



Haiti Earthquake ONE YEAR ON

On the 12 January 2010, an earthquake struck Haiti which would devastate the capital Port-Au-Prince, causing much of the island and its infrastructure to crumble. The earthquake was a debilitating blow to a country already very much in the grip of poverty; before the earthquake as much as 70% of the population lived on less than \$2 a day. It is estimated that approximately 230,000 people died in the earthquake, which caused 1.3 million people to flee their homes. All institutions that would normally be involved in disaster response including hospitals, government buildings, schools etc incurred significant damage.

Freemasons deliver immediate response



Once the terrible reality of the earthquake became clear, a decision was taken by Grahame Elliott, President of the Grand Charity, to provide financial assistance for the people of Haiti. An emergency grant of £20,000 was awarded to the British Red Cross to help them deal with immediate needs in assisting the injured and supporting hospitals.

£10,000 was also awarded to Plan International whose priorities were assisting children and their families and getting people into safe accommodation wherever possible, as well as working with survivors to help ease their psychological trauma.

Haiti Relief Chest opened to mass support

In late January 2010, in response to requests from members of the Craft and as the extent of the devastation caused by the earthquake in Haiti became clearer, the Council of The Freemasons' Grand Charity opened a dedicated Relief Chest. £93,000 has since been raised, thanks purely to the generosity of Freemasons and their families.

A decision was made late last year to fund the rebuilding of a community school in the city of Léogâne, which was at the epicentre of the earthquake. The donation will enable 400 children to attend school each year, as well as pay for eight new teachers to be properly trained. The project is being delivered in partnership with the aid organisation Save the Children and work is due to begin later this year.

In Haiti, hundreds of schools remain closed, affecting approximately 500,000 children aged 5-14 years. Before the earthquake only 51% of children attended school, primary school teachers completed only one year of secondary education and, on average, children only completed four years of schooling.



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Save the Children has been assisting children and families in Haiti for more than three decades, making them a logical partner for the Grand Charity to work with in Haiti. Save the Children are aiming to rebuild schools that are structurally feasible, ensuring that as many children as possible have a safe building in which to continue their education, as quickly as possible.



Cholera outbreak, another devastating blow

In late October 2010, an outbreak of cholera began in Northern Haiti. Within weeks it had spread all over the island, killing an estimated 2,500 people and hospitalising thousands. Following January's devastating earthquake, over a million people in Haiti had been living in make-shift camps. It is these difficult living conditions which resulted in the first cholera outbreak in Haiti in over a hundred years, due to a lack of decent sanitation facilities and access to clean drinking water. In November, the Grand Charity donated £25,000, at the President's request, providing hygiene and sanitation packs. The Red Cross distributed these packs to people living in camps, aiming to help stop the spread of the disease.



The continued support of Freemasons

In total, £148,000 has been donated towards projects in Haiti. Masonic support meant valuable immediate assistance in the days following the earthquake, via the Red Cross and Plan International. In addition, hundreds of people have been helped in the fight against cholera by the hygiene and sanitation packs the Grand Charity funded through the Red Cross. Finally, a school is being rebuilt, providing a safe environment and fully trained teachers, an invaluable haven for young children to learn and spend time.

All of this could not have happened without the generosity and support of the Masonic community. The Council of the Grand Charity would like to thank all those who have donated for their support. Representatives of Save the Children, the British Red Cross and Plan International continue to keep the Charity informed of their efforts in providing help and support to Haitians in need, and also extend a warm message of thanks to members of the Craft for their invaluable assistance.



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