

# Haiti Assistance Program



In the immediate aftermath of the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck outside Port-au-Prince on January 12, 2010, the American Red Cross joined the global Red Cross network to provide food, water, basic household goods and emergency medical care to hundreds of thousands of people. Today, as Haiti continues its recovery, the American Red Cross works to ensure that households and communities in Haiti are safe, resilient and connected to healthy and secure living conditions and spaces.

## From Response to Recovery

During the nearly five years since the earthquake, Haiti has transitioned from emergency response to longer-term and sustainable recovery efforts. The number of people living in camps has steadily declined, most of the rubble has been removed from the streets of the capital, and new health infrastructure is in place. However, Haiti still faces challenges that existed prior to the earthquake, such as issues relating to poverty, sanitation, economic inequality, scarcity of safe housing, and limitations on basic services and security.

## The Haiti Assistance Program's Approach

Haiti's social, economic and institutional challenges that existed before the earthquake were exacerbated in its aftermath. In response to this landscape, the American Red Cross takes an integrated approach to recovery programming. Rather than limit projects to a single sector, the Red Cross addresses multiple sectors simultaneously. The American Red Cross asks community members to prioritize the issues they see as most important,

then helps neighborhoods to implement solutions in a coordinated and community-driven way.

In order to strengthen resilience at the household, community, regional, and national levels, Haiti must gain the ability to anticipate, reduce the impact of, cope with, and recover from the effects of disasters and crises. Through the integrated programming approach, the American Red Cross collaborates with local and international partners, the Government of Haiti, and communities in order to prepare for, manage and mitigate disasters, as well as to build resilience.

## Safer Housing

Families who live in secure housing are safer, healthier, and more resilient to future disasters. That's why the American Red Cross helps people who were displaced by the earthquake to leave camps and pursue more permanent shelter solutions, while also providing options to accommodate the spectrum of interests and needs of the wider community. These options include retrofitting houses, repairing infrastructure such as schools, improving sanitation facilities and expanding local economic opportunities to engage community members in reconstruction efforts directly through training and work programs and to invest their own resources in their new homes and communities. Coordinating with the government is an essential element of this work, as the healthy long-term functioning of any neighborhood depends on its successful engagement with the local authorities' urban planning and legal frameworks.

The American Red Cross will follow a similar approach to assist with the formalization of emerging settlements in the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. Recovery plans for these new suburbs will seek to leverage existing self-recovery efforts, as people have begun making investments in their homes and communities. The financial and social resources mobilized by the community help promote shared value, accelerate recovery, and are much more cost-effective and sustainable than building on previously undeveloped land. These efforts are closely coordinated with other organizations and grounded with the government's post-earthquake housing policies, on-going urban planning processes and updated regulations.

## Disaster Preparedness

Although catastrophic events like the January 2010 earthquake are highly visible, Haiti is frequently affected by natural disasters, including floods and hurricanes. The American Red Cross is helping communities to prepare for and respond to these emergencies. Community Intervention Teams comprised of local residents have been developed to lead risk reduction efforts, education, and emergency response activities such as evacuation drills.

## Program Highlights

-  **4.2 million** people benefitting from hygiene promotion activities
  -  **3.5 million** people benefitting from cholera and outbreak response activities
  -  **132,000** people reached through housing and neighborhood recovery
  -  **551,000** people covered by disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities
  -  **867,000** people benefitting from community health services
  -  **388,000** people benefitting from livelihoods assistance
  -  **552,000** people benefitting from improved water and sanitation
- 4,500,000+** total beneficiaries



Claudy Jean Louis (left) and Jean Daniel Henrius (right) review a map of Campeche, a neighborhood targeted by the American Red Cross for a community regeneration project. Photo by Talia Frenkel / American Red Cross

The American Red Cross will continue to support integrated risk reduction by improving first aid and other risk management skills, developing disaster response plans, repairing evacuation shelters, and improving infrastructure to prevent flooding and vulnerability to other disasters.

## Livelihoods

The American Red Cross seeks to improve household and community financial stability through savings programs, conditional loans and vocational and other training in the communities where it works. In addition, it is engaging private sector actors to increase economic opportunities so people can find work where they live and accelerate community recovery. A consortium of international NGOs has been engaged to carry-out livelihoods initiatives in its main urban resilience program in Port-au-Prince. The American Red Cross helps both existing and aspiring business owners to access capital to start or expand their business with hands-on entrepreneurship training that offers guidance on negotiation, marketing, accounting and more. Additionally, savings and loans programs teach community members how to save money and offer micro-financing to others.

## Health

Considerable investments have been made to strengthen Haiti's public health system in order to improve the availability of and access to care and prevent disease. The American Red Cross has provided funding for construction, equipment and operations of several hospitals and clinics to help ensure that Haitians injured in the earthquake, as well as others with medical needs, have access to reliable health care facilities. The American Red Cross

also raises awareness of HIV prevention, teaches first aid skills, promotes hygiene and sanitation, distributes mosquito nets, and supports operation of mobile clinics.

The American Red Cross increases families' access to clean drinking water by repairing and building water sources, as well as promoting water treatment at home. In schools, the American Red Cross improves water and sanitation infrastructure and promotes healthy hygiene practices. In urban areas, it helps provide communities with access to sanitation while protecting the environment. In rural areas, it improves in-home sanitation using appropriate technologies, targeting the most vulnerable communities.

## Cholera

Preventing further deaths from the cholera outbreak that began in 2010 remains an essential area of focus for the American Red Cross and its key local partner, the Haitian Red Cross. Prevention efforts have included vaccinations and distribution of soap, water purification tablets, and other hygiene supplies in conjunction with robust health promotion activities that focus on educating households and communities when outbreaks occur and to raise awareness about proper hand washing and household water treatment. The American Red Cross is also supporting efforts to enhance disease surveillance, distribution of oral rehydration supplies and operation of specialized cholera treatment units. These measures, taken in close coordination with the Ministry of Health and other local and international actors, contribute to making communities more knowledgeable and resistant to this serious ongoing threat.