

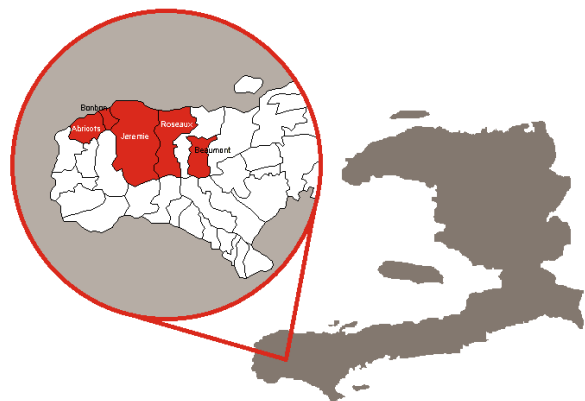
Report for the Isle of Man Government

ActionAid's response to Hurricane Matthew, Haiti



ActionAid is reaching thousands of people in Grand'Anse region with cash for work schemes. Each individual is paid for 10 days of work, and one of community participation. Photo: ActionAid

On the night of 4 October 2016, Hurricane Matthew struck the south-western tip of Haiti, bringing heavy rainfall in the south, south-east and the north-west, and creating the largest humanitarian emergency in the country since the 2010 earthquake. The storm affected over 2 million people and left 1.4 million in need of humanitarian assistance. In the region of Grand'Anse, over 90% of crops were destroyed, and there was a significant loss of livestock.



ActionAid had already trained 30 local women as leaders of the response two months before the hurricane hit, and we were able to act fast. Our needs assessment began on 5 October, and initial urgent response kits were distributed on 10 October. ActionAid was also one of the few agencies to distribute seeds for hundreds of families in time for the vital winter cropping season.

In total, we have reached approximately 60,000 people. Support from the Isle of Man Government has contributed significantly to our response.

Our response

Our response was driven by local people and partners. We made sure that feedback was sought at every stage of our response, setting up communal committees to analyse our plans, decide who should receive aid, and keep the wider community up to date. These committees were responsible for several changes to our activities, including the extension of Cash for Work schemes to clear farm plots as well as roads, several changes in the design of Women's Friendly Spaces, and the employment of local agronomists to provide training. Key achievements within our response are detailed below:

Relief

This project was designed and relief distributed in consultation with people affected by the hurricane – we spoke to groups of people in shelters and asked them what relief they needed most urgently. After that, we set up communal committees, led by women, which met monthly to discuss community needs and provide feedback on our work. These committees drove our response, determining beneficiary lists, monitoring our work and informing the wider community about the response.

- **14,020 people received our urgent response kits**, with water, soap, milk & biscuits
- **200 hospital patients benefitted from cholera equipment**, including rehydration salt solutions, catheters and syringes
- **3,394 households received hygiene kits**, including antibacterial soap, toothbrushes, feminine hygiene pads, rehydration serum, gloves, water cleaning tablets, washing liquid and toilet paper
- **500 households received solar lamps**

Shelter

Community Committees, led by women, were established early in the response and helped lead programme design. For example, the community decided they wanted more metal sheets instead of imported wood as part of the shelter package, because they wanted to recycle wood from trees that had fallen in the hurricane and because imported wood was expensive. This was agreed; ActionAid increased the number of metal sheets and helped recycle the wood.

- **1,120 households received cash vouchers for shelter**

Livelihoods

We worked closely with communities to assess the most appropriate response based on need, and decided a cash distribution scheme would support people to rebuild their agricultural inputs. ActionAid, in collaboration with KPGA and RELAZA, ran 'cash for work' schemes to help support reconstruction. Water supplies and sanitation services had been damaged after the hurricane, making reconstruction vital to prevent the spread of disease. Beneficiaries received cash in exchange for 10 days' work in the community, through which they collectively cleaned water sources in Roseaux, rehabilitated 24km of roads, and cleared 54.18 hectares of community agricultural land.

- **742 households received cash for agriculture vouchers** in the winter
- **372 households received cash for agriculture vouchers** in the spring
- **78 builders were trained in how to 'build back better'**
- **2,554 people were employed for 10 days of paid work** rehabilitating roads & land
- **A cassava mill was repaired**, rebuilding the livelihoods of 300 women and enabled hundreds more women to benefit from employment opportunities in the future.

Protection

Women and girls are at increased risk of all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) in the aftermath of disasters. ActionAid's rapid assessment has found that there is no privacy in the shelters for women and girls - increasing the threat of GBV. We placed a strong focus on protection in our intervention: protecting women and girls from threats to their wellbeing and helping them cope with the shock and trauma of the disaster.

- **603 volunteers were trained in women's protection**, reaching 30,150 more people
- **4 Women's Friendly Spaces have been built**, and a fifth is under construction
- **1,000 women received 10,000 gourdes (about £125) to support their businesses**
- **1,719 children received psychosocial support**

Working with partners

ActionAid Haiti currently works with four partners in Grand'Anse as part of our Hurricane Matthew response. We have been working with these partners with the aim empowering them and the affected communities, so that they can build resilience to other disasters in the future:

Our main partner has been **KPGA**, a locally-rooted civil society organisation founded in 1997 and an ActionAid partner since 2007 – most activities are led by at least one ActionAid and one KPGA staff member. KPGA members came to Port au Prince to help plan the overall response programme, and staff led on drafting beneficiary lists, which were then vetted by ActionAid and by the community. KPGA managed all of our cash distributions, as well as running some protection and hygiene training sessions. ActionAid also supported KPGA by funding a member of staff to look at finances, with the overall aim of increasing KPGA 's knowledge and skills in the long-term.

SOFA is a national women's organisation, and ActionAid partner since 2005. During the response SOFA and ActionAid have worked together on hygiene kit distribution and protection training for women. Additionally, on the International day to eliminate violence against women (November 25th) ActionAid and SOFA organised an activity exposing cases of gender-based violence in communities following Hurricane Matthew and the role women's organisations can play in addressing those violations.

Jeremie Technical College - a local vocational college in Jeremie, Grand'Anse. The college is a new partner for ActionAid, and has been facilitating our 'build back better' training and training of women entrepreneurs. The vocational school was severely damaged during the hurricane, losing \$2 million USD in equipment. In the next stage of our response, ActionAid is working to build the school back up to its pre-hurricane strength, so that it can continue to provide training in the future.

RELAZA has been working in six communes of Grand'Anse since 2003, specialising in agriculture and trade. With many of its structures and members suffering severe damage following Hurricane Matthew, RELAZA partnered with ActionAid for the first time in December 2016 and they have been running agricultural activities such as seed distribution, cash for work schemes that have been clearing farmland, and hosting community machinery for recycling dead wood. They have contributed to the design of some of our programmes such as an initiative to replant fallen trees.

Working with women

At ActionAid we know that women are hit harder by disasters than men. Not only losing their homes and livelihoods, women are at greater risk of sexual violence and are often excluded from aid distributions, which can lead to cases of sexual exploitation. That's why women led in all areas of our response – to make sure that women's needs were not overlooked, and so that after the end of the response, the whole community knows the value of a female leader.

ActionAid worked to make sure that women stayed safe in the wake of the hurricane. Women were always present at our aid distributions, and we put measures in place – such as an SMS helpline – so that any incidences of abuse could be reported. We also ran protection training sessions and created Women's Friendly Spaces, hubs of women's rights and protection work with private rooms where women could seek refuge and support.



Mernie Blaise, 53, attended women's protection training run by ActionAid and our partners in Bonbon.

"[There is] a group of people - including me - in my community who work on this, fighting violence by supporting women. We would be there with the family at every stage - at the hospital, with the lawyer, and in front of the judge. We are always there. It's important first because it's about prevention, and second so that people know that they can and should get help, if anything happens."

Our six-month response has not been without challenges. Heavy rain and flooding after the hurricane destroyed several bridges, and political insecurity caused curfews, protests and road blocks, which delayed the implementation of some activities. In late 2016 drought also caused some crops to fail. While we are not yet aware of the full impact, evidence suggests that many farmers did harvest a small amount, and saved seeds to plant in the spring.

The future

ActionAid is proud to have delivered a strong first response, which will not only provide long-term relief, but which will help to build resources back better so that communities are more resilient to future climatic disasters. We have placed an emphasis on building local capacity, running vocational training on the production of women's hygiene products, building works and business management, which have embedded skills within the community. What is more, our focus on raising awareness of women's rights, and the construction of Women's Friendly Spaces – resources which will be available for generations to come – will help to build a fairer, more equal society for the long term.

Thank you for supporting our response to Hurricane Matthew