

MRDF's Haiti appeal – three months on

Thank you for giving to our Haiti appeal. As you may know, we try to channel our funds to areas where the needs are greatest. Many of the people we supported were from high-risk groups, including children, the disabled, the elderly and people not receiving assistance from other agencies. Although a lot of our emergency work is happening in Port-au-Prince, we are also supporting relief and rebuilding work in areas such as Leogane, 25 miles from the epicentre, where 80% of the buildings were destroyed.

Your gift has helped to support a number of initiatives in Haiti, which include:

1. Food and shelter

You helped to provide food supplies and regular meals to thousands of people in the aftermath of the earthquake. These included food buckets for families who had cooking facilities and meal stations in the temporary settlement areas.

Donations to our appeal also paid for tents and tarpaulin and ropes for people to build emergency shelters, as well as blankets.

2. Clean water and better sanitation

Clean water is a crucial commodity at any time, but particularly after a disaster when people are living in crowded areas without access to proper sanitation facilities. Waterborne diseases, such as typhoid, cholera and dysentery thrive in these conditions. Just after the earthquake, the number of diarrhoea cases started to rise.

Gifts to our appeal helped to fund a water purification system with pipes, filters and pumps in the Belair neighbourhood of Port-au-Prince. It provided 10,000 homeless Haitians with crystal clear drinking water – the first clean water many of them had had since the earthquake.

You also helped to fund the construction of public toilet blocks and public shower blocks, along with providing water purification tablets, wells and septic systems for controlling waste – all vitally important in trying to prevent the spread of diseases. Our appeal also helped to provide tools to local committees for cleaning and repairing toilets.

3. Medical care and supplies

At a malnutrition clinic in Port-au-Prince, hundreds of children were given enriched milk, spinach, beans and rice to ensure they survived the earthquake. The most severely malnourished children had meals of 'plumpy nuts', a special protein-based paste full of vitamins and minerals. Their mothers were also looked after, all thanks to donations to our appeal.

You also helped to provide emergency medical care and supplies to hundreds of survivors who made it to an emergency clinic in Port-au-Prince. Although overcrowded and with surgery going around the clock, it was a vital lifeline for patients like six-year old Kevine, who needed surgery on an injured foot after being buried under a wall. He was able to wriggle free after the earthquake, but couldn't walk because of his injury. He managed to crawl into the middle of the street where he cried for help until someone brought him to the clinic.

Doctors at the clinic saw many cases of bone fractures and a lot of amputations, but were able to treat people in very difficult circumstances because of your generosity.

4. Counselling support

The repercussions of the Haiti earthquake will be felt for many years, and we believe that psychological and emotional support is also an important part in helping communities to recover.

Donations to our appeal helped to enable counselling services to be set up to support aid workers and teachers, and provide trauma counselling to those affected by the earthquake.

5. Homes and livelihoods

You are also helping to fund the construction of houses for some of the most vulnerable families in the earthquake-hit regions. Where possible, local masons and carpenters will provide the skilled labour for rebuilding work.

Many families lost their source of income. Donations to our appeal are helping to provide some of them with seeds and tools to plant crops for the next harvest, as well as cows, goats and chickens to help them generate an income.

6. Looking forward

One of our Programme Managers will be meeting with representatives of the Methodist Church in Haiti later this month to discuss possible long-term rehabilitation projects. Please continue to check our website at www.mrdf.org.uk for further updates.

Thank you again for your generosity.