



Response Update: Haiti's 2021 Earthquake



Save the Children®

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Nephtalie*, center, holds her younger sister Gaelle* while brother Joseph looks on. They are under the roof of a temporary shelter their family made after the earthquake. We helped by providing waterproof tarps.

Photo: Rebecca Davies/Save the Children

**name changed to protect privacy*

You Were There When it Mattered the Most

A 7.2 magnitude earthquake in the first hours of August 14, 2021, left communities across southwest Haiti in shambles. In scenes reminiscent of the country's epic 2010 earthquake, children and families who survived the August disaster found themselves surrounded by collapsed homes and buildings, cut off from aid and without shelter, clean water, food, and health care.

As we did in 2010, Save the Children's teams in Haiti began relief efforts within hours, thanks to our presence in affected communities and our donors' strong support. At the six-month mark of our ongoing response to this latest emergency in Haiti, we thank you for rallying to the side of children, families, and communities – many of whom were still recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Matthew in the summer of 2016.

Here are five key takeaways from this update:

- We reached 30,400 children and adults through our relief and recovery work across the affected area.
- Our Emergency Health Unit provided primary care where the local health system was damaged. We strengthened health and nutrition services by training doctors, nurses, and other workers.
- We provided education and safety to children, knowing that having a daily routine that revolves around school provides children with a sense of comfort and wellbeing. More temporary learning centers are under construction now.
- We've improved school water and sanitary facilities to help make schools cleaner and more hygienic places to learn.
- We disseminated radio messages about handwashing, good hygiene, and COVID-19 prevention reaching school children and communities.

You were there at the pivotal moment when our Haitian staff rushed to respond. Thanks to you, they had the resources to reach desperate children and families and provide humanitarian relief to alleviate their urgent needs.



After the Ground Stopped Shaking

The earthquake occurred in the context of extreme food insecurity in Haiti, the country's worst wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, gang violence and political instability following the assassination of the president in July 2021.

- 2,248 people were killed and 12,760 others were injured.
- 800,000 people were affected, including 340,000 children.
- Over 137,500 homes, 97 health centers and nearly 75% of schools were destroyed or damaged.

A Snapshot of Our Response at Six Months

Save the Children has worked with families, communities, government, and civil society in Haiti since 1978, in both development and emergency contexts. We have an office and staff in Les Cayes, one of the areas that was most severely impacted by the earthquake. This presence, our experience in disaster relief in Haiti, and our partnerships with local

organizations positioned us to move quickly to assess needs and mobilize relief.

We were one of the very first agencies to respond. Within a week we had distributed tarpaulins to families sleeping in the open, infant care and hygiene kits, adult hygiene supplies, mosquito nets, and buckets for storing clean water.

At the six-month mark, we are pleased to share the impact your support made possible:

Relief Distributions

- 1,650 families received essential supplies, including tarps and ropes for temporary shelters, blankets, household items, mosquito netting, and solar-powered lamps. 12,800 people received hygiene items.

Child Protection

- At 11 child-friendly spaces we opened, 1,600 children have played, learned, and received psychosocial support that will help to build their resiliency.
- Nearly 400 adults participated in sessions to learn how to protect children from harm; other adults have learned about parenting without violence.
- Radio spots across Les Cayes and Camp Perrin focused on children's healthy development amid this emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic. Another radio campaign focused on preventing gender-based violence and conflict management.

Health and Nutrition

- Our Emergency Health Unit, based in the community of Jeremie, deployed and provided health services in tents. Health staff saw over 2,600 children and adults and provided primary care, vaccinations, nutrition services, mental health, and psychosocial support, and COVID-19 prevention messaging. The team also collaborated with the Ministry of Health to



Juvena, 22, here with her son, lives in the area impacted by the earthquake. She and her husband struggled before the disaster and often could not afford medical care for the family.

“The Carrefour Charles Health Centre is where I get medical checks for my baby. Before the earthquake, I had to buy the medicine from the health centre. However, with Save the Children’s arrival, we no longer have to buy the medicine and the medical services have really improved.”

Our health and logistics experts helped the government to restart services in clinics that were damaged.

Save the Children Photo

support the reopening of area health facilities.

- We trained health workers in infection prevention and control and newborn resuscitation.
- 61 nurses, doctors, and health care workers were trained in Infant and Young Child Nutrition practices to help pregnant and nursing women protect their infants' nutrition.
- We opened mother-baby areas next to eight of our child-friendly spaces to reach more mothers with nutrition information and services. These spaces provide a protective and safe environment for mothers and other caregivers to receive other support as well, such as mental health counseling. Over 1,400 mothers have been reached so far.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- We constructed 17 water towers and connected them to latrines and handwashing stations to enable good hygiene practices.
- Water and hygiene systems were constructed at two health centers.

Education

- To date, we have built 11 temporary learning spaces and have 14 more under construction to get children back to learning. Going to school is an essential part of a child's daily routine. School provides comfort and contributes to children's sense of wellbeing. These semi-permanent classrooms are built to be disaster-resistant and are accessible to children with disabilities. They can easily be upgraded, as they use the same foundation that a permanent solution will require. We also provide furniture, water and hygiene facilities, a lunchroom and rooms for the school administration.
- 18 teachers, seven school directors and 232 students participated in training on disaster risk education to prepare them for future emergencies.
- At 15 schools, we rehabilitated buildings and water and sanitation infrastructures.
- 2,684 students received books and stationery to encourage their return to school.
- Age-appropriate messages about handwashing and other good hygiene practices and COVID-19 risks reached students at 14 schools.

Livelihoods

- Our cash assistance helped 891 families in Camp Perrin and Maniche purchase food, medicine, shelter supplies, hygiene items, and other materials that they identified as most critical for their recovery. Cash transfers allow families the dignity to make their own decisions and support local markets. 98% of the families said they were satisfied with our support.



Wilson* hugs his aunt Mirlande.* Mirlande and her sister Angeline* live next door to each other, although their houses were destroyed by the earthquake. **The families constructed temporary housing from waterproof tarps we provided,** and other materials they found.

Mirlande and Angeline also used our cash transfers for material needed for their recovery. Their children attend a school we support.

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**Names changed to protect privacy*

The Way Forward for Children and Families

Our donor-supported programs will continue to address many facets of Haitian children's recovery – including their health and nutrition, education, and protection from harm.

Our commitment is to ensure a better future for Haitian children. To do so we are now focused on programs that drive more sustainable outcomes. We work closely with the Haitian government, local authorities and partner organizations. Our staff co-lead two collaborations among aid agencies in the affected region, one on education and one on families' food security and livelihoods.