

PROFILE: HAITI



A history of slavery, exploitation and dictatorship has paved the way for Haiti to become the poorest country in the western hemisphere.

An earthquake in January 2010 entrenched that poverty, as well as claiming more than 200,000 lives. Some 1.3 million people still live in tents.

But even before the quake struck, three-quarters of the population lived on less than US\$2 a day, and half on less than \$1.

Haiti was once used as a massive sugar and coffee plantation for the world, but its people saw few benefits. In 2008 parts of Haiti erupted into violence triggered by the spiralling cost of food. Rice, beans and fruit prices had gone up by 50 per cent in 12 months.

Outside sub-Saharan Africa, Haiti is the country most affected by HIV. Extensive deforestation (just two per cent of forest cover remains) has made Haiti more vulnerable to floods and hurricanes.

Amid all these challenges, Haiti's church has become a symbol of hope as quake-devastated communities sought a focal point for their grief and local churches responded to the needs around them.

TEARFUND'S WORK IN HAITI

Tearfund has been working in Haiti for three decades. Our links with local churches and communities meant we could quickly respond to the January 2010 earthquake.

Many Tearfund partners opened the grounds of their schools and colleges to the newly homeless. Distributions of cash, tarpaulins and food eased immediate hardship.

Our partner **World Relief Haiti** worked through local churches to offer grants to 2,000 families (around 10,000 people), enabling them to buy food and hygiene products.

Another partner, **World Concern Haiti**, offered relief to 15,000 families (around 75,000 people). Self-help was encouraged through 'cash for work': offering a set wage for each completed task, such as clearing rubble from targeted properties.

Tearfund's **Disaster Management Teams (DMT)** reached 63,000 people during the first seven months of relief. For example, 1,687 households received shelter, 92 schools were restarted, allowing more than 12,000 children to complete the academic year, 1,500 families received seeds and tools, and 3,600 families benefited from 'cash for work'.

Tearfund's response has now entered a rehabilitation phase. This includes disaster risk reduction education, trauma counselling, livelihood support, HIV and healthcare, school rehabilitation, and water, sanitation and hygiene promotion. Local carpenters and engineers are being trained in safe construction methods, and transitional classrooms and household shelters are being built, many already in use.

- **Pray for people living in poverty in Haiti.**
- **Please pray for our Haitian partners as they seek to help others.**
- **And pray for Haiti: for justice, peace, good health and hope for everyone.**