

ON JANUARY 12, 2010, shortly after a catastrophic earthquake struck one of the world's most vulnerable nations, Development and Peace began working with local partners to help Haitians build a better future. Despite significant, ongoing challenges, the results are showing.

# HAITI

## ONE YEAR LATER

### A pathway to reconstruction

In the year since the most devastating earthquake in two centuries hit just 15 kilometres west of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, Haitian people and their international partners have been at work rebuilding this careworn country.

Among those lending a hand is Development and Peace, a Canadian international development organization that has been present in Haiti for 40 years. In the quake's aftermath the group quickly raised \$20 million, which it has since begun carefully investing in partnership efforts to help affect meaningful change in Haiti. By working with Haitian grassroots organizations, including women's and youth groups, peasant organizations and community radio associations, Development and Peace aims to improve the lives of Haiti's most poor and vulnerable citizens.

Among its first actions, the organization provided resources to help local organizations meet the urgent need for clean water, tents and food. "I was so moved by the response of our Haitian partners to this disaster," says Danielle Gobeil, assistant director of International Programs, Emergencies. "After being torn from their homes by this devastating earthquake, they worked day and night, delivering aid to people who were even worse off."

In that initial period, Development and Peace responded mainly through its participation in the Caritas Internationalis network, a worldwide confederation of 165 Catholic development and relief organizations whose members pooled resources, bringing 2.3 million Haitians aid within the first six months of the crisis.

But such emergency efforts are only the first step in a much more complex response to the crisis in Haiti, says Development and Peace executive director Michael Casey.

"The change process takes so much longer. It's not something that is ever done in six weeks or six months. In our reconstruction programs, we generally plan for five-year periods."

Looking back on the first year of reconstruction, he says, it can be disappointing to perceive what seems like a lack of progress. Despite facing continual, often daunting challenges, however, he also sees the results of foundational work critical to the long-term recovery of affected communities taking shape.

Reconstruction requires a more measured response, says Mr. Casey. "Our fundamental approach to development is intensive partnership with local

## about

Development and Peace is a Canadian international development organization working to address the root causes of poverty and injustice in the Global South. Founded in 1967 by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the organization's aim is to reach out to the most poor and vulnerable regardless of race, gender or religion.

Beyond raising awareness of social justice issues among Canadians, Development and Peace works in over 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, partnering with local organizations to bring change in their respective countries. It is the Canadian member of the Caritas Internationalis confederation of the Catholic Church and receives program funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

## by the numbers

**313,000**  
houses destroyed or damaged in the earthquake

**1.5 million**  
people living in temporary shelters in Haiti

**\$123,000**  
A recent Development and Peace contribution to a campaign to help prevent and treat cholera in Port-au-Prince camps

organizations and communities. In the aftermath of a disaster, we do extensive consultation and planning with local people and involve them in reconstruction."

In the hard-hit town of Gressier, for example, the community has been very involved in designing four prototype homes that meet the needs of local residents. "They are the people living with the consequences of this work, long after most aid workers will have gone home. It's only right that they should lead and participate actively in the recovery effort," says Mr. Casey.

With support from Development and Peace and another funding partner, work in Gressier is being carried out by ITECA, a local organization that supports the peasant economy in Haiti through training and rights advocacy. The project, which involved ITECA-led consultations to ensure that the community participated in home design and construction, is expected to yield 1,700 new dwellings.

ITECA executive director Chenet Jean-Baptiste says, "As much as 75 to 80 per cent of the houses here were destroyed [around Gressier]. Because our training centre is here in Gressier, we lived the disaster and the destruction with the community."

Immediately after the quake, he says, "we encouraged people to stay on their land and not go to the tent cities. We promised to



Canadian and other international development groups are helping Haitian citizens like the girl above rebuild their communities. Evidence including new home construction (pictured above) signal hope.

PHOTOS: DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

find tents for people, which we did. With Development and Peace, we provided 3,000 tents for the benefit of 15,000 people."

While reconstruction is not ITECA's usual work, Mr. Jean-Baptiste says, "We bring all our experience in mobilizing the community, our institutional resources and our understanding of how to adapt to the realities of rural peasants to the process. We want to create homes that correspond to their needs and genuinely improve their quality of life. The participation of families for families, and use of local materials, is central and valued."

"We are using the earthquake as an opportunity to transform our community," says Mr. Jean-Baptiste.

Despite the trauma now being wrought by the cholera outbreak in Haiti, it is critical to remember that there is hope through this work, says Mr. Casey. "The human spirit is very strong. There's been terrible loss of life and human tragedy associated with this disaster, but we see such resilience as people come to terms with terrible losses and join in rebuilding lives and communities."

Even when the saga seems never-ending, "we have a responsibility not to despair," says Ms. Gobeil. "The situation with the cholera outbreak is very terrible, but it is up to us to continue to provide hope for the people living with this reality in Haiti every day."

## Through local citizens and partnership efforts, Development and Peace is making a difference ON THE GROUND

ITECA provides technical training and educational workshops for peasant farmers who make up 75 to 80 per cent of Haiti's population. A long-term partner of Development and Peace, ITECA helps local farmers improve their agricultural production and preserve the environment.

Development and Peace supports ITECA in its regular activities and has also financed specific projects, such as the creation of a mango co-operative in the Gros Morne region. "This region grows the most mangoes, but the producers were receiving very little profit from their harvests," says ITECA executive director Chenet Jean-Baptiste. "We formed a mango co-operative with 1,000 members and helped them improve their crops."

The co-operative also planted 10,000 mango trees, helping reforestation efforts and introduced more commercial varieties of man-

goes. "Within two years we were able to double the price that the farmers receive for their mangoes on the market. This makes a huge difference in people's lives," says Mr. Jean-Baptiste.

**Céline Tessier**, 75, stands proudly on a small plot of red earth. She is one of 100 people from Ti Boucan participating in a permanent housing reconstruction program, sponsored by Development and Peace and led by ITECA, that will eventually benefit 1,700 families.

Céline would likely have been one of the forgotten were it not for this program.

She does not live in a camp, and although Ti Boucan was at the earthquake's epicentre, it is isolated, on a dirt road that alternates between rocky inclines and a streaming river bed. But as part of a team of 10 people from her community who will help one another in the building process, she has



Céline Tessier will soon have a new permanent house to live in to replace the small crammed tent that holds her belongings.

PHOTO: DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

already begun to assemble a growing mound of stones for construction.

"My house used to be over there," she says, pointing across the road, "but that land holds too many bad memories for me." For Céline, this bare patch of earth, soon to be her home, is a vision of hope.

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# ONE YEAR OF SOLIDARITY WITH HAITI

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