



One Month after Major Quake, Ongoing Crises for Haitian Children

Save the Children is Providing Food, Water and Essentials to about 300,000 Children and Families

Port-au-Prince, HAITI (February 9, 2010) — One month after Haiti experienced the worst natural disaster in its history, Save the Children has reached nearly 300,000 children and adults in the earthquake impact zone.

Since the early hours after the disaster, the international humanitarian agency has been providing emergency assistance to save lives, alleviate suffering and support the recovery and protection of Haitian children and families.

"The majority of Haitian children were vulnerable before this disaster and now, a month after the earthquake, their health, well-being and future are at increased risk. Their families are caught up in a daily struggle to meet basic needs and rebuild their lives," said Lee Nelson, Save the Children's country director in Haiti. "We are moving quickly to provide immediate aid to thousands of families, including providing food, water, household items, medicines and medical care, while we also implement programs to protect children and get them back to school as soon as possible."

The January 12 earthquake affected 3 million people, more than half of them children. The extensive damage wrought by the 7-magnitude quake forced families into the street and into temporary encampments with little but the clothes on their backs. Today, living among the rubble, they struggle to meet their shelter, health, nutrition and other day-to-day needs as they begin to regain their livelihoods and reconstruct their homes.

"This is a wide-scale disaster that affected all aspects of society, and it will take years to for Haiti's families and cities to recover," said Annie Foster, Save the Children's team leader for the emergency. "Haitians are very resilient, but it is going to take serious and sustained assistance to help them build back and ensure a better future for their children."

Adding urgency to the relief effort, the rainy season is expected to begin in mid-March or early April. Even under normal circumstances, poor drainage and sanitation infrastructure causes problems for the population. This is expected to be significantly exacerbated by displacement and clogging of drainage channels with rubble from the earthquake.

To date, Save the Children's child protection programs have benefitted more than 15,000 children through 18 mobile child-friendly spaces in Port-au-Prince and Jacmel. In conjunction with UNICEF, International Rescue Committee and the Red Cross, the organization is registering children at hospitals and in camps so as to trace their families and reunite them with loved ones.

Save the Children's 14 mobile health teams have seen 10,630 patients at 45 locations in Port-au-Prince, Leogane and Jacmel. In addition, the organization has distributed food to more than 120,000 people, including 72,000 children. The agency also has provided clean water to more than 59,000 people; latrines for 7,800 people; and essential items such as blankets, hygiene kits, and plastic sheeting to some 48,000 people.

Save the Children, which has worked in Haiti since 1978 and currently has more than 300 staff in the country, plans to reach 800,000 people, including 470,000 children, through its emergency response. At the same time, the agency is continuing to support children through education, nutrition and other programs, where possible.

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