

EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE  
**ADVOCACY BRIEF**

HAITI | FEBRUARY 2022



EVERY CHILD IN THE WORLD DESERVES TO BE IN SCHOOL. NOT JUST ANY SCHOOL. A SAFE SCHOOL — FREE FROM VIOLENCE AND DANGER.

## SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

- **Low enrolment:** Primary school enrolment is roughly 75% – an improvement from earlier years but still low. School fees can be prohibitively expensive for low-income families.
- **Poor literacy rates:** roughly 75 % of children at the end of first grade and nearly half of students finishing second grade cannot read a single word.
- **Lack of government oversight:** Most schools in Haiti receive minimal government oversight.
- **Shortage of qualified teachers:** Half of public sector teachers in Haiti lack basic qualifications and almost 80 percent of teachers have not received any pre service training.
- **Violence against children:** Corporal punishment has been officially banned in Haiti since 2001, yet studies show that violence against children remains common throughout the country, particularly in schools.

## KEY MESSAGES

- Every child in the world deserves to be in school. Not just any school. A safe school — free from violence and danger. Where every girl and boy can learn, free from natural disaster threats or man-made risks.
- Too many Haitian children have their education disrupted by crises such as conflicts and natural disasters. And beyond the direct humanitarian crises, many others risk violence, abuse and exploitation every day, just so that they can sit in a classroom and learn.



## WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Most of you have heard the news of the 7.2 magnitude earthquake that hit Haiti Saturday, August 14: a deadly earthquake rocked southwestern Haiti just 12 km northeast of Saint-Louis du Sud and about 125 kilometres west of the capital Port-au-Prince in Haiti. The August 14 earthquake killed 2,248 people, injured 12,763 and directly affected nearly 800,000 people. 53,815 houses destroyed and 83,770 others damaged and essential infrastructure, including roads and bridges, were destroyed. In total, 1,250 schools were destroyed or damaged, affecting more than 300,000 students, and 97 hospitals and health centres were affected. This disaster has just exacerbated the vulnerabilities impacting the access to quality education. In Haiti, more than half a million children are out of school because of a multitude of reasons, including high education costs, lack of support for the most vulnerable and poor educational services. Gang violence has fast become another reason for parents not to send their children to schools. The earthquake, tropical storms, flooding and health crisis are among the many disasters that have led to schools being destroyed, damaged, closed or left inaccessible. In November 2021, the Haitian Government released its Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) report, which estimates the reconstruction and recovery process at \$1.978 billion (nearly 200 billion Gourdes). The largest needs are in social sectors such as housing (\$1.027 billion), education (\$401 million), food security (\$54.5 million) and health (\$31.9 million). Six months after the 7.2-magnitude quake severely affected the departments of Sud, Nippes and Grand'Anse on 14 August 2021, back-to-back aftershocks caused more panic in the already affected areas, these consecutive quakes lead to the death of two people and the injury of 52 others, destroying homes and triggering widespread panic, particularly among the school-age population, according to the DGPC.

The intentions of decision makers and key stakeholders may seem sincere but, so far, they have not yielded remarkable results. Currently, the education sector in Haiti lacks the quality and access necessary for sustained social and economic development. A serious reform is in order that will treat education as a true instrument of progress and development prioritizing the educational sector and calibrating the system to be focused on the specific needs of the country. Despite improvements in enrolment and the commitment of the Haitian government to strengthening public education, challenges in funding, teacher training and access remain prevalent. These issues put a generation of Haitian youth at risk of not receiving the knowledge and basic skills necessary to succeed in a very challenging Haitian context.

## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Half of public-school teachers in Haiti lack the basic qualifications and almost 80% of teachers have not received formal training.
- 50% of children cannot attend primary school and the 60% of children who do attend, drop out before 6th grade.
- Lack of public schools leaves private schools the most popular option for education and most families cannot afford private school tuition.
- The challenges of the education system infrastructure, governance, human capital, and teaching and learning issues – come from a lack of financing.
- In matters related to the earthquake response, Challenges have been identified in institutional coordination at the local level.
- Significant lack of funding for education partners to support response activities and limited prioritization of the Education Sector in resource mobilization efforts.

## KEY MESSAGES

- The need for minimum quality education services in this post-crisis period is imperative. Stakeholders must ensure that children are provided with a sense of normalcy and stability and structure that will benefit their hope for the future.
- Education isn't a luxury. It is a basic human right that reaps lifelong rewards for the child, their family, their community and their country.

## UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

In a country where nearly half the population is under the age of 18, education represents a major challenge for Haiti, but also one of the main solutions as well. Threats to safe schools exist in every country in the world.

However, they are inevitably heightened in countries like Haiti, affected by conflict, environmental disasters, and high levels of endemic violence. Children and young people living in Haiti often grow up being victims and witnesses of extreme violence and instability diming their hopes of brighter future. In addition the educational system in Haiti presents major access and quality challenges.

Almost all schools in Haiti are privately run: In the early 2000s, about 80 percent of schools were privately owned and operated by religious organizations, for-profit institutions and nongovernmental organizations and tuition fees charged by most institutions are considered a hindrance for many Haitians, particularly the most vulnerable. It is important to understand that privately run schools usually charge tuition fees plus transportation, textbooks and uniforms (mandatory), which prevent many families from sending their children to school.

Moreover, the State actors have limited capacity to oversee and to monitor the proliferation of privately held schools, and many operate without legal accreditation from the Ministry of Education. In recent years, the Haitian government has made significant gains in improving schools. However, capacity building, program development and largescale teacher training take years to implement. While the government works to improve the education system, a generation of students is at risk of missing the opportunity to attend school, leaving them without the skills needed to succeed in the labor force. As a consequence, the quality of education offered in such establishments cannot be guaranteed by State institutions. Additionally, As a result of the earthquake, many families lost their income and are currently struggling to meet their children's education expenses. UNICEF estimates that more than 230,000 children are at risk of dropping out of school in the Great Southern departments of Haiti. Every day outside of the classroom will expose more vulnerable children to protection risks such as violence, abuse, exploitation, forced migration and even gang recruitment. One of the main concerns after the earthquake was regarding the continuation of education in the affected areas and the lack of adequate spaces for learning. To date, more than 80 percent of students in southern Haiti are in school, but there are still those who have not been able to do so, and 250,000 boys and girls are at risk of never returning to school if access to education does not urgently recover.

## AN OVERVIEW OF WORLD VISION HAITI ADVOCACY ACTIONS | *Emergency response*

WVH's response will target some of the most impacted communities, particularly in areas not served by other agencies. World Vision's response plan will be targeting 60,000 children and 180,000 people focusing on sectors related to Wash, Shelter, Food Security, Child Protection and COVID-19 prevention. WVH advocacy efforts will focus on preventive messaging with focus on institutional protocols for COVID-19 preparedness and prevention including promotion of child-focus disaster management and child sensitive approaches in national and local level response efforts.

Many schools were severely damaged and children's school supplies were destroyed, making a fast return to school particularly challenging. To address these needs, the response will support the rehabilitation of schools and the provision of back-to-school kits for children.

We will also be catering distance learning content in selected community radios in order to scale up distance learning activities. **Activities:** School rehabilitation; Back-to-school kits; Distance learning content - **Beneficiaries:** 15,000.



## UPDATES ON ADVOCACY IN THE RESPONSE AREAS

**In the WASH sector,** a partnership agreement has been signed with OREPA Sud (government entity) to facilitate World Vision's interventions in this area. There are promotional activities related to hygiene and hand washing at 26 schools in the Department of Nippes including Petit-Trou des Nippes; L'Asile and Baradères.

**Sector needs:** There is a problem of access to water at the school and community level. This constitutes a kind of blockage for handwashing awareness activities. Hence the need to mobilize people, to hold community meetings and this, with community and religious leaders so that they can take advocacy actions with local authorities.

**In Food Security,** support is provided to the population in terms of distribution. However, the problem arises in terms of access to agricultural inputs. Orientation sessions are conducted by the team with a view to creating Mutuelles with the youth at the commune level. 25 mutual insurance companies will be created, 5 per commune.

**Sector needs:** Lobby the departmental authorities to influence policies related to food security. We are looking to increase our participation in cluster to continue to debate on the issue.

**For Child Protection,** protection and advocacy committees are formed in Nippes, particularly in Petit-Trou de Nippes. Other committees will be created in Baradères, L'Asile with other young people to carry out advocacy actions regarding positive discipline, elimination of violence on children, health, water and sanitation. A follow-up in terms of petition will be done with the youth in order to address the local authorities and create a better environment for the development of children.

**In Education,** the implementation of the positive discipline policy in schools will continue. The document is developed and will be disseminated in the different schools that have benefited from the training on positive discipline in the region. 36 schools for an impact of 6641 children have already received the document.

We will need a survey at these schools to better measure the impact of the positive discipline policy. Implementation of Positive Discipline in South Torbeck schools with the support of BDS and the local organization ADET (Association of Torbeck School Principals). 20 schools for an indirect impact of 4310 children. Follow-up with the Departmental Directorate of Education will be done to popularize the code of conduct and laws on corporal punishment.



## UPDATES ON ADVOCACY IN THE RESPONSE AREAS

### Actions undertaken by our allies/partners:

Compassion international benefited from 3 days of training of trainers on positive discipline. The Trainers are in the process of repeating these trainings. We already have very positive feedback for some Compassion International clusters, especially in the South. Up to last December, 15 CDE have already been trained for a total of 280 participants. The next step is to disseminate the Positive Discipline Policy in these CDEs.

### Collaborations with local organizations in the region:

We have renewed a partnership with RONDDH, a local structure. The basis of this partnership is to carry out the training of trainers on positive discipline; to lobby around the issue of birth registration and to accompany the protection and advocacy committees in the communities. As a result, there has been : Lobbying of civil registrars Anse-à-Veau (Genet Lumène); Petite-Rivière (Lionel Prucien) and Baradères (Eddy) from October to December 2021 on the problem of birth registration in the department; Submission of a formal advocacy document on birth registration on January 11, 2022 at the secretariat of the Minister (RONDDH); Lobbying meeting with the Minister of Justice Bertho Dorcé on Friday, January 28 for a follow-up of the document (Partner: RONDDH)

### Petition follow-ups will be done with children and youth around non-violence on children.

Recall that there has already been a submission of a petition to the Local Authorities (Asec/CASEC and Mayors) by children and youth in the department of Nippes precisely in Petit-Trou around the following points:

- Reinforcement of the existing legal framework on non-violence against children;
- Application of Positive Discipline in schools
- Setting up a mobile to register children
- Organizing a mobile clinic for the most vulnerable children. Etc.





## CONCLUSION

Despite some progress in the past few years, thousands of Haitian children are denied education. The education sector has been hindered by the multiple crisis occurring country wide and more recently in Southern Haiti, hit last August 14 2021 by a damaging 7.2 magnitude earthquake. While the government and stakeholders work to improve the education services in earthquake affected areas, a generation of students is at risk of missing the opportunity to attend school, leaving them without the skills needed to succeed in the future. We must understand that education and development go hand in hand. The role of education in poverty reduction is huge. Education is an important investment in a country as there are win-win benefits and by supporting the governments of countries like Haiti affected by high violence, conflict or environmental threats to prioritise safe schools will only benefit the guarantee that children can have better chances in life, including economic opportunities and better health. In our emergency response actions, all of us, from governments and global funders to NGOs, philanthropists, the business sector and local communities must work together in bold and innovative ways to guarantee to every girl and boy their right to quality and inclusive education, as it will contribute to keeping peace and reducing inequalities and vulnerabilities.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a framework for action to create safe, non-violent, inclusive and efficient learning environments, A framework for action that can also help identifying the entry points, focus areas and actions through which a diverse range of actors can help make a difference on a local, national and global level to improve educational sector in Haiti.
- Policy needs to move further towards strengthening the capacity of schools and communities to develop young people and reduce inequality in terms of their participation in education.
- Because of Haiti's high vulnerability to major natural hazards, it is essential to educate children and youth so that they master the steps to take to save their lives and those of their loved ones.
- Increase the percentage of Haiti's national budget allocated to education
- Programming reform and capability development to address needs in psycho-social support, distance learning and teaching, innovative skilled-based assessments in schools, increased number of positive discipline practitioners and improved implementation of law of Oct 2001 prohibiting corporal punishments and other types of violence against children.
- Rehabilitation of schools, including for WASH, provision of school kits, school desks and furniture, hygiene kits, catch up classes, psychosocial support for children at school and safe temporary learning spaces.
- Provision of COVID-19 prevention and hygiene kits to protect the health of children and their families
- Increased funding for education partners to support response activities and promote the prioritization of the education sector in resource mobilization efforts.