new compacting device (Figure 7.5).

Various interviews indicated that there was some controversy about what approach to reconstruction has the fewest drawbacks. Governmental officials claimed that the Indians, even though they are primarily farmers, had sufficient time to also work on the reconstruction of housing in their communities. Furthermore, the use of the residents to provide the construction labor makes the projects less costly and supposedly gives the residents a stronger sense of ownership for reconstruction activities. Other observers felt that the construction work cut into the farming work and that this might lead to problems in the future if food production was inadequate. Another argument was given by some that it was *not* the best idea to have the villagers do the construction, since houses not properly designed and constructed will be likely to suffer damage during future earthquakes.

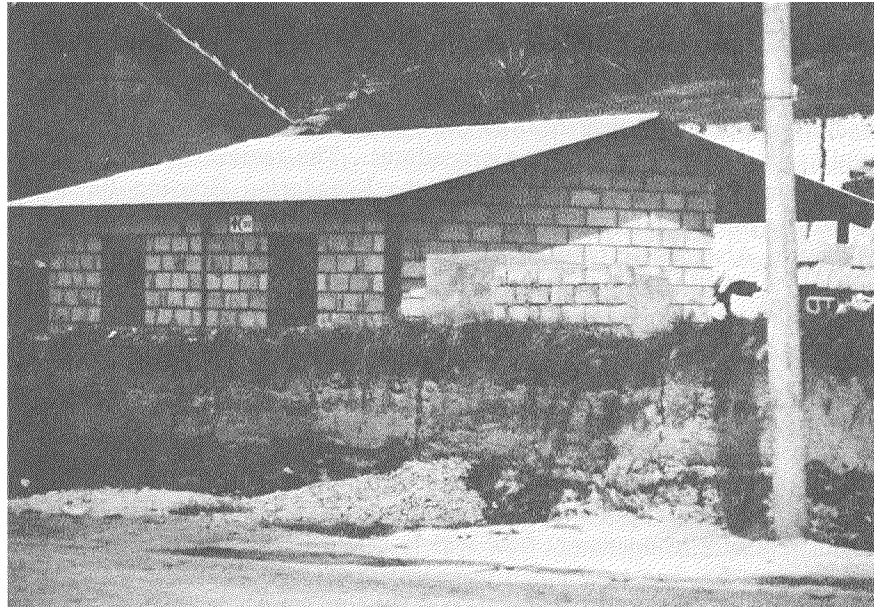


FIGURE 7.5 *Minga* (traditional community work group) making mud bricks using a brick-compacting machine that had been donated to the community, Tabacundo, Pichincha Province.

The provision of technical assistance and instruction is a means of counteracting the potential that local people will be unfamiliar with appropriate building design and construction procedures. The reconstruction plans of the national Civil Defense office and the Ecuadorian Housing Bank included the provision of technical assistance and instruction to community residents. Also, books with simple pictures and descriptions on how to repair or to build seismically resistant adobe houses were available for distribution in the communities undertaking reconstruction. Two booklets that were available had been jointly prepared by the Junta Nacional de la Vivienda (National Housing Council) and the United Nations (Junta Nacional de la Vivienda and Centro de Naciones Unidas para Asentamientos Humanos-Habitat, 1987a, 1987b). A third one, on building with *tapia* (sun-dried mud slabs), had been published after the earthquake by the Centro Andino de Acción Popular (Andean Center for Popular Action) in 1987. It would be useful to document how widely distributed and used such booklets came to be, and how much technical assistance is necessary to support the use of such instructional materials.

Another example of a housing reconstruction program was observed in Imbabura Province (Figure 4.1). There, the League of Red Cross Societies