

# Haiti



The Republic of Haiti is located on the western, smaller part of the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean Sea. It shares the island with the country of the Dominican Republic. There are almost 10 million people who share this tropical island that is slightly larger than the state of Maryland; most Haitians are descendants of African slaves. Haiti has been an independent country since 1804. It was the first independent nation in Latin America and the Caribbean region, gaining its freedom from France after a 10-year slave revolt. Haiti's capital city is Port-au-Prince. The country's two official languages are French and Creole.

Haiti's location makes it vulnerable to hurricanes, severe storms, floods, and earthquakes making life very unpredictable at best. Whether in flatlands or the mountains, the terrain of the country is mostly rough. There is little arable farmland, which means Haiti must import much of its food, making it very expensive for people who live in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Healthcare is very limited – there is only one doctor for approximately every 4,000 Haitians. Water borne diseases are common due to the lack of access to clean water in the country.

On January 10, 2010, at about 5:30 in the afternoon, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Port-au-Prince and killed an estimated 220,000 people. Because many Haitian schools have “double sessions” – some

children go to school from 7 AM-noon, some from 1-6 PM – many were trapped in the rubble of their school buildings by the thirty-five second long earthquake.

*Please stop now to say a silent prayer for 35 seconds for the children of Haiti – it's longer than you think!*



Injured children were brought to makeshift hospitals made of tents to be treated, in some cases, by teams of missionary Sisters from around the world (Sister Marcella, above, is from Italy). These Sisters are nurses and doctors who flew to the Dominican Republic and took buses through the mountains into Haiti to help.

## MCA in Haiti

Missionaries funded by the Missionary Childhood Association are still hard at work tackling healthcare problems and issues affecting children caused by lack of access to clean water for drinking and cooking

In the Diocese of Gonaives farming had all but stopped. The topsoil had dried up from generations of deforestation and lack of water, making the land unable to produce crops needed to sustain life. Many villagers walked for hours every day to reach the only water available – a river shared with local livestock.



With a grant from the Missionary Childhood Association, a local group was able to purchase a used truck to drill a bore hole for a well along with a pump and a generator to keep the pump running. A huge cistern, (center, above) capable of holding 140,000 gallons of water, was built on the highest point in the area and the fresh ground water is pumped up to it regularly. Shallow concrete canals installed at the same time run the water from the cistern, down the hill to the village of Ti Riviere.



The people of the village can now walk to clean water within 20 feet of their front doors!

The presence of clean water impacted children in many ways:

- Less water borne illnesses such as cholera
- Less time wasted walking for water means more time allowed in the local mission school
- Less instances of malnutrition: fresh food grown by local families makes for a healthier diet
- Less respiratory illnesses because the land is now irrigated and used for farming. Blowing dust is minimized.

What was once an infertile, dusty valley is now green and lush. Local farmers are producing enough fruits and vegetables for their own families with a surplus to sell in city markets. They are also reinvesting in their farms by purchasing new seed and equipment.



Missionaries run seminars to teach local people the skills they need to turn their farms into successful small businesses, enabling them to hire local labor. This frees the children from many daily farm chores and allows them to attend the local mission school.

Your gifts to the Missionary Childhood Association make a difference in the daily life of Haitian children!

**Missionary Childhood Association**

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