

# Gran Nò Pi Djanm Program



The tremendous loss of life and damage to infrastructure resulting from the 2010 earthquake underscored the urgency of preparing Haiti for future disasters. While recovery work has focused on the hardest-hit areas in and around Port-au-Prince, the entire nation remains at risk from a wide array of natural disasters due to its geography, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to basic services. According to a World Bank study, 96.5 percent of the population of Haiti faces a relatively high mortality rate risk from multiple hazards—the fifth highest rate in the world.<sup>1</sup>

The 'Great North' of Haiti—the North, Northeast, and Northwest departments—suffers from these vulnerabilities in a distinct way. Limited and poorly maintained roads make the region difficult to access, and much of the population in these areas lives far from main roads, restricting their access to markets and services. The region sits within a common path of hurricanes and near the northern ridge of the Caribbean's tectonic fault line, and the topography makes it especially susceptible to flooding and landslides.

In order to build the region's resilience, the 'Great North' must develop the physical, social, and economic capacities to withstand, quickly adapt to, and successfully recover from disasters.

## Building Resilience in the Great North

Expanding the ability of the 'Great North' to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disaster risks requires a comprehensive approach that integrates several types of activities and engages a number of actors.

1. Dille, M. et al. (2005, April 30). [Natural disaster hotspots: A global risk analysis](#).

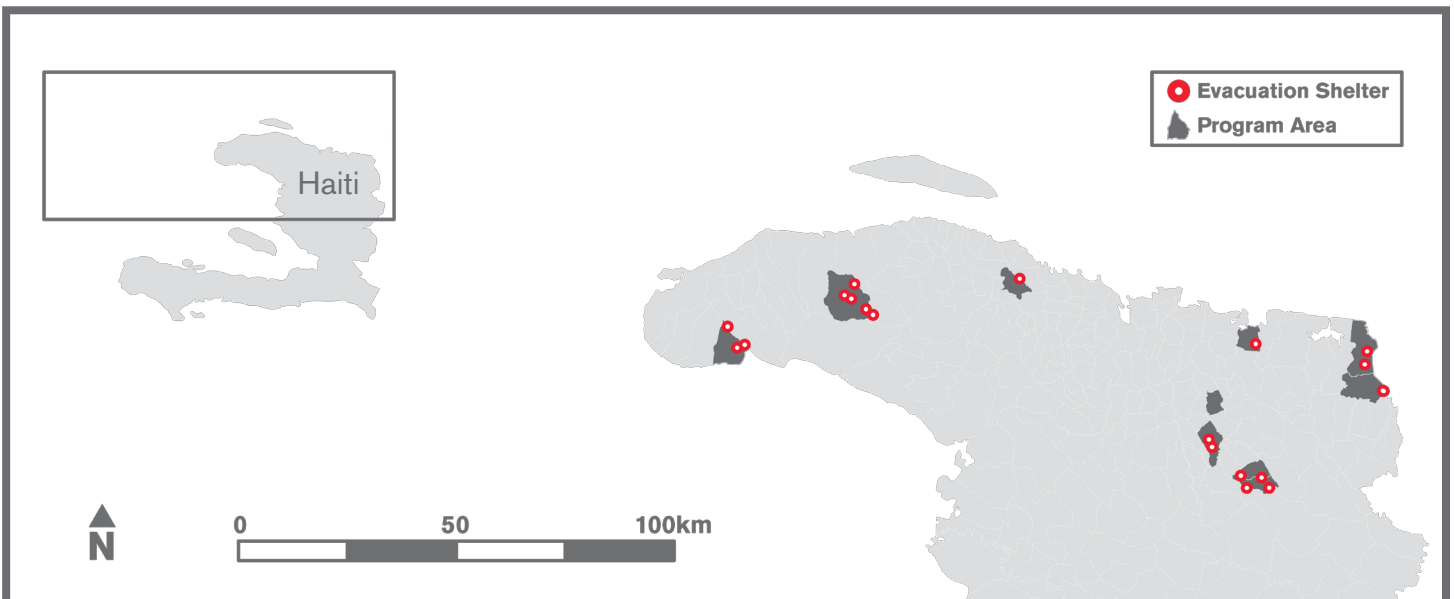
The Gran Nò Pi Djanm program ("A More Resilient Great North") seeks to build resilience in these northern departments in three ways:

- **Capacity Building** – Develop the technical capacity of the Haitian Red Cross and local line ministries to respond effectively to disasters at the regional and local levels.
- **Community Mobilization, Training, and Behavior Change** – Work directly with communities and households to reduce vulnerability to identified health, hygiene, nutrition, environmental, and livelihoods challenges.
- **Development of Infrastructure** – Coordinate a variety of improvements to infrastructure to improve people's access to healthcare facilities, water and sanitation services, and to neighboring communities.

As the American Red Cross' partner, the Haitian Red Cross leads these three aspects of the program at the regional, community, household and individual level.

## Capacity Building

Strengthening the disaster response capacity of the Haitian Red Cross, a key responder across Haiti, is important for the sustainability of resilience initiatives. The Haitian Red Cross committees in each department of the 'Great North' are best positioned to respond, but have requested additional resources and training to be as effective as possible and help them better manage preparedness initiatives. One example is the



**The Gran Nò Pi Djanm program aims to reach more than 170,000 people in 10 communal sections:** Bailly, Bas Maribahoux, Champin, Citerne Remy, Cracaraille, Glaudine/Jacquesil, Haut Maribahoux, La Victoire, Mahotiere, and Petite Borgne.

development of branch-level Community Intervention Teams - groups of volunteers trained in first aid and disaster response.

The Gran Nò Pi Djanm program of the Red Cross prioritizes helping residents be healthier and safer, while expanding livelihoods opportunities that are best suited to the region's environmental conditions. The Haitian Red Cross is well positioned to collaborate with local government offices to improve livelihoods opportunities in the region, offering technical and financial assistance in agriculture, natural resource management and rural development to improve food security in the region and expand employment opportunities.

## Community Mobilization, Training, and Behavior Change

Drawing on extensive experience in preparing for and responding to disasters, the American Red Cross is helping communities in the target areas develop disaster plans which consider various hazard profiles, possible disaster scenarios, and available community resources in order to create a local-level plan that defines roles and responsibilities for action.

In schools, the Red Cross is training students and teachers with simulations and drills that involve both community members and the local government. School-based programming covers a wide array of preparedness themes relevant to students and families. Trainings on sound hygiene practices help fight the spread of infectious diseases such as cholera, and training in disaster risk reduction and first aid empowers individuals to play a central role in prevention and disaster response.

Through this program, the Red Cross also offers communities a variety of trainings on agricultural techniques that optimize crop production and improve animal husbandry approaches. Expanded livelihoods opportunities and strengthened food security helps the 'Great North' withstand potential shocks from disasters in the future.

## Development of Infrastructure

The tropical climate and poor infrastructure frequently lead to flooding in the region, which can hinder transportation, damage homes and businesses, and spread diseases like cholera. Limited access to clean water, proper sanitation facilities, and quality health centers with modern medical equipment pose challenges to wellness.

The Red Cross is working to make broad improvements to infrastructure in the region. Construction of drainage canals and upgrades to roads will mitigate frequent flooding and facilitate transportation. Financial support to community health centers for procurement of new medical equipment allows these facilities to offer improved care to patients throughout the region. Latrine and well construction is an essential component to improve health practices keeping in mind the ongoing threat of cholera.

Due to the region's susceptibility, residents need access to secure locations in their communities that can be used in times of disaster. The American Red Cross is coordinating with local authorities to identify, rehabilitate and retrofit 19 such locations, among them churches and schools, to serve as evacuation shelters during emergencies.



Michelet Saintilma packs items into an emergency kit at his home in Bahon, in the North department of Haiti, on November 27, 2014.

The Red Cross is helping families in northern Haiti to put together emergency kits, so families can be ready in the event of a disaster. These kits contain essential items such as documents, a radio, a flashlight or medicines.

Photo: Garry Calixte / American Red Cross