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THE EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI

THE IRC RESPONDS



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FROM THE PRESIDENT



IRC president George Rupp.
Photo by Christopher Scott/The IRC.

I am pleased to present this report outlining the response of the International Rescue Committee to the massive earthquake that devastated Haiti on January 12, 2010. Because of our proximity to Haiti, we moved immediately to dispatch our emergency team, knowing that we possessed invaluable experience and expertise in humanitarian crises and keenly aware of our strong ties to Haiti as the result of our work with its diaspora in the United States. Our donors, I am pleased to note, were equally prompt in acting to fund our response.

This document offers brief descriptions of the programs the IRC is carrying out for the displaced people of Port-au-Prince, with their full participation. Before the earthquake, these residents were already living in difficult circumstances in one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. A year later, far too many of them are still without a decent

place to live and in need of an assured regular supply of food and clean water and a way to earn a living. Women and children, meanwhile, need protection from sexual violence and other forms of exploitation. We and our colleagues are doing our best to overcome this unacceptable state of affairs. Even so, the IRC's programs are making a real difference in the lives of tens of thousands of Haitians. Undoubtedly, their circumstances would be even worse if we were not assisting them.

As you review this report, please note in particular the eyewitness accounts of Haitians, including members of the IRC staff, who discuss the severe challenges they faced and their efforts to overcome them.

The people of Haiti, especially the poor and displaced, deserve and need our continued support.

I am especially pleased that we have been able to offer protection to large numbers of women and children, who are the most vulnerable members of Haitian society. In the final section of this report, we recommend ways to protect children, ensure that the needs of women and children are central to reconstruction plans, and provide urgent help to displaced people.

A year ago, many were moved to donate to help Haitians in need. I hope this report helps explain the positive role played by the IRC as part of an overall international response supported by the generosity of so many. At the same time, it is intended to remind readers that our job is far from done and daunting challenges remain. The people of Haiti, especially the poor and displaced, deserve and need our continued support.

George Rupp

Front Cover: A mother and child inside a tent at a temporary settlement for displaced people in Port-au-Prince. The IRC provides direct support to nearly 100,000 people in 30 camps. Photo by Gerald Martone/The IRC.

Back Cover: The earthquake left 20 million cubic meters of debris—enough, if put in shipping containers and placed end to end, to reach from London to Jerusalem. Photo by Gerald Martone/The IRC.



INTRODUCTION

On January 12, 2010, a magnitude 7 earthquake struck Haiti about 10 miles southwest of the capital Port-au-Prince. It killed approximately 230,000 people, injured 300,000 more and destroyed great swaths of the city and surrounding areas. In the aftermath, nearly 600,000 people left Port-au-Prince to live with friends and relatives in unaffected rural areas. An estimated 250,000 of these displaced Haitians have since returned to the capital because they were unable to secure work in rural areas.¹

Haiti is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. It suffers a major catastrophe every three years. It is one of the world's most vulnerable islands to hurricanes, flash flooding, and landslides. Haiti was still recovering from the 2008 hurricane season—one of the worst in Caribbean history

Today, far too many Haitians, especially women and children, are engaged in a daily struggle for access to basic necessities such as clean water, economic opportunities, education and protection from violence.

(four hurricanes in 30 days)—when the earthquake struck. The earthquake was the worst disaster in the Caribbean in 200 years. In just 30 seconds, Haiti lost 20 percent of its civil servants. The scale and magnitude of the disaster crippled the ability of the already weak Haitian government to meet the basic needs of its people. While Haiti was still reeling from the earthquake, an outbreak of cholera in October 2010 quickly spread from rural areas to towns and cities.² Recovery and reconstruction were further undermined by political and civil unrest following highly contested

presidential and parliamentary elections held on November 28, 2010. As a result, a year after the earthquake, nearly 1.3 million people in Port-au-Prince are still displaced and remain living in crowded spontaneous settlements and tent cities. Unemployment remains high, buildings are in ruins, most rubble has yet to be removed and children are unable to attend school.

Prior to the earthquake, Port-au-Prince was home to approximately 3 million people, even though the city was designed to accommodate only 200,000. The combination of a dearth of jobs in rural areas and lack of investment in the agricultural sector had pushed people to migrate into the city, leading to overcrowded living conditions in Port-au-Prince.

Social and economic inequities also predated the quake. Before the earthquake, Haiti's unemployment rates were as high as 80 percent; nearly 54 percent of the population lived on less than \$1 per day.³ Required school fees prevented many children from attending school; only an estimated 55 percent of children went to school before the earthquake.⁴

The earthquake exacerbated all of these problems. People marginalized by Haitian society, including children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, found themselves acutely vulnerable. Today, far too many Haitians, especially women and children, are engaged in a daily struggle for access to basic necessities such as clean water, economic opportunities, education and protection from violence.

At the time of the earthquake, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) did not have programs in Haiti although the IRC had worked with Haitian asylum-seekers in the United States. Within hours of the earthquake, the IRC sent its emergency response team—including doctors, water and

¹ Inter-Agency Standing Committee: Haiti Earthquake Response, 6-Month Report, July 15, 2010. Page 5.

² The Haitian Ministry of Health announced that as of December 10, 2010, there had been a total of 104,918 cases and 2,359 deaths. OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin #24

³ http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/country/haiti/

⁴ <http://www.interaction.org/sites/default/files/UNICEF-%206%20Months.pdf>, page 14.

INTRODUCTION (continued)



Aisha Bain (right), IRC deputy director of programs in Haiti, helps to distribute hygiene kits to women in Port-au-Prince. "Women have a huge role to play in the rebuilding of Haiti," Bain says. Photo by Melissa Winkler/The IRC.

sanitation experts, coordinators and logisticians—to Haiti to assess the critical needs of survivors and mount an effective response. In the days and weeks that followed, the IRC established emergency operations in Haiti and moved to address the urgent need for clean water, sanitation and health care, as well the special needs of women and girls.

Today, the IRC is continuing its work with the displaced and poor of Port-au-Prince and surrounding communities. The IRC is preparing to open a second office in Petit Goave—southwest of Port-au-Prince—to focus on tracing and reuniting people who are still separated from their families a year after the earthquake

The IRC strives to ensure that the most vulnerable earthquake victims—including the elderly, persons with disabilities, women and separated or unaccompanied children—have access to services and that their views and needs shape the rebuilding process. Much of this work is done with local groups and organizations. Moreover, the majority of IRC staff members in Haiti are Haitian.

This report lists some of the outstanding problems affecting Haiti and describes how the IRC is responding. Personal testimonies from IRC field staff and the people they serve illustrate the immense challenges they face.

➤ WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

THE PROBLEM:

After the earthquake, the IRC conducted an assessment of sanitary conditions in 10 settlements and found that accumulating solid waste and stagnant water posed a serious health hazard and fertile ground for the spread of cholera and other waterborne diseases. The settlements had no bathing facilities and access to latrines was far below international standards (1 latrine per 500 displaced people; the international standard is 1 latrine per 20 people).⁵

THE IRC'S RESPONSE:

As of December, 2010, the IRC had built 500 latrines, showers and safe water points⁶ for displaced people in Port-au-Prince, Leogane and surrounding areas and distributed hygiene and household supplies including jerry cans, soap, sanitary napkins, toothpaste and laundry detergent. Over 150 IRC hygiene-promotion volunteers are educating residents in 30 camps on good health and disease-prevention practices such as hand washing and hygienic food preparation. All told, these efforts have reached more than 130,000 people.



Lack of access to clean water and sanitation poses a serious health hazard to more than a million displaced people living in settlements in Port-au-Prince. Photo by Susana Ferreira/The IRC.

Because Haiti relies on tanker trucks for the delivery of water, the IRC utilized this already in place system to meet water needs following the earthquake. In addition to providing water to two camps, the IRC is working with government agencies to rehabilitate vital water systems.

The IRC has also developed partnerships with health clinics and schools. The IRC is building incinerators and biological waste pits for six health facilities in Port-au-Prince and Leogane and training their staff on proper medical waste management. IRC sanitation and hygiene education programs are also planned in 14 schools.

The IRC's response to the October 2010 cholera outbreak built on all these programs. The IRC's environmental health team working in coordination with the United Nations, other humanitarian aid groups and the Haitian Ministry of Health quickly launched a prevention campaign focused on four key areas:

- Testing and chlorinating water sources;
- Stepping up prevention and education efforts about the importance of hand washing with soap;
- Teaching people to drink only treated water;
- Distributing water storage and water treatment supplies and oral rehydration salt, soap and basins for hand washing.

The IRC is focused on improving the health and living conditions of the Haitian people while supporting local efforts to maintain and run lifesaving services. This approach—providing immediate assistance while helping people develop the ability to manage future health challenges on their own—is integral to a long-term strategy to address Haiti's urgent and continuing health crises.

⁵ http://www.sphereproject.org/dmdocuments/handbook/hdbkpdf/hdbk_c2.pdf, page 71.

⁶ These are communal water taps in a densely populated area of Port-au-Prince.

CHALLENGES:

Response to the cholera outbreak has been disrupted by post-election political unrest. Roadblocks and demonstrations in Port-au-Prince and the South Department have prevented patients from traveling to medical facilities. The IRC provided a surplus of supplies to carry each camp and community through the period of unrest so that the daily response to the epidemic would not be interrupted. The IRC's cholera

response team resumed work on December 13 after a temporary suspension. The teams are restocking kiosks in some 30 camps with oral rehydration salts that are distributed to Haitians suffering cholera symptoms. Meanwhile, the IRC and other international organizations face logistical challenges in obtaining supplies that have been held up in customs for several months.

VOICES FROM HAITI

CLEAN WATER In the Time of Cholera

At Teleco, a camp for displaced people near the Bel Air neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, young boys were taking bucket showers in the sunshine. They pulled the water from an underground reservoir in one section of the camp, hoisting up the heavy tubs with long ropes. They lathered up, keeping their trunks on, and poured the water over their heads to rinse off.

"There's no chlorine in the water," said Fritnzer Pierre-Louis, a member of the IRC's environmental health team. It's okay to bathe with but not okay to drink." The water is trucked in several times a day by an outside aid organization.

At a camp in southwest Port-au-Prince, in an area called Martissant, a crowd of women and girls were gathered around a water source, filling tubs and buckets for washing, cooking and bathing. Louis collected a sample and placed his testing kit into the water.

After a few moments, he held the kit up to the light. "Only zero point three," he said. To be considered safe to drink, there must be at least 0.5 mg of chlorine per liter. This water would have to be treated, too.



The IRC tests and chlorinates water at camps throughout Port-au-Prince. Photo by Susana Ferreira/The IRC

Jeanne Romene La Guerre runs a small business selling cool drinks to her fellow camp residents. She says she's received information from IRC community hygiene promoters, and has even received cholera prevention alerts on her mobile phone, but she's still frightened. "I know to drink clean water, to prepare food well," she said. She sells a few sachets of water to a little girl, still wearing her uniform from school, and sifts through the change. She sighs. Knowing how to protect herself hasn't allayed her fears. "It's a contagious disease and we don't know where it comes from."

➤ PRIMARY HEALTH CARE



Special IRC cholera response teams have carried out education and prevention activities in 30 camps. Photo by Susana Ferreira/The IRC.

THE PROBLEM:

An assessment conducted by international aid and development agencies confirmed that the Haitian health system had been devastated by the earthquake. The disaster disrupted key disease control programs for illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.⁷ Only 18 percent of people questioned in a post-earthquake survey reported having access to health care facilities despite the fact that medical care was among the highest priorities of those surveyed.

THE IRC'S RESPONSE:

The IRC has been working closely with several local and international organizations to address the extensive health needs in Haiti. The IRC recruited and deployed teams of local residents in areas where there were no health care workers or where outbreaks of disease were likely.

The IRC ran health clinics in camps in Carrefour and Bel Air, two hard-hit areas of Port-au-Prince. The clinic's staff has conducted 24,000 consultations, administered over 8,500 vaccinations and vitamin A doses, performed over 700 malaria tests, monitored over 3,400 children for malnutrition, and delivered prenatal care to over 750 women.

As of November 2010, the Carrefour clinic was temporarily converted into a cholera treatment unit. Nurses from the clinic and from a special IRC cholera response team have provided services to the 30 sites the IRC serves in Port-au-Prince.

CHALLENGES:

The recent cholera outbreak is symptomatic of wide scale problems in the Haitian public health system. There is an urgent need for investment in basic health systems and water and sanitation infrastructure across the country. Although the IRC works mainly in Port-au-Prince and surrounding communities, it recognizes that sustainable development will not take place without the delivery of basic services in rural areas. Even prior to the earthquake, Haitians living in isolated rural communities lacked health care, sanitation and water. Now more than ever, the Haitian government and the international community must increase their investment in health programs in hard to reach rural communities.

⁷ Inter-Agency Standing Committee: Haiti Earthquake Response, 6-Month Report, July 15, 2010.

➤ WOMEN AND GIRLS



Lack of security in the camps and elsewhere is a major concern for many women and girls. Photo by Gerald Martone/IRC.

THE PROBLEM:

Even before the earthquake, women and girls in Haiti faced social and economic discrimination and high levels of sexual and physical violence. SOFA, a Haitian women's organization, reported 238 cases of rape between January 2007 and June 2008; of these, 140 involved girls ages 18 and under. The youngest was 19 months old. In the aftermath of the earthquake women and girls who were forced to live in camps and settlements for displaced people found themselves at even greater risk.

Experts have long pointed to a link between a lack of basic necessities and the threat of sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls in

settings such as refugee and displaced persons camps.⁸ In the camps and settlements of Port-au-Prince, residents voiced their concerns about sexual violence. Women and girls speak of being afraid to sleep in congested camps surrounded by strangers and of bathing in the open without any privacy. Although no comprehensive statistics are available, organizations in Haiti regularly receive reports of sexual violence. In March 2010, KOFIVIV, a local women's group, reported nearly 250 cases of rape in 15 camps.⁹ Because almost all pre-existing social services were destroyed in the earthquake, survivors of rape or assault have severely limited access to information, support, justice and medical care.

⁸ Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines on gender based violence recommend that humanitarian actors assume that sexual violence is present in all displacement and emergency situations. http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Portals/1/cluster%20approach%20page/clusters%20pages/Gender/tfgender_GBVGuidelines2005.pdf.

⁹ "Our Bodies are Shaking Now: Rape Follows earthquake in Haiti," Beverly Bell, *Huffington Post*, March 25, 2010.

VOICES FROM HAITI

WOMEN HELPING WOMEN: **Madeleine Rene, IRC Volunteer**

I'm a native of Petit Goave. I am 30 years old. When I was 12, I witnessed the rape of my older sister, which caused her death. As I grew up I felt the need to fight against rape which was very common where I lived. When I was 18, my partner beat me but I knew nothing about my rights. It was only when I joined (the Haitian Women's organization) KOFAVIV that I overcame this problem. I would no longer accept my situation and I told myself that even if I die my children would live in a better environment.

I feel very motivated to work as an IRC volunteer because it is an opportunity to help other women facing situations like mine. Many women think that men have the right to beat them because they pay the rent and bring home food. I participate in campaigns to educate women about their rights and how not to be abused by men. I participate in awareness campaigns and training sessions for women and girls in the Champs de Mars camp. We also provide psychosocial support by listening

We listen to them and together we create a security plan. Our presence here gives them hope.

I get threats about my work from malicious men. They think that we want to destroy their homes and that we receive money from NGOs. So we have to take precautions not to go into areas where we could encounter problems, especially because the men are sometimes armed.

Some women agree with this way of thinking; sometimes when I speak to them of their rights, they tell me that I'm creating problems between them and their partners. Convincing certain women that it's necessary to fight for their rights takes time.

I remember one woman who was in a difficult situation. She refused my assistance and did not want to talk. I thought of quitting but people in her neighborhood told me to insist. According to them, she was a victim of her husband's acts of violence. She was very afraid of him because he was very violent. She could not go out and always stayed at home under his control. So I used a technique to follow her when she went to the market. Later, her situation improved. She's currently an active member of KOFAVIV. I feel good when I see her attending meetings and we became friends.

Several things need to be improved or changed. Most women tell me that not being able to meet their needs and pay their rent is a cause of their problems. They are sometimes forced to remain under the domination of a man who abuses them. Many women lost their husbands after January 12 and were left alone, sometimes with two or three children, and they don't know where they are going to live. Creating jobs for these women would be a good thing as it would give them the power to make their own decisions.

Many women and girls are not able to get an education. It would be useful to think of an educational and literacy project for them. There's also a need to offer girls skills training, such as tailoring. This would help them to earn a living, live with dignity and be less vulnerable.



Madeleine Rene volunteers for the IRC, educating women on their rights and ways to prevent violence. Photo by Susana Ferreira/The IRC.

to survivors of violence and helping them to find solutions to their problems. We also do referrals. Women at the Place Petion (Champs de Mars) know about the work we do. They are orphans who are sometimes forced into prostitution. If they experience domestic violence, they come to tell us.

WOMEN AND GIRLS (continued)

THE IRC'S RESPONSE:

Women and girls are at the center of the IRC's relief efforts in Haiti. The IRC was among the first agencies to deploy a specialist dedicated to reducing sexual violence and is one of the few organizations to run a full-time program to help ensure the safety of women and girls. The IRC's work in Haiti draws on 14 years' experience with programming to prevent and address sexual violence in more than 20 countries. The IRC actively encourages women and girls to participate in and benefit from reconstruction efforts.

Specifically, the IRC has worked in Haiti to:

- Reduce the vulnerability of women and girls by distributing solar lights in spontaneous settlements in Port-au-Prince, including Villambetta, Teleco san Fil, and Trou Vital;
- Strengthen community-based efforts to prevent violence against women and girls;
- Help women and girls gain access to needed services by supporting local women's organizations;
- Improve coordination between United Nations agencies and local and international nongovernmental organizations;
- Support the efforts of women and girls to play an active role in Haiti's reconstruction and development.

The IRC distributed items such as hygiene kits, jerry cans, laundry detergent, sanitary napkins, soap, toothpaste and undergarments to women and girls living in camps and settlements. Working through local women's organizations, the IRC printed and distributed referral cards with information on where women and girls can obtain medical treatment and emotional support. The IRC advocated for adequate lighting in dangerous areas to enhance the safety and security of women and girls and worked to ensure that they had private and safe places to bathe.



The IRC distributes hygiene kits and personal and household items to women and girls living in camps and settlements. Photo by Melissa Winkler/The IRC.

CHALLENGES:

Lack of security in the camps and elsewhere is a major concern for many women and girls. The limited presence of the Haitian police and United Nations peacekeepers leaves women and girls vulnerable to sexual violence. In addition, the inability of the judicial system to prosecute the perpetrators of violence fosters a culture of impunity. As a result, the victims of sexual attacks are often fearful of reporting crimes to authorities.

➤ CHILDREN AND YOUTH



An IRC staff member leads children in songs and drumming at a child-friendly space inside a tent at the crowded Teleco camp in Port-au-Prince. Photo by Gerald Martone/IRC.

THE PROBLEM:

Only 55 percent of Haitian children attended school before the earthquake and even fewer returned to the classroom when schools reopened in April, 2010. The earthquake disrupted the education of about 2.5 million children and affected 4,992 schools. Prior to the earthquake, over one third of the school-aged population had never received a formal education, an estimated 50,000 children were living in orphanages, and the use of domestic child workers—known as *restaveks*—was widespread. In addition, prior to the earthquake, Haiti had one of the highest per capita rates of adoption in the world.¹⁰ According to UNICEF, 300,000 children lived in servitude as unpaid domestic servants and 2,000 children each year were trafficked to the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Following the earthquake, hospitals, agencies and church groups reported large numbers of

separated and unaccompanied children. Schools were shut down, with a third of school buildings in Port-au-Prince completely destroyed. Child protection services were and continue to be among the most urgent needs in post-earthquake Haiti.

THE IRC'S RESPONSE:

The IRC has decades of experience protecting children and youth in emergencies and is a leading agency working to ensure a coordinated child protection system in Haiti. The IRC started a comprehensive family tracing and reunification program and with its partner organization Beyond Borders, began training case workers to identify and register children.

Tracing missing or lost children and reuniting them with their family or loved ones is a complex, resource-intensive process that can sometimes take a matter of hours, but more often takes weeks or months. IRC case workers are trained in how to

¹⁰ Lammerant, I., Hofstetter, M. *Adoption: At What Cost. For an ethical responsibility of receiving Countries Intercountry Adoption.* Terre des Hommes, 2007.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH (continued)

interview, trace, verify and reunify families. The IRC is responsible for family tracing in some of the most severely earthquake damaged and affected areas of Delmas and Port-au-Prince communes. As of December, 2010, the IRC had reunified 147 children with their families.

In the camps, traditional, community-level child protection mechanisms have eroded. These spontaneous settlements of displaced people lack the cohesion and unity of pre-earthquake neighborhoods and districts. Without the structure and stability offered by tight-knit communities and reliable school systems, children in the camps are unable to simply “be children.”

The IRC has established “child friendly spaces” in 11 camps where children ages 3 to 14 can learn, heal and play. Vital elements of Haitian culture—music, dance, storytelling—are incorporated into the curriculum, along with basic numeracy and literacy. The centers are a place of joy, safety, gathering and information-sharing for the whole community. At the outbreak of the cholera epidemic, community “animators”—grassroots members of the community trained to impart and spread important information—used skits and drama to illustrate proper hygiene practices for children and their parents.



Children learn basic literacy and numeracy in the IRC's child-friendly spaces. Photo by Susana Ferreira/The IRC.

CHALLENGES:

Child friendly spaces provide important educational opportunities for children who otherwise would not be able to attend school but they are not a replacement for school. Larger systemic issues must be addressed to ensure the well-being of displaced and poor children. Many of the schools most affected by the earthquake have reopened but remain inaccessible to many children, especially to those whose families can no longer afford to pay the fees required to send their children to school.

While the IRC continues to help children who have been separated from their families and loved ones by the earthquake, it has also turned its attention to children who have been separated from family as a result of poverty or domestic servitude. For those children whose families cannot be found or where family reunification is not possible, long-term care solutions must be addressed. The IRC is part of an interagency consortium that is seeking to work with the Haitian government to identify long term care options.

It is imperative that the Haitian government strengthen its efforts to combat child trafficking, reduce the institutionalization of children, ensure that vulnerable children have access to a quality and affordable education and promote the ability of Haitian families to support their children.

VOICES FROM HAITI

A FATHER AND SON REUNITED: **Oservio and Genald**

It was hard for him to hear the shouting over the Saturday morning din of downtown Port-au-Prince—a cacophony of honking, pattering taxi engines and whirring generators.

“Oservio! Oservio!”

Tall, thin, and looking a bit anxious, Oservio Janvier was standing on the corner waiting to be picked up by the IRC. He finally saw the two case workers, Gina and Aliene, waving from a car and scurried across the road.

When he sat down, he was grinning from ear to ear. His face wore the kind of happiness that can't be masked—absolute joy in knowing that he was about to be reunited with his son.



The IRC helped Oservio Janvier and his nine-year-old son, Genald, find each other after they were separated in the chaos that followed the January 2010 earthquake. Photo by Susana Ferreira/The IRC.

At the time the earthquake struck, Oservio's nine-year-old son, Genald, was at school. Oservio, who worked as a mason, was out on a job. Oservio's wife, who was at home, was killed when their house collapsed. Oservio's in-laws found Genald in the chaos that followed. Distraught and unable to care for his son, Oservio asked them to take Genald in with their own children, and the two lost touch soon after.

When IRC caseworkers met young Genald months later, the boy was still living with his aunt and uncle in their house, but said that he missed his father terribly and wanted to see him again.

Gina and Aliene finally tracked Oservio down near his old home, the rubble of his former neighborhood within sight of the tent where he'd been living.

“That's my boy!” he said when they showed him Genald's photo. One week later, he was on his way to pick up his son.

As the car inches its way across town through traffic, Gina and Aliene ask Oservio how he feels. “Happy,” he responds in Creole, his smile missing a few front teeth. “It's been a long time.”

When they reached their destination, Oservio jumped out of the car and hurried towards his in-laws' home. He darted up stone stairs, through narrow passageways and across gaping ditches. All he could think about was his son.

Genald was waiting for him, all smiles despite being sick with a fever, and embraced his father as soon as he walked in the door. He already had his few possessions tied up in a black plastic bag, ready to go.

Gina and Aliene took a few moments to complete some paperwork, having Genald's current guardians sign over custody to Oservio, and then the boy said his goodbyes. He went around the small room, giddy, kissing and shaking hands with his aunt, uncle and cousins. Then Oservio put his arm around him and they walked out together.

On the drive back across town, Oservio and Genald sat together in the wide front seat of the IRC vehicle, the sick boy snuggled into the father's arms.

“Are you going to sleep with me tonight?” Oservio asked his son in Creole. Genald nodded yes. “You have a fever because you were sleeping without me for so long.”

The boy smiled.

➤ ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

THE PROBLEM:

Before the earthquake nearly 80 percent of Haitians were unemployed and many relied on the informal economy for work. Lack of adequate food remains a major problem since Haiti imports more than 50 percent of its food needs. This large importation of food means Haitian farmers are unable to sell locally grown products. As a result, many people from rural areas have migrated to the capital in search of work. Following the earthquake, household income in Haiti dropped between 60 and 70 percent, making it difficult for consumers to buy food. Food appeared to become scarce and demand for goods fell. Traders and wholesalers reported they could no longer order in bulk and no longer had a place to store large quantities of stock.

THE IRC'S RESPONSE:

The IRC led an Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA)¹¹ with local and international aid organizations focusing on four critical markets: beans, rice, construction labor and roofing material. The assessment revealed that while food was available on the local market in Port-au-Prince, few people had enough money to buy any. The IRC is committed to bolstering the local economy and markets by supporting bulk traders and warehouses, sustainable project partnerships, and cash-for-work activities that increase the purchasing power of displaced people.

More than 2,000 people have been put to work at 15 sites in Port-au-Prince and Leogane through an IRC cash-for-work program. Cash-for-work activities include addressing water, sanitation and hygiene needs through cleaning, clearing, improving or digging drainage; protecting infrastructure (including latrines and showers) from rains; planning for hurricanes and storms; and filling low lying areas prone to flooding.

Empowering people to earn incomes, and decide for themselves what to purchase and which local markets and vendors to support, stimulates the economy and helps keep prices down, making goods more accessible to the broader community.

Cash-based market-support programs can play a vital role in Haiti's recovery.

CHALLENGES:

Cash-for-work programs play an important role during the initial stages of an emergency. However, these programs alone cannot spur long term economic recovery and eliminate food insecurity. The government of Haiti and donor nations and institutions should support agricultural programs to help increase local production and invest in vocational training programs for youth and their families.

The IRC will also provide training and economic support to families who have been reunified through the Family Tracing Program, enabling them to meet their basic needs and send their children to school.



More than 2,000 people have been put to work in Port-au-Prince through an IRC cash-for-work program. Photo by Gerald Martone/The IRC

¹¹ EMMA is designed to help humanitarian agencies better understand how local markets have been impacted by an emergency and the most effective ways to restore people's livelihoods. <http://emma-toolkit.info/>

➤ **CAMP MANAGEMENT**

THE PROBLEM:

The earthquake destroyed 190,000 homes and displaced some 1.3 million people. The international community provided tents, tarpaulins, and other emergency shelter to many of the most affected people. However, these materials were not intended



After heavy storms swept through their camp, the IRC delivered tarps and building kits to families who had had their temporary dwellings destroyed. Photo by Susana Ferreira/The IRC.

to last for more than several months and in most cases have not been replaced. The progress from temporary to transitional shelter has been very slow. Humanitarian agencies working in Haiti planned to construct 124,889 transitional shelters. However, as of November 9, 2010 only 19,197 have been built.¹² People still live in fragile tent settlements that are not built to withstand harsh weather, hurricanes and mudslides. The Haitian government and the international community have failed to resettle displaced people in safe, dignified housing.

THE IRC'S RESPONSE:

The IRC manages two displaced persons camps in Port-au-Prince: Villambetta, in Tabarre commune, with more than 3,500 residents, and Teleco, in Bel Air commune, with over 1,000 residents.

The IRC has trained 149 camp residents to serve as camp committee members and works alongside these local leaders to identify and protect residents and ensure equal access to aid. The IRC's child protection and anti-violence programs have trained camp monitors to ensure that the special needs of women and children are met.

The IRC works in both camps to improve the environment for female-headed households, unaccompanied or separated children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Once identified by camp monitors, those with urgent problems are referred to appropriate services, including women's centers, health clinics, psycho-social support groups, child friendly spaces, and legal or administrative advisors. The IRC also works to improve camp conditions through the installation of solar lighting, building community spaces, and other steps as requested by community members. Following a heavy storm last September, the IRC delivered tarps and building kits to the hundreds of families who had their temporary dwellings destroyed by wind and rain.

CHALLENGES:

Camp management is a complex issue given the lack of land tenure precedents, property ownership laws and documentation. Even before the earthquake, land tenure was a complex and contentious issue in part because in Haiti land ownership was never officially registered. As a result, in some cases displaced communities have been forced to evacuate their informal settlements due to disputes over land ownership. Although the Haitian government can declare private land for public use, it has yet to exercise that authority. It is unclear when and if a new government will use eminent domain to build sustainable housing for displaced people.

¹² Inter-Agency Standing Committee Haiti Shelter cluster. <https://sites.google.com/site/shelterhaiti2010/>

➤ ACCESS TO JUSTICE



Cutting through bureaucratic red tape is difficult for ordinary citizens who need to replace documents, register for school or access critical services. Photo by Gerald Martone/The IRC.

THE PROBLEM:

Many displaced people in Port-au-Prince have lost important documents including birth and marriage certificates. Without a birth certificate, a person is not able to register for school, open a bank account or access other critical services. Other people lost their loved ones and do not have access to death certificates to claim inheritance. Others do not have the necessary documents to establish property rights.

THE IRC'S RESPONSE:

The IRC has provided legal information to Haitians and has developed and distributed posters in Creole with instructions on how to replace lost documents or obtain new ones. This information has been distributed not just in camps but in other parts of Port-au-Prince, Leogane and surrounding areas as well.

CHALLENGES:

Bureaucratic challenges that existed prior to the earthquake continue to be an obstacle. Cutting through bureaucratic red tape is difficult for ordinary citizens and only experienced lawyers seem able to penetrate a very complex system. The IRC's field teams have experienced enormous logistical challenges in helping people to obtain the documents they need.

VOICES FROM HAITI

AN ADVOCATE FOR HAITI: **Roxanne Paisible**

As a Haitian-American, I was deeply moved by the devastating earthquake in Haiti. After hearing eyewitness accounts from my relatives in Haiti and seeing the jarring images of fellow Haitians who lost their lives, I felt compelled to take action. At the time of the earthquake, I was living in South Florida and working on social issues at the local and state levels. Building on my previous advocacy work, I was hired by the IRC to serve as the Haiti advocacy officer based in Washington, D.C.

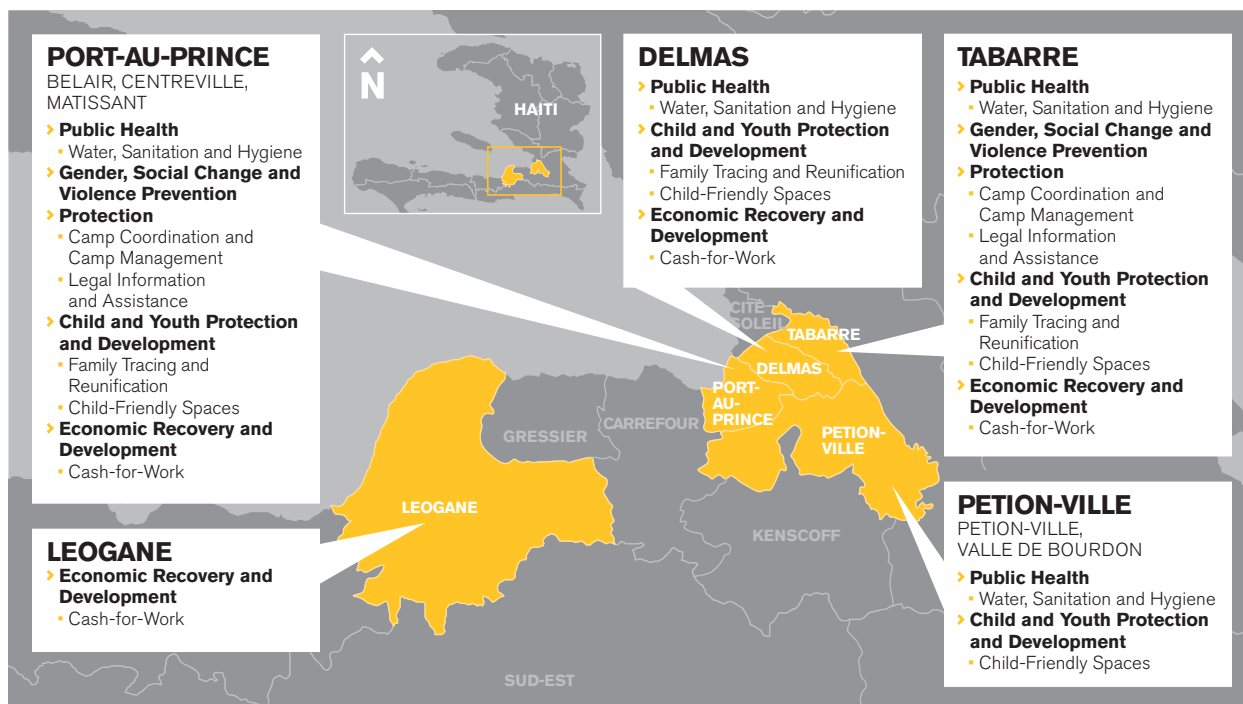
The IRC's advocacy work began immediately after the earthquake when board members and overseers spoke out in support of the U.S. government granting temporary protected status to Haitians living in the United States. IRC staff also advised executive branch and Congressional contacts, including Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA), on ways to protect orphaned and separated children. More recently, I was able to work collaboratively with other aid agencies to advocate for the inclusion of displaced Haitians and civil society groups at all stages of the reconstruction process. In our meetings with government officials and in briefings for the public, we highlighted the protection needs and rights of vulnerable groups. In the year ahead, the IRC will continue to bring attention to the needs of displaced Haitians and work to ensure that they are not forgotten.

Two hundred years ago, when slaves led the revolt that created Haiti, human rights principles were a fundamental part of their struggle. Today, respect for these rights should be integrated into aid programs and our efforts should aim to benefit all Haitians, irrespective of their social and economic status.

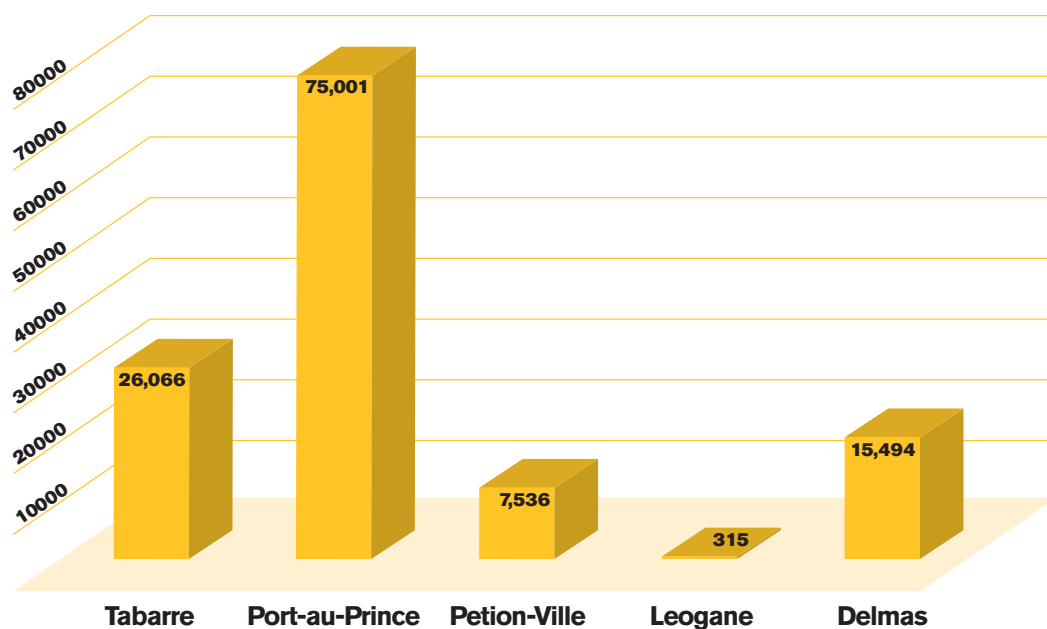


The IRC's Roxanne Paisible (left) with Oveline Mercuix, an IRC child and youth protection expert in Haiti.

IRC PROGRAMS IN HAITI (as of November 2010)



NUMBER OF PEOPLE AIDED BY THE IRC



RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Haitian people had many problems before tragedy struck in January 2010. For those who survived the earthquake, these problems were only exacerbated. Today, Haiti has a long road to travel if its people are to recover and thrive. However, there are critical areas on which the Haitian government, donor governments, the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations can focus to meet the immediate needs of Haitians. The best designed projects will lay the ground work for a future where Haitians can meet their own needs and live with dignity. Helping and protecting poor and displaced Haitians—many of whom are living in dire circumstances, with inadequate shelter—must be a top priority.



The IRC is dedicated to the protection, health and well-being of children in Haiti. Photo by Susana Ferreira/The IRC.

The government of Haiti seeks to spur economic development. But reconstruction will be lasting and sustainable only if it includes the views of all Haitians, especially those most affected by the earthquake, and only if all Haitians, not just the elites, benefit.

Drawing on our work in Haiti in 2010 as well as our long history of helping displaced people around the world, the IRC has three main recommendations.

1 IMPROVE THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM ACROSS HAITI

- › National and local government must step up efforts to combat child trafficking at the border with the Dominican Republic and end the widespread practice of children working as domestic servants.
- › Government donors and others in the international community must continue to build the capacity of the Haitian Child Protection Agency and other agencies to ensure that all residential care facilities are regularly and routinely monitored and that they put the best interest of children first.
- › Help should be given in a way that facilitates family reunifications and ensures that families who are caring for the children of close relatives are able to earn a living.

International adoption of Haitian orphans should be undertaken only after it is established that their own families cannot be found or cannot take care of them. Family unity should be a priority and a child's right. When parents cannot care directly for their children, extended family members or others within the community may be best placed to care for them. A child's right to his or her own identity and culture should be respected.

- › The government of Haiti must eliminate barriers that prevent children from obtaining a birth certificate or other important documents. The IRC has observed that children without documentation are unable to benefit from basic rights, such as education.
- › The government of Haiti must make primary and secondary education accessible and affordable to displaced and poor children. Schools should be improved so that more children receive a quality education.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS (continued)

2 PLACE WOMEN AND GIRLS AT THE CENTER OF RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS

- ▶ The international community and the government of Haiti should take steps to empower and support local women's groups. Haiti continues to have a robust women's movement and local women's groups provide critical services to women and girls. Many of these organizations lost staff, resources and infrastructure in the earthquake. The expertise of these groups should inform reconstruction plans. They should be consulted particularly when sexual violence issues are being addressed. Meetings should be facilitated in Creole to ensure greater participation of local communities.
- ▶ The Haitian government and the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission¹³ must strengthen the legal system and end impunity for perpetrators of violence.
- ▶ Aid programs should focus on the economic empowerment of women so that they are able to improve their economic status within the family and within the community. Programs should target survivors of sexual violence.
- ▶ Young girls who are at risk of being exploited need educational opportunities and other vital services.
- ▶ The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission and the new government must consult with women and girls to develop a comprehensive strategy to address their needs. The Commission should support projects that target vulnerable groups and increase access to health programs, legal aid and economic support for women while enhancing their safety.

3 MAKE THE BASIC RIGHTS OF DISPLACED HAITIANS A TOP PRIORITY

- ▶ The new Haitian government should use its right of eminent domain to obtain the land necessary to construct housing for 1.3 million displaced Haitians.
- ▶ The government must carry out urgently needed water and sanitation projects in urban and rural areas to prevent public health crises.
- ▶ Poor urban and rural households must be given the means to acquire skills and earn a living so they can support themselves and their families.
- ▶ Health care must be made accessible and affordable to all Haitians, including the displaced and poor.

The IRC and other major international humanitarian agencies firmly support as a basic tenet of our work that the people most affected by the earthquake should be consulted to ensure that their perspectives are included in all phases of reconstruction and that their needs are met. In addition, it is imperative that Haitian civil society lead the overall recovery efforts. We do this in the projects we manage in Haiti and we call on others to do the same. The poor and displaced of Haiti should not be forgotten.

The IRC is grateful to all government and nongovernmental, corporate, foundation, and individual donors who have contributed generously to our work in Haiti.

¹³ The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission is responsible for approving and overseeing all recovery and reconstruction projects in Haiti. Prime Minister Jean Max Bellerive and President Bill Clinton, UN Special Envoy to Haiti, serve as co-chairs. The commission's mandate will expire in October 2011.



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