



**Save the Children®**



## **Save the Children's Response and Recovery for Children and Families after Hurricane Irma**

### **Six-month Donor Report - March 2018**

Rodetter and her son Ro'jan were among those benefiting from distributions and referral help from Save the Children in the community of Immokalee. Your support has ensured that we could meet the immediate needs of thousands of families affected by the hurricane.

*Save the Children Photo*

## A Note of Thanks

The first time I drove out to the Florida Keys after Hurricane Irma, I reflected on a trip I'd taken there with my son 10 years earlier. We camped in state parks, swam in the warm clear water and played miniature golf.

This trip was different – mounds of debris lining the Overseas Highway, boats lying haphazardly in unlikely places far from the water and dozens of trailers and homes abandoned due to damage inflicted by the strongest hurricane to hit the Keys in decades. My trip revealed the scale of the disaster in this otherwise idyllic place.

In the six months since Irma, progress has been made: the piles of debris are gone and many houses and businesses have been repaired. Children have been back in school and childcare for months and most parents have returned to work and normal routines.



While there are clear signs of recovery, the impact of the storm lingers, though, in the stresses and strains on the emotional well-being of those affected, particularly children. For that reason, Save the Children has introduced our signature Journey of Hope program throughout the Keys and in other affected places. Since Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005, more than 85,000 children have benefited from the emotional healing that Journey of Hope promotes, and the program is expanding in the counties most severely affected by Irma.

Journey of Hope is just one of the ways Save the Children has responded to the needs that Irma created. This report summarizes our work in communities and our partnerships with local organizations to reach families whose lives were turned upside down by Irma. All of this work has been possible because you and many others stepped up to help at a critical moment.

Thanks to your generosity, Save the Children's programs have helped thousands of people recover and find hope to carry on into the future. I'm very grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Adam Keehn". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Adam Keehn  
Hurricane Irma Recovery Team Lead

## **The Crisis at a Glance**

Hurricane Irma struck Florida on September 10, 2017, leaving thousands of families to deal with the loss of homes, power, lack of access to clean water and damage to schools, child care/early education programs and places of work. Communities in south and southwest Florida that are home to low-income and migrant families were especially hard hit.

At the six-month mark since the hurricane, children have returned to schools, caregivers are receiving psychosocial support and families continue to rebuild their lives. As so often happens in the wake of a disaster, communities have pulled together and local organizations are at the forefront of rebuilding. Although children are smiling on the outside, we know that many are still experiencing emotional difficulties and trauma and are worried about when the next storm may hit.

Our staff and partners have talked with parents and caregivers who are still repairing homes, finding new places to live and work and ensuring that their children can attend school and child care. Given that some of the areas in Florida most heavily impacted were tourist destinations, caregivers feel the stress of having lost their jobs and are worried about whether the tourism industry will bounce back. In other areas that rely heavily on agriculture, the loss of crops is impacting families' financial well-being. While life has regained its normal rhythms for many families, the emotional and psychological strains will last for months to come.

## **Our Response at Six Months: Your Support Has Made a Significant Difference**

Save the Children deployed nearly 50 staff and volunteers after Hurricane Irma to build partnerships with trusted local partners and provide immediate relief in the hardest-hit communities. At the six-month mark, our team continues to work in partnership with schools and child-care programs/early learning programs to support the emotional recovery of children and their adult caregivers.

Over 18,000 children and adults have benefited from work that your support has made possible. Over the next two years, we are targeting our efforts to reach families across high-poverty areas in south and southwest Florida and the Florida Keys. Communities in these places are among those where Irma dealt the strongest blows and where resources for families' recovery are most limited.

Our teams in the Dominican Republic also mobilized a response after that island was affected by both Hurricanes Irma and Maria. To date, over 21,000 children and adults have benefited from our health-focused work there.

## **Meeting Immediate Needs through Distributions and Child-care Recovery**

- Since our three-month update in December 2017, we have conducted half-dozen large distribution events in Naples and Immokalee in Collier County. Working alongside our

partner, the Redland Christian Migrant Association, we provided over 700 diaper packs and children's clothes to 400 families. In Key West and Key Largo, we provided over 11,000 articles of adult and children's clothing and over 150 hygiene kits to Kids Come First in the Florida Keys, which helped us reach 1,000 families.

- We've distributed children's clothing and books to local organizations and schools such as the Shelter for Abused Women and Children in Naples, Grace Place for Children and Families and Healthy Families Miami. Thus far, nearly 11,000 children and families, especially those in the most impoverished and badly damaged areas, have received goods to help meet immediate needs ranging from hygiene products to clothing to meals. A \$50,000 sub-grant to partner Meals of Hope enables it to continue to provide meal kits and food to communities throughout Collier County and beyond.
- Save the Children has made nine sub-grants to partners who in turn distributed funds to child-care and other facilities to help with rebuilding. Over 400 preschools and child-care centers that serve a combined 18,500 children ages 0-5 have received Save the Children's support to help them recover.



One of our Florida team hands a bin of infant and child hygiene items to a member of the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department during one of our distributions after Hurricane Irma. We partnered with the department to reach agencies that serve children and families, including a foster home and a women's shelter.

*Photo: Perry Knotts/Save the Children via AP Images*

One of our partners also used the sub-grant to waive or reduce child-care fees for 303 families in Immokalee.

- While these grants have enabled partners to make significant progress in helping child-care centers resume services, some facilities have ongoing needs that Save the Children staff and partners will monitor and seek ways to help support moving forward.

## Supporting Children and Caregiver's Psychosocial Well-being

- We know that the emotional impact of disasters can linger for months and even years and providing children psychosocial support from the start is critical to their overall recovery. We are following through on our commitment to provide children and adults with psychosocial support programs, especially through our evidence-based Journey of Hope program, which helps children and their caregivers cope with the stress and emotions that accompany a disaster. Along with local partners such as the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe and the Guadalupe Center in Immokalee, we have trained facilitators who will implement these programs in caregiver groups, schools and child-care centers. Our goal is that the 100 facilitators whom we trained will each reach 100 children.
- To date, we've reached caregivers in Monroe, Miami-Dade, Collier and Duval counties, and facilitators have recently launched sessions for children in these counties as well. We are recruiting local organizations to participate in caregiver groups and to provide them with information and resources on how to help children through trauma. We are in negotiation with the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe and other partners to expand psychosocial support and child protection work in affected areas. These activities will include identifying professionals to be trained as facilitators to work with children. We are also collaborating with local universities and schools.

## Building Preparedness with Local Partners

- We are working hands-on with partners such as the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, the Redland Christian Migrant Association and the Guadalupe Center, helping these networks strengthen their own emergency plans and protocols and leading training modules that will help caregivers plan for and recover from future disasters. In addition, through outreach to schools, we hope to implement our signature *Prep Rally* program, which helps schools and child-care centers teach children basic preparedness and resilience skills through interactive games and activities.

## Our Unique Role in the Response

Save the Children brings to this response a unique attention to child-focused services and advocacy around the well-being of every child, while simultaneously working on the ground and with local organizations throughout affected counties in Florida to address children's most urgent recovery needs. We understand the importance of supporting the most vulnerable of communities, providing grants, materials and children's learning resources to schools and other child-serving organizations. Our approach looks at the whole child, and as such we are one of the few entities providing psychosocial and resilience programs.

Our team of professionals with expertise in child protection, education and emergency response work out of Miami and serve communities across the region. Our local partners also help us leverage local resources, such as venues to hold trainings or volunteers to help support programs.

We are actively engaged in local initiatives and have become a member of community groups such as the Immokalee Unmet Needs Coalition. We are committed to staying in the region and working on the ground every day to support children and their families throughout the recovery process.

Our national staff continue to meet with key House and Senate appropriators as well as House and Senate leadership staff to discuss an aid package with a specific focus on funding for children's needs.

## Our Responses to Hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Dominican Republic

Large areas of the Dominican Republic were battered by Hurricane Irma days before it struck Florida. In late September, the island nation narrowly escaped a direct hit from Hurricane Maria, which created additional damage and hardship for children and families. High winds and flooding from both hurricanes left homes, schools and local infrastructure across the island damaged. Children and families' health was especially at risk in these areas, given the floods, poor sanitation and diseases transmitted by mosquitoes.

Save the Children has focused its response on protecting the health of affected children and families by helping to control disease outbreaks. We have also organized activities in schools around health and sanitation. Over 21,200 children and adults have benefited from these donor-driven responses, for which we have raised \$277,844 and spent \$244,050 to date.

Here are highlights of our work in communities in our response period from September 2017 to March 2018:



Our Dominican Republic and United Kingdom staff share information while assessing children and families' needs after Hurricane Irma. Our relief after Hurricanes Irma and Maria benefited over 21,200 people.

*Photo: Maria de la Guardia/Save the Children*

- We organized cleanup activities in Santo Domingo Oeste, San Juan de la Maguana, San Pedro de Macoris and San Cristóbal. Prior to these cleanup days, we held community awareness sessions to help residents eliminate possible mosquito breeding sites in

homes and in public spaces. Our teams also passed out cloth covers for tanks that families use to store water, and scrubbing brushes and chlorine for cleaning.

- Health promoters held over 70 community workshops on preventing infectious diseases.
- We distributed hygiene kits to nearly 5,000 families and helped them improve hygiene practices for better health.
- We partnered with the Ministry of Public Health to distribute oral rehydration salts to help treat children suffering from diarrhea.

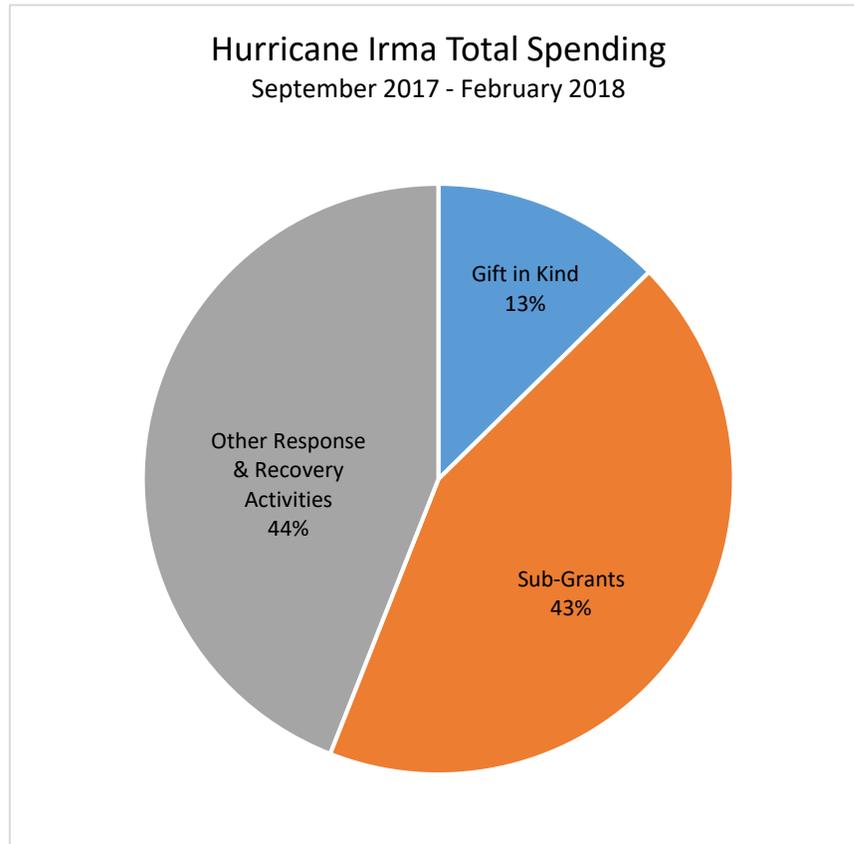
Working in schools, our expert health staff:

- Organized talks in 16 schools in San Cristóbal, San Juan de la Maguana, San Pedro de Macorís and Miches on how children can prevent diseases such as dengue, Zika and cholera. These talks reached nearly 700 children and adults.
- Trained groups of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students and their teachers to form teams to cascade key messages about preventing disease to more students.
- Arranged for a water filter at a school in Magdalena that is used as a shelter during hurricanes. The school's septic system can overflow, causing contamination and unhealthy conditions.
- Repaired bathrooms at public schools in communities in Miches and Santo Domingo West to improve sanitation.
- Addressed water quality issues at 8 schools so primary school students have better drinking water.

We have also conducted disaster risk reduction activities in public schools in Miches, Santo Domingo Oeste and San Pedro de Macoris to help prepare students and teachers for future emergencies. Over 600 children also received new school supplies to replace those lost during the storms.

## Hurricane Irma Financial Snapshot

Save the Children has received \$6.3 million in contributions and in-kind donations for its response to Hurricane Irma. The total spending to date is \$3 million.\*



\*does not include our spending on Hurricane Irma relief and recovery in the Dominican Republic.

## A Story from the Field: With Access to Child Care, Mom and Son Reunited

Like many families in Big Pine Key, Florida, Jenna lost her home when Hurricane Irma stormed the Florida Keys. Jenna is a hard-working single mother whose dedication to her two-year-old son, Warren, is unconditional.

When our staff met Jenna in October, a month after Hurricane Irma, she told us that she had to send Warren to Orlando to stay with his grandmother because she had been unable to find an open child-care center in the wake of the storm.

Jenna was only able to see Warren when she could take enough time off from work to make the long six-hour drive to her mother's house.

As a waitress, Jenna makes too much money to qualify for assistance but still struggles to afford fulltime child care.



Jenna, who was staying with a friend when she met our staff, told us about other displaced families in the area and their search for the everyday services on which their families relied. One woman she knew had given up a valuable source of income in order to stay at home and care for her children.

As 2017 ended, many child-care centers still needed repairs and some have only recently reopened, driving home the continued needs of families like Jenna's and the importance of Save the Children's ongoing work in places affected by Hurricane Irma. Through community partnerships and our donors' generosity, we continue to support child-care centers' repairs and recovery. We are also providing children who were fearful, stressed and in some cases, traumatized by their storm experiences with psychosocial support through our disaster-tested *Journey of Hope* program. Developed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, *Journey of Hope* helps children cope with their stress, losses, and fears and build resilience to future crises.

It was through one of our local community partners that we were able to direct Jenna to an open child-care facility where Warren now attends. Jenna was overjoyed to hear about the possibility of local child-care and even happier to be reunited with her son and bring him home.