

The facts

- Just before 5 p.m. on January 12, 2010, a magnitude 7 earthquake struck Haiti about 10 miles southwest of the capital, Port-au-Prince.
- The worst temblor to hit the country in more than 200 years, it killed approximately 230,000 people, injured 300,000 others, and wrecked great swaths of the city and surrounding areas, leaving—in less than a minute—losses and damage estimated at \$7.8 billion nationally.
- The government was severely disabled: 13 of its 15 ministry offices were destroyed and about 25 percent of its civil servants died.
- Nationwide, half of Haiti's schools and three main universities collapsed, along with hospitals and countless homes.
- An estimated 600,000 people fled to the countryside, putting great strain on their rural hosts, nearly 90 percent of whom live on less than \$2 a day.
- The quake left 25 million cubic yards of debris—enough to send a loaded pickup truck to the dump more than eight million times. Haitians continue the monumental task of removing much of that rubble from their plots by hand.
- Approximately 1.3 million people remain displaced in more than 1,000 spontaneous camps as of September 2010.

“““

Things were difficult right after the earthquake, but we're Haitian, so we have to get up and move forward.

—Marie Carole Boursiquot, one of 200 women entrepreneurs who ran Oxfam's community cafés in the capital, providing food to the most vulnerable survivors.

Before the quake

- **Income gaps and hunger:** Even before the quake, countless Haitians faced lives of profound hardship. Their country is the poorest in the Western Hemisphere, and its 9.6 million people have long been plagued by enormous inequality in income distribution. The poorest 40 percent receive just 6 percent of national income. The consequences of that disparity reveal themselves in a host of ways, including hunger: 58 percent of Haiti's people don't have enough to eat, and chronic malnutrition stunts one in four children of preschool age.
- **Rural neglect and urban congestion:** Though agriculture once accounted for 50 percent of Haiti's overall economic activity—and still represents 28 percent of its gross domestic product—years of rural neglect, aggravated by the dumping of US subsidized rice, have left people with few opportunities



Above: Men and women build stone barriers as part of an Oxfam-funded community project in Los Poetes, Haiti. Designed to prevent soil erosion and control flooding, the project also provides steady work for people displaced by the earthquake. *Ami Vitale / Oxfam America*

in the countryside, driving streams of them to the capital in search of a better life. There, slum conditions greet many: built for 250,000, Port-au-Prince had swollen to nearly 3 million residents by the time the quake hit. Many homes have neither clean running water nor sewage facilities—a problem not unique to the capital. Across Haiti, about half the population lacks clean drinking water.

- **Deforestation:** Haiti has a painful history of political instability and humanitarian disasters, made worse by environmental degradation that leaves the country vulnerable to tropical storms. With making charcoal one of the few ways in which rural residents can earn a living, the country's 30 watersheds have suffered: 25 of them are now almost completely deforested. And without trees to hold down the topsoil, erosion continues at the rate of 3 percent a year. When the quake hit, Haiti was still recovering from a string of severe storms in 2008 that triggered landslides that swept away thousands of acres of crops.
- **Progress, too:** Despite facing many challenges, Haiti had begun to see progress on some fronts before the quake struck. In 2009, its economy had grown by 2.4 percent—at a time of economic upheaval that left many countries around the world struggling. The nation's crime rate was falling, and there had been marked improvement in problems such as acute malnutrition: its rate had dropped by half from 9 percent in 2008 to 4.5 percent in 2009.

The challenge now

In the grueling months since January 12, Haitians have confronted challenges of staggering proportion: loved ones lost, homes ruined, jobs gone. Their endurance has been extraordinary. Yet the Herculean task of recovery lies ahead—an undertaking that will require a degree of political will and sustained global support perhaps never seen before.

Today, recovery efforts are focusing on four key concerns:



Preparing for hurricanes

Hurricane season began on June 1 and will continue through November. Though the storms do not typically hit Port-au-Prince directly, their threat is heightened because so many people are living in makeshift shelters. Oxfam has pre-positioned emergency stocks of tarps, and at many sites we are digging drainage canals, spreading gravel, and sandbagging tents to keep people safe from flooding, high winds, and landslides.



Resolving land issues

Land issues continue to be the main bottleneck to reconstruction. Building permanent homes for people will require secure access to land—and in Haiti most of the land is owned by a few. In many camps where people have settled, the owners want their land back. Avoiding evictions is critical. Metropolitan Port-au-Prince has land for settlement, and the government needs to make the resolution of property disputes a priority. In addition, the government owns rural land that it could lease to people to farm.



Returning home

Engineers have determined that more than 118,000 of the houses they have evaluated are safe for families to return to—but many of them are not inhabited. One reason is that people have better access to basic services, like water and sanitation, in the camps. Oxfam is working with the Haitian water authority, CAMEP, to repair and extend the city's network of pipes that bring water into neighborhoods and homes.



Earning an income

Ensuring that people can earn a living is central to rebuilding communities. With incomes, people can provide for their own needs, such as food, rent, and school expenses. Oxfam has been giving cash grants to small business owners to help them restart their operations. The program is now benefiting more than 60,000, but the government needs to implement a job-creation plan for countless others starved for work.



In June, David Deroil (pictured at left with his daughter Sabine, age 5) and his family were among 5,000 quake survivors living in a resettlement camp in Corail, 10 miles outside Port-au-Prince.

"We would like a little place to plant trees, so that they could give us shade and we could have mangoes to eat," said Deroil. "We need a real home. We need some privacy. ...But we don't know if there will be homes. There are rumors that they might be moving us again. So we don't know."

Read more stories from Corail at oxfamamerica.org/a-place-to-call-home.



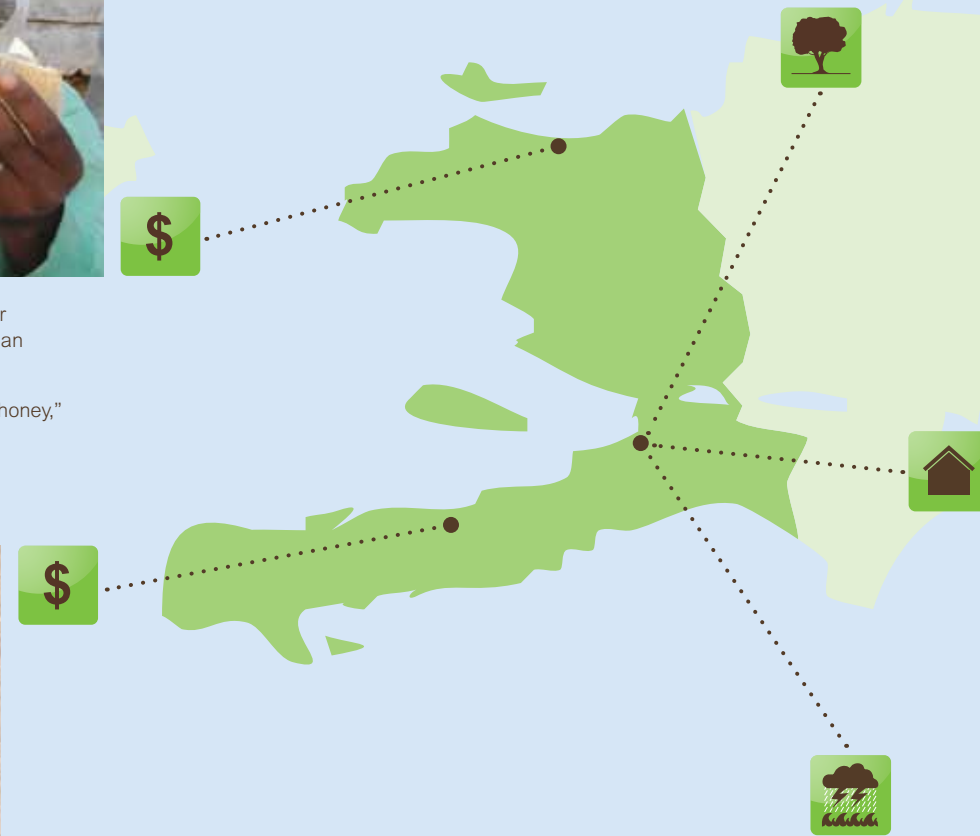
In rural Lacedras, farmers (pictured above) are learning better beekeeping with the promise that greater honey yields will mean more money to spend on household necessities.

See Haitian beekeepers in action: watch the video "Sweet as honey," at oxfamamerica.org/honey.



Guerline Rubin (pictured above) stands at the entry to her house in Paillant. The eggs she holds are from her henhouse in the corner of the yard—part of an Oxfam-supported community project designed to help local families find ways to boost their incomes. Each chicken lays about an egg a day. For Rubin, that means trips to the market at least twice a week to sell her family's cache.

Read more about Oxfam's income-generating projects at oxfamamerica.org/eggs-in-haiti.



"Once we help Haitians get things going, they can keep them going," says Oxfam press officer Julie Schindall of efforts to improve water and sanitation services in Port-au-Prince. Schindall says that strengthening basic water and sanitation infrastructure not only prevents the spread of disease, but will also encourage people to move back into homes that are structurally sound.

Read more about Oxfam's work in Port-au-Prince at oxfamamerica.org/recovery-in-haiti.



"For 28 sites in Port-au-Prince, a recent survey showed [that] the arrival of a violent storm could unleash a new wave of disaster," Oxfam writer Coco McCabe reported on June 3. "Oxfam is scrambling to get ready. We're working to coordinate disaster response and preparedness. We're stocking more emergency supplies. And we're helping people in the camps improve the drainage and stack sandbags around shelters to prevent flooding."

Read more about Oxfam's hurricane preparedness efforts at blogs.oxfamamerica.org, keyword: **Haiti hurricane**.

To get the most up-to-date information, go to oxfamamerica.org/haiti.

Oxfam's response

We know the communities we work with are strong and determined, and will respond to this disaster as they have to others, striving to renew the recent progress the quake cut short. As part of the international community, Oxfam's role is to support the Haitian people to overcome the challenges they face and to help the government fulfill its responsibilities to them and their country.

Oxfam has been working in Haiti since 1978 to help people create sustainable means of earning a living, to reduce the vulnerability of families in the face of disaster, and to strengthen and support Haitians' ability to hold their government accountable. When the quake struck, we had a staff and local partners ready and able to respond. We have now scaled that staff up to 700 people, the majority of whom are Haitians.

In the months following the disaster, our urgent mission has been to help the people of Port-au-Prince, and beyond, meet their basic needs—not only to ensure their survival but to uphold their dignity. We have been providing:

- clean water and latrines to prevent the spread of disease
- plastic sheeting for shelter
- essential household items to replace those that were lost
- food baskets composed of food produced by Haitian farmers
- cash payments to support communities and grants for small businesses to help people restore their incomes

We have also been clearing rubble and drainage channels, providing psychological support for displaced people, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups through theater activities and the provision of hot meals, and paying keen attention to the needs of community members by carrying out surveys and establishing a hotline.

Recent program highlights

- As of September 2010, Oxfam is reaching more than 440,000 people with emergency relief—more than 20 percent of the 2 million people affected by the earthquake.
- Oxfam has installed 10 percent of all the latrines built for the earthquake response, helping to prevent a major outbreak of disease despite intense crowding in the camps.
- Our hotline, started to encourage people to report incidents or complaints and to make recommendations, received more than 1,400 calls between March and May.
- For months, Oxfam has been working on clearing several large drainage canals in the capital that were clogged with trash well before the earthquake. One recently completed canal—a stretch of a little more than a mile through the Cité Soleil area—is protecting more than 80,000 people from flooding during heavy rains.

Looking ahead

A major focus of the country's reconstruction needs to be on agriculture—a source of rural jobs, food for the nation, and a means of encouraging decentralization. As Haiti moves into the next phase of its recovery, Oxfam will be concentrating its work in three areas:

- Basic services and community development, including a focus on water and sanitation, and strengthening the local workforce to provide shelter.
- Economic recovery and improving livelihoods through the support of income-generating activities and the promotion of small-scale farming and sustainable agriculture.
- Governance, accountability, and decentralization aimed at promoting a more inclusive and democratic approach to delivering community services.



Oxfam America

We are an international relief and development organization that creates lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and injustice. Oxfam America is a member of the international confederation Oxfam, a confederation of 14 organizations working in more than 90 countries. Together with individuals and local groups in these countries, we save lives, help people overcome poverty, and fight for social justice. Learn more about us at oxfamamerica.org.

To donate or to learn more about Oxfam's earthquake recovery work in Haiti, go to oxfamamerica.org/haiti.

Above: As the sun rises, a farmer works in his fields near Belladere, Haiti. About two-thirds of Haiti's workforce earns a living from agriculture. *Ami Vitale / Oxfam America*

Working together to end poverty and injustice

Oxfam America | 226 Causeway Street, 5th Floor | Boston, MA 02114-2206 | (800) 77-OXFAM | oxfamamerica.org