

Gwenael Apollon, General Secretary of the Haiti YMCA, reports that almost three months after the devastating earthquake in Haiti, hundreds of thousands of people continue to live in make-shift tent cities and the availability of basic necessities is limited. Inadequate sanitation and close living quarters are promoting the spread of infectious diseases which will worsen with the arrival of the rainy season. The Haiti YMCA continues to provide support for those impacted by the disaster with a particular focus on the health and well-being of children and youth. **Thanks to the generous support of YMCAs and individuals across the United States**, the Haiti YMCA has delivered critical services such as psycho-social counseling, education, recreation activities and family programs.

A multinational YMCA support group (including the Latin American and Caribbean Alliance of YMCAs (LACA), the World Alliance of YMCAs, YMCA Canada and YMCA of the USA) continues to work with the Haiti YMCA on **the development of long-term recovery and rebuilding strategies**. In early March, a team of experienced technical volunteers (Paula Gavin, YMCA of the USA Board Member, Lynda Gonzales, YMCA of the USA International Group, Cathy and Ray Smith, U.S. YMCA technical volunteers, and Miguel Blasco, Latin American and Caribbean Alliance of YMCAs) traveled to Haiti **to evaluate**



community need and develop a strategic operating plan for the Haiti YMCA. The short- and long-term strategies are based on priority needs and the Haiti YMCA's capacity to deliver effective support and solutions.

Rehabilitation priorities

Over the next 12 months, the Haiti YMCA will focus on delivering basic supplies to displaced residents, providing family and youth development programs, creating employment opportunities for vulnerable populations including women and the disabled, rebuilding YMCA facilities and increasing the Y's institutional capacity. Specifically, the Haiti YMCA will:

- Increase the delivery of youth, young adult and family programs by 50 percent to 1,800 households through three YMCA centers (Port-au-Prince, Kenscoff and Camp Perrin), with a focus on expanded psychosocial support and counseling services to address post-disaster stress and trauma.
- Provide scholarships for children and youth to participate in education programs.
- Deliver YMCA programs and services directly to individuals living in two tent cities (St. Terese and Airport Cite Militaire).
- Expand programming at the Kenscoff center to accommodate the increasing number of displaced individuals who have migrated to the area following the disaster.
- Establish a YMCA employment training initiative for amputees to assist with the delivery of post-disaster recovery programs.
- Develop a micro-financing program that will offer 10 women an opportunity to build a business (with revolving funds) by providing each participant with USD \$500 in start-up funds.
- Rebuild the YMCA youth center in Port-au-Prince which was destroyed by the earthquake. Construction is scheduled for completion within six weeks of receiving emergency relief funding.

- Identify, hire and train two executive-level staff and several part-time staff to strengthen the YMCA's capacity to deliver additional services to meet community need post-disaster.
- Strengthen the YMCA's institutional capacity in key areas to support long-term rehabilitation efforts through staff and volunteer training, board development, governance and program development and delivery.

Long-term strategy

The emergency relief plans are consistent with the long-term strategic priorities of the Haiti YMCA. Resources allocated to emergency relief will transition to long-term strategic priorities once the need has diminished or alternative services are provided. Programs developed as a result of the disaster will be integrated into ongoing programming provided by the Haiti YMCA as detailed in the Haiti YMCA strategic plan.

Y-USA would like to thank the local YMCAs and individuals across the U.S. who have provided valuable technical and financial support to the Haiti YMCA. In this time of need, cash donations are the most efficient and effective way to support the Haiti YMCA. **If you would like to help, please make a donation to YMCA World Service at www.ymca.net/worldservice or by calling (800) 872-9622.** Please be sure to specify that your contribution is for "Haiti Earthquake Support." Due to environmental concerns, lack of infrastructure and the limited capacity of the Haiti YMCA to host volunteers, YMCA of the USA will not coordinate a volunteer delegation at this time.

We will continue to post information as it becomes available. **You can find all updates at www.ymca.net/worldservice.** Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

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Port-au-Prince, Haiti
March 2010

