



Although major events like the January 2010 earthquake are often the most visible, Haiti faces frequent natural disasters, including floods and hurricanes. Building on its experience around the globe, the American Red Cross has reached more than 484,000 people with disaster preparedness activities in Haiti.

Since 2010, the American Red Cross has worked with Haitians to assess their vulnerabilities and help identify ways to reduce the impact of various threats. Examples include—

- Digging drainage ditches to prevent flooding
- Reinforcing shelters
- First aid training
- Stabilizing roads
- Identifying evacuation routes
- Reinforcing embankments to prevent erosion



Drainage ditches reduce the impact of frequent heavy rains in Haiti.

In each camp or community where the American Red Cross worked, a five-member committee was formed and charged with creating a disaster response plan. These committees were trained in basic disaster management, first aid, early warning systems and use of emergency equipment. American Red Cross staff and volunteers worked with the committees to ensure that they understand emergency evacuation procedures, including correctly interpreting threat levels and using whistles and bullhorns to alert residents. Through illustrations, demonstrations, music and

dance, the American Red Cross educated residents both in and out of camps about how to prepare for and stay safe in the event of various natural disasters.

Disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities were complemented by various media campaigns designed to engage Haitians in recovery and preparedness efforts. The Haitian Red Cross continues to run a weekly radio program promoting community interaction and sharing information about available services. With support from the American Red Cross, more than one million people have received text messages providing preparedness tips. Since an estimated 80 percent of Haitians – including those living in camps – have access to cell phones, this is an effective way to spread critical knowledge.

Given Haiti's poor infrastructure and recurring emergencies, having access to pre-positioned supplies is critical for a rapid response. With considerable American Red Cross support, the global Red Cross network stores enough basic first aid supplies and relief items to meet the immediate needs of 25,000 families. These strategically positioned stocks include tarps, blankets, hygiene kits and kitchen sets, and were used during emergency responses to both Tropical Storm Isaac and Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

The American Red Cross is taking important steps to ensure we can appropriately respond to evolving disaster preparedness needs. In addition to our work in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, we have expanded risk-reduction activities to assist vulnerable communities in Haiti's Northern departments.

### Preparedness in Action

Tropical Storm Isaac hit Haiti in August 2012. Two months later, Hurricane Sandy made landfall, highlighting the need for ongoing disaster preparedness efforts that help reduce the risks of death and damage to homes and property.

In anticipation of these storms, the American Red Cross mobilized committees to activate early warning systems in camps of Port-au-Prince and increase awareness about the impending danger. Teams received lists of identified temporary shelters, such as schools and churches, helped evacuate people to these safer locations and provided first aid services. In some rural areas, community members and the Haitian Red Cross took action to prepare for the storms based on community disaster response plans developed with American Red Cross support.