

Haiti Earthquake: Rescue to Relief Work

The 7.0-magnitude earthquake that shook Haiti on January 12, 2010, was the largest experienced by the country in over 250 years. The quake resulted in an estimated 217,366 deaths, and left more than 1.5 million people homeless and displaced. While adversely affecting the social and the economic stability of communities throughout the island nation, the quake – centered near the city of Léogâne (approximately 16 miles west of the capital Port-au-Prince) – has had a particularly devastating impact on Haiti's Western and South-western Departments (geographic divisions similar to counties). This region includes Episcopal parishes and outstations of the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti's Western II Archdeaconry.

**"Ansan-m ann di: Ayiti leve kanpe pou-w mache."
Together we say, Haiti rise up and move forward.
– The Rt. Rev. Jean Zaché Duracin, Bishop of Haiti**

The initial Rescue and Relief activities supported by Episcopal Relief & Development were characterized by rapid needs assessments and service provision. Food and non-food items were distributed throughout the Haitian parish network to assist families left homeless by the quake, as well as those hosting the displaced. Programming during the first three months of 2010 assisted over 60,000 people.

This programming included search and rescue, health care, food, non-food items, water and sanitation, temporary shelter, transportation and institutional support.

Search and Rescue

Episcopal Relief & Development supported work by the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti and CEDDISEC to save people and salvage property on church grounds.

During the first hours and days, the primary concern of the diocese and CEDDISEC was to locate and rescue trapped and injured people on church properties. To help with search and rescue efforts on the church grounds, Episcopal Relief & Development helped CEDDISEC purchase five sledgehammers and hire approximately 25 laborers.

The emergency situation in Haiti was both severe and widespread, and the availability of professional first responders was limited. As a result, the workforce during this initial response was composed of able-bodied community members and youth scouts from the church. CEDDISEC mobilized these volunteers to sift through debris and rescue important diocesan effects. At Bishop Duracin's destroyed residence, important documents were recovered. At Holy Trinity Cathedral, efforts were made to salvage worship items and bells, as well as some organ pipes. Thereafter, a temporary open-air worship facility on Cathedral property was constructed.

These initial search and rescue activities continued through January 22.

Health Care

While it is impossible to know the exact number, the Haitian government estimates that the quake took an estimated 217,366 lives and caused just as many injuries. In the days and weeks following the disaster, Haiti's healthcare infrastructure was overwhelmed as injured and sick people flooded hospitals and clinics.

In the period immediately following the earthquake, CEDDISEC organized ambulance services for injured persons, as well as removal of the deceased to the General Hospital. Approximately 20 injured victims were transported to Cange (80 km northeast of Port au Prince). Thirty children from St. Vincent's School for the Handicapped in Port-au-Prince were relocated to Montrouis (75 kilometers northwest of Port-au-Prince) for safety. Transport services worked long hours to help survivors reach medical care and secure shelter, and CEDDISEC staff and volunteers prepared for removal of the bodies of those who had died.

Episcopal Relief & Development worked closely with the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti, CEDDISEC and other partners to provide medical care to as many survivors as possible. CEDDISEC provided health care to 20,890 individuals. This included 6,641 individuals assisted at a temporary clinic established on the grounds of College St. Pierre in Port-au-Prince, and 14,249 individuals assisted through mobile medical clinics conducted in remote areas severely affected by the earthquake.

In February and March, 94 mobile health clinics served remote rural populations in more than 70 communities in the Léogane, Carrefour, Jacmel, Bainet, Grand-Goave, Gressier, Arcahaie and Croix des Bouquets communes. The clinics were staffed by 29 Haitian doctors and nurses. In conjunction with 15 Episcopal parishes and approximately 40 mission stations, six mobile medical teams (with two doctors and two nurses per team) treated and educated between 1,500 and 1,900 individuals per week.

Medical supplies for the mobile clinic care teams were secured in part through Episcopal Relief & Development's partnerships with the Episcopal Diocese of the Dominican Republic and IMA World Health. Supplies were also secured by CEDDISEC through local purchases and donations from NGOs and UN Battalions in Haiti.

Emma's Story: Receiving Care in the Quake's Aftermath

Before the January 2010 Haiti earthquake, 20-year-old Emma Mentor lived with her mother and brother in a rented house in Carrefour-Feuilles, an area of Port-au-Prince. She and her brother were the only ones at home on January 12th when the earthquake hit. When their house fell down around them, Emma was struck and her leg was broken. [Read more](#)

Food

Following the quake, Episcopal Relief & Development worked closely with the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti, CEDDISEC, the Episcopal Diocese of the Dominican Republic and other partners to get food to people in need as quickly as possible. During the initial months of 2010 it is estimated that CEDDISEC assisted at least 13,700 individuals with 217 tons of food. This includes 800 individuals assisted with wet rations (hot meals), and 12,900 individuals (equivalent to 2,150 families) with dry rations. Just over 50% of the food provided was purchased in Haiti.

During the months of January and February, CEDDISEC offered hot meals once daily to around 800 individuals living on the grounds of College St. Pierre in Port-au-Prince. A typical meal consisted of locally sourced rice and beans, and periodically meat.

CEDDISEC also supported food needs through several distributions of locally sourced dry rations (i.e., rice, beans, pasta, cooking oil, sugar, smoked herring, canned milk, and dry milk). These supplies were distributed by 12 Episcopal parishes in Port-au-Prince, Carrefour, Léogâne, Baint and Grand-Goave.

Additionally, during the initial weeks after the quake when roads were impassable, a series of food drops were made by helicopter to six rural mountain communities in Léogâne. Each drop included 216 pounds of rice and 204 pounds of beans. Donkeys were also used to make food deliveries to other rural communities near Léogâne that were inaccessible by other means of transportation.

From the initial response through mid-March, the Episcopal Diocese of the Dominican Republic transported food supplies from Santo Domingo to Port-au-Prince twice a week for distribution by CEDDISEC. Ultimately, with support from Episcopal Relief & Development, the Diocese of Haiti was able to purchase two trucks to continue these and other transport activities.

Non-Food Items (NFIs)

With support from Episcopal Relief & Development, CEDDISEC also assisted at least 16,834 individuals with non-food items. This included clothing for 1,500 individuals, kerosene for 351 families (1/2 gallon per family), and blankets for 9,728 individuals.

Following the earthquake, various traders in Port-au-Prince had bales of used clothing available for sale. CEDDISEC purchased and distributed, via Episcopal parish priests, three bales of used clothing. This clothing went to an estimated 500 displaced people in the camp at College St. Pierre in Port-au-Prince, and 1,000 people in the Léogâne area, in response to the immediate needs of people who could not return to their homes to recover belongings because of the risk of aftershocks.

Episcopal parish priests in Port-au-Prince, Léogâne, and Carrefour were also authorized and provided with funds through CEDDISEC to purchase locally sourced blankets and kerosene for distribution to families displaced by the quake and living in makeshift tent camps on Episcopal church grounds.

Additionally, CEDDISEC ensured the distribution of 33,000 school kits, donated by Lutheran World Relief, to 32 parishes/institutions, which in turn allocated the supplies to more than 26,763 students in October 2010, at the start of the 2010–11 school year.

Water and Sanitation

In the wake of a disaster, lack of access to clean water and adequate sanitation can often worsen already terrible conditions. This is especially true when a large number of individuals are living in close proximity to one another, as in many of the camps where people took refuge following the earthquake.

Episcopal Relief & Development supported CEDDISEC immediately after the quake to ensure that people had access to both clean water and adequate sanitation systems.

Clean Water

During the initial weeks following the earthquake, CEDDISEC, with Episcopal Relief & Development's support, hired a water tanker truck to supply water twice daily to 2,500 people on the grounds of College St. Pierre, as well as to 1,000 displaced people in the public camp situated at Champs de Mars. At the same time, Episcopal parish priests in Port-au-Prince, Léogâne and Carrefour were authorized to purchase bottled or bagged water for distribution, benefiting an additional 9,728 people.

As a longer-term measure, CEDDISEC also ensured the rehabilitation and subsidized the operation of several parish-level water filtration systems. For example, CEDDISEC provided fuel to restart a water filtration system serving the community surrounding the Darbonne parish in Léogâne. CEDDISEC also purchased a generator, repaired a pump and cleaned a water cistern in order to provide drinkable water to displaced individuals living on the grounds of College St. Pierre in Port-au-Prince. Additionally, eight CEDDISEC Development Agents were trained in the installation and maintenance of chlorine water filters, donated by Water for Life. In all, 20 filters were installed in 11 rural communities.

Public Sanitation

CEDDISEC, with Episcopal Relief & Development support, assisted at least 4,000 individuals (an estimated 1,000 individuals per parish) with access to sanitation through the construction of four public latrines. Each latrine had 12 toilets (six male and six female stalls). These latrines were built on the grounds of four Episcopal parishes (Ste. Croix in Léogâne, St. Etienne in Buteau, Annunciation in Darbonne and St. Matthieu in Matthieu) where large numbers of families left homeless by the quake spontaneously took refuge in informal tent camps

Shelter

It is estimated that more than 1.5 million people were left homeless by the January 2010 earthquake. Even those whose homes were left standing were, in many cases, unable to return to these unstable structures as aftershocks continued to affect the country. Among the various Episcopal Church properties that served as temporary tent camps for people following the earthquake, the largest tent camp emerged on the grounds of College St. Pierre in Port-au-Prince. College St. Pierre at one time housed upwards of 2,500 persons.

In the immediate aftermath of the quake, CEDDISEC, with support from Episcopal Relief & Development and in collaboration with the Episcopal parishes situated in the communities surrounding the epicenter of the quake, assisted people with temporary shelter materials such as plastic tarps, wood and nails, and family-sized tents.

During the initial months of 2010, CEDDISEC assisted 1,350 families with shelter materials. This included 450 families who received insecticide-treated tarps and construction materials, and 900 families who received family-sized tents. While the majority of families assisted were located in communities and camps surrounding the 11 Episcopal parishes of Port-au-Prince, Delmas, Carrefour and Léogâne, 21 additional Episcopal parishes and institutions outside the quake zone in the north and south of Haiti also received CEDDISEC shelter supplies for distribution to the many people displaced to these areas.



Philogene's Story: Rains Arrive in Haiti

One evening a few weeks ago, as we were winding down the day in Port-au-Prince, heavy rain started falling. Those drops announced the arrival of the rain and hurricane season that will continue through October. The rainy season is bringing yet another layer of trials for people hit hard by the January 12 earthquake. ...

[Read more](#)

Transportation Support

Transportation was a huge challenge in the days following the quake. Roads were made impassable by debris, the airport was overwhelmed with traffic, and operations at the port were shut down. During this time, Episcopal Relief & Development worked with CEDDISEC to secure adequate means of transportation, ensuring that assistance and supplies could reach those who needed them most.

Specifically, with Episcopal Relief & Development's support, three heavy-load trucks were purchased to transport supplies. One was designated for use by the Episcopal Diocese of the Dominican Republic and the other two allotted to the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti. Additionally, nine pickup trucks were donated to the Diocese of Haiti by the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia.

Institutional Support

In addition to supporting the program work of the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti and CEDDISEC, Episcopal Relief & Development also provided direct technical and operational support to these institutions.

A unique aspect of Episcopal Relief & Development's response to the quake, as compared to our other international response efforts, was that Episcopal Relief & Development program staff and consultants were deployed within Haiti for substantial periods of time. The organization's rationale behind this deployment considered the scale of the disaster and its stress on local clergy, leadership and systems, as well as the possibility of assisting CEDDISEC in coordinating with the massive international relief efforts and diverse US parish-based mission responses, on behalf of the vast number of individuals and communities across Haiti in which the Episcopal church is present.

Throughout all of Episcopal Relief & Development's response, the principles and strategies that guided the organization's support of the Diocese and CEDDISEC have included:

- Supporting and encouraging the vision of Bishop Duracin that calls parishes to work together with and on behalf of their entire communities, not only their congregations, so that Haiti may "rise up and move forward together."
- Strengthening local leadership and engaging Haitians in their own recovery and redevelopment processes.
- Reinvesting knowledge and experience gained through previous emergency and community-based programming into current earthquake recovery efforts.
- Ensuring that support reaches communities throughout the country, assisting both those displaced by the quake as well as communities hosting them.



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- Ensuring that recovery programs provide individuals and communities with choices, create employment (both short- and long-term), protect the environment, and assure participation and respect for all people.