2010 Haiti Earthquake:

10 YEARS LATER

Lutheran Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God’s work. Our hands.
In January 2010, the most powerful earthquake to hit Haiti in more than 200 years struck the country, killing an estimated 300,000 people, injuring 300,000 others, and leaving more than a million people homeless.

You responded instantly with an outpouring of generosity. Through Lutheran Disaster Response (then ELCA Disaster Response), compassionate people like you gave more than $13 million for Haiti earthquake relief.

**COVER IMAGE:** A boy bounces a soccer ball on his head in a model resettlement village constructed by the Lutheran World Federation, which was supported by gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response. The village, housing 150 families who were left homeless by the 2010 earthquake, represents an intentional effort to “build back better” and create a sustainable, democratic community.
Powerful partnerships

Lutheran Disaster Response works with companion churches and other partners around the world, whose deep knowledge of local needs and how to address them helps make our work relevant and effective in each community. Through this network, we accompany survivors from the time a disaster strikes until communities are rebuilt. We are particularly grateful to:

The ELCA’s longstanding work in Haiti through these partners enabled it to have a quick response, as well as an enduring one.
The response

When the earthquake hit, your gifts went to work quickly, supporting immediate relief needs that included:

- Blankets
- Health kits
- Medical supplies
- Mosquito nets
- Tents
- Tarps
- Water and sanitation

Within days of the quake, water systems were up and running, bringing clean water to thousands of thirsty people. Hundreds of thousands of water purification tablets and jugs were distributed. Organized food distribution met immediate needs.

In camps for people displaced by the quake, health kits were supplied, and spiritual care and counseling was provided to survivors suffering from trauma.

REMEMBERING BEN SPLICHAL LARSON

On Jan. 12, 2010, Ben Splichal Larson died after the earthquake toppled the highest two floors of St. Joseph’s Home for Boys, just up the mountain from Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Ben, a student at Wartburg Theological Seminary, was in Haiti that January with his wife, Renee, and his cousin Jonathan. These three seminarians were walking with the Lutheran Church in Haiti, to learn from the church and to teach Lutheran theology.

Ben, Renee and Jonathan were together inside the building when it collapsed. Renee and Jonathan escaped; Ben was trapped in the rubble, where he died after singing a verse from the Agnus Dei (ELW, p. 208).

At Ben’s funeral service, the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, executive director of Global Mission, remembered Ben’s solidarity with the people of Haiti. “[Ben] became one with them in their pain, even as his God was one with their pain,” he said. “He emptied himself in love and service for them. And he gave until there was nothing else to give but his own life.”
Your gifts helped not only to meet immediate needs, but to help end cycles of poverty and injustice for people in Haiti. People displaced by the earthquake moved into new, low-cost, more disaster-resistant houses.

In the long term, Lutheran Disaster Response’s work also focused on vocational training to help Haitians improve their livelihoods, so they would be less vulnerable to future disasters. Training workshops and an awareness campaign highlighted disaster risk reduction, providing safety tips and informing people about signs of hurricanes. One LWF meeting participant remarked, “No matter what happens, we are better prepared now!”
THE RESPONSE ALSO INCLUDED:

- Intervention for cholera treatment and prevention reaching nearly 1 million people
- Two of the first Haitian-based cooperative dairies
- Multiple livestock and agricultural development projects for displaced residents
- Organizing a vocational school for home construction graduating 30 students
- An expanding number of deep well projects with solar pumps
- Rehabilitation of a local primary school with special work in trauma
Looking ahead

Building back better has created greater resilience and effectiveness for response in a subsequent disaster. Lutheran Disaster Response also addressed the destruction after Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti in 2016. As part of this response, 16 new homes were built and 125 farmers belonging in 10 cooperatives learned agricultural techniques to help increase and diversify their food production. Long-term agricultural sustainability work continues in Haiti through ELCA World Hunger. We’re also working to build the resiliency of the Caribbean region, which often experiences natural disasters, by helping churches and communities become better prepared for disasters and respond to current and future needs.

Lutheran Disaster Response
ENDOWMENT FUND

To give a gift that will support Lutheran Disaster Response in the long term whenever and wherever disaster strikes, visit community.elca.org/lutherandisasterresponse and select “Lutheran Disaster Response Endowment.”

Together as a church, we can continue to support our neighbors in Haiti as well as others facing the threat of disasters around the world.

Ways to support other responses like this

ONLINE
ELCA.org/disaster

BY MAIL
Make a check out to Lutheran Disaster Response and send to:
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELCA Gift Processing Center
P.O. Box 1809
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

BY PHONE
Call 800-638-3522 to make a donation with a credit card. Operators are ready to assist you Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time.