

# REPORT FROM HAITI

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**Six months ago an earthquake shattered Haiti. Families have been devastated.**

On January 12, 2010, Haiti changed. A powerful earthquake shattered the capital city and thousands of people lost their lives. The world watched the press releases. Families frantically searched for loved ones. The magnitude of the impact of a few seconds is difficult to explain. But to a child who has lost her mother and father, her grandparents and her home, words fall short of expressing the severity of the disaster.



#### **Children are impacted in so many ways.**

Their food supplies are cut off. Their young bodies are unable to withstand the heat and the trauma of hunger. Parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents and caregivers died, leaving children to fend for themselves. In some cases it took several weeks to reunite family members.

Children lost their homes. The catastrophe brought out the best in many people. Families and whole communities worked together to provide a safe and secure environment for their children. But catastrophes also bring out the worst in people. Desperation caused an outbreak of violence. Children were without the protection of a home.

While the government ordered a return to school, few schools were able to open. It will take many months before the schools are able to open for full days.

All of the classroom materials have been lost. Chairs, desks, books, teaching tools and all of the teachers' supplies must be replaced. We are beginning our journey on the road to recovery, but there is so much still to do.

**Catastrophic... that is the one word that describes the impact of the Haitian earthquake. Tremors and aftershocks killed more than 230,000 people, shattered the homes of more than 1 million people, destroyed more than 250,000 homes.**



## Your Gifts at Work



ERDO, with partners like Michael and Louise Charbonneau living in the hub of the disaster, was able to send emergency supplies immediately. We distributed emergency food to 1200 families for three months. It was critical for us to deliver this food as fast as possible, as starvation is a very real risk in an emergency of this magnitude.

We worked with the community and families to locate children who had been separated from their families. We located more than 40 children who had lost their parents and needed full-time care. We ensured they were safe and cared for.

105 Haitians are able to build shelters from the money received. These are designed to be earthquake and hurricane resistant, protecting families in the future. Each home is a simple 18 x 12 wooden construction with a steel roof.

Education is still a challenge. Even though the government ordered schools to reopen on April 6, most schools are too badly damaged to accommodate students. We are working to provide 12 child-friendly spaces, with the capacity for 1,200 children. We are also working on proposals to build two schools that will provide education for 1,000 children in total.



Your response to Haiti has been extremely generous, but there are many needs. Our initial list of projects that are already beginning to ensure a safe future for children and their families:

1. Build 6 new boreholes to provide clean, safe water. (\$10,000/borehole)
2. Continue to build earthquake and hurricane resistant homes for people who have lost their homes. (\$3,000 per home)
3. Provide cash for work programs. This is a special program that will pay men and women for the work they do in the reconstruction process. This gives them the funds to provide food for their families while the rebuilding continues.
4. Rebuild two schools.
5. Provide 12 Child-Friendly Spaces to serve more than 1,200 children who are still unable to go to school.
6. Provide resources for men and women who are disabled as they rebuild their lives.

## The Glory of God in the Shadow of the Disaster

**“You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat.” Isaiah 25:4**

A tiny community of believers has no church in which to worship. When their own building was destroyed in the earthquake, they moved to a rental space. They were recently asked to leave their rental space. But their hearts longed to worship God in spite of the traumatic months following the earthquake.

So they found a space in a warehouse parking lot where they were wedged between a transport truck and a garbage dump.

God's Spirit is working in the lives of young people in Haiti as they work together to rebuild their lives.

The situation in Haiti is complex – there are few easy answers. Rebuilding is slower than expected.

But through ERDO your gifts are directed to immediate needs – we have no governmental beauracracy. Our partners work with integrity ensuring financial stewardship.

While there is much to do, the people are optimistic and we are there for the long haul helping build a stronger future.

Canadians are sending a message of hope through each gift. There are no boundaries to God's Church – we are one people. When one part of the church hurts, the other parts gather around helping to heal and restore. The Haitian church is growing, rebuilding, praying – and God's name is receiving the glory that is due.