

EDITORIAL

→ Haiti, 12 January 2010

Two years ago, a devastating earthquake ravaged Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, and surrounding areas. We all remember the images relayed by the media and social networks around the world. There is no need to revisit the accumulated destruction and suffering. Dark memories.

Presented by some as an opportunity «to rebuild Haiti better», the tragedy has served as a mirror of the poverty already present on the ground before the earthquake in a country marked by political patronage, without real education, without access to care for most, the poorest, who were already living on less than 1 to 2 dollars a day per person: a country already dependent on international assistance.

The global mobilisation to come to the aid of the victims of the disaster of 12 January 2010 had been rapid and extraordinary. Individual donors in particular - but also the public donors first and foremost those of the neighbouring United States - also supported the deployment of resources with an unprecedented number of international aid workers to help survivors. Over the past two years, this has made it possible to ensure the survival of the disaster victims, destitute, homeless or living in makeshift camps, without work, without resources, without access to even the most essential services.

In Port-au-Prince, but also in other more rural areas of the country, critical aid programmes were developed and continue to be run to this day, compensating, for want of anything better, for the absence of strong and organised State, in the hypothetical expectation of an implementation of the promised reconstruction programmes.

For in Haiti, temporary solutions, taken to confront the urgency of the situation and the new emergencies that relentlessly follow, have sadly become long-term... if not permanent. Therein lies the dilemma. Haitians have perfectly understood this and are under no illusions. «Reconstruction is not moving forward enough» we hear again and again. They know better than anyone that it is not for the NGOs to rebuild their country. Without an international plan wor-



Queue at the hospital in Cité Soleil

thy of the name, nothing will be possible. But the attention of some donor states is already turning away from Haiti.

As our teams find every day, Haitians are determined to reclaim their destiny. In the districts of Port-au-Prince, but also in rural areas of Petit-Goâve or Grande Anse, full of energy and determination, they show remarkable courage to overcome the difficulties of everyday life, and to attempt to build a different future, regardless of the immensity of the task and the precariousness of their living conditions. Two years after the earthquake, it is our duty to honour them.

It is an inescapable fact that dependence on humanitarian aid has also increased following the earthquake. Acknowledging this is, in a sense, a way of beginning to restore the power of decision and action to the Haitian people, and of refusing, as far as possible, to act as a substitute for the Haitian government, which is slowly rebuilding itself. For foreign aid stakeholders, this also means accepting their gradually disappearing role. Even if it takes time, let's not be naïve; we will need to support their efforts over the long-term. But that's the best one could wish for the future of Haiti and Haitians, in recognising all the limitations of foreign humanitarian assistance; a necessary infusion, but one that should remain temporary. Doctors of the World/ Médecins du Monde does not see its action, however small it may be, any differently, and plans to continue its actions in Haiti in constant cooperation with national and local health authorities.

IN FIGURES

ACTIVITIES

- In 2011, nearly 250,000 exams and medical / surgical procedures performed by Doctors of the World.
- **More than 4,000 medical consultations carried out each week** (including vaccination), of which 55% for children under 5 years and 11.5% for pregnant women.
- **Five areas of operation:** Port-au-Prince, the West, Central, Grande Anse and Nippes departments.

In the West:

- **In Port-au-Prince:** treatment for cholera, primary health-care, sexual and reproductive health, testing and referral of cases of malnutrition, treatment of victims of violence and psychosocial activities.

- **In the Goâve region and in Leogane:** community mobilisation, health education, prevention and treatment of cholera, primary health care, sexual and reproductive health, testing and treatment of malnutrition and maternity and paediatric support at the hospital in Petit Goâve.

- **In Central:** activities to promote health and prevention of cholera in the communities and at home.

In 2011, nearly 6,000 families received home visits in Leogane and the Central Department.

- **In Grande Anse:** primary health care, sexual and reproductive health, testing and treatment of malnutrition and prevention and treatment of cholera.

In 2011, nearly 22,000 people benefited from prevention activities.

- **In Nippes:** prevention and treatment of cholera.

FUNDS COLLECTED

- Following the earthquake, the total funds collected by Doctors of the World's international network was **24.1 million Euros** (31.5 million USD).
- **In 2010**, Doctors of the World collected 17.8 million Euros (10.3 million from private funds and 7.5 million from public funds).
- **In 2011**, Doctors of the World collected 6.3 million Euros (0.1 million from private funds and 6.2 million from public funds).

EXPENDITURES

- **From January 2010 to October 2011**, Doctors of the World's international network's expenditures for its actions in Haiti came to a total of **19 million Euros** (24.8 million USD).
- **5.1 million Euros** (primarily from public funds) were committed for late 2011 and 2012 for financing the assistance programmes of Doctors of the World's international network.

THE SUPPORTERS OF MDM IN 2011

- CIDA/IHA, Chaîne du Bonheur, Comunidad Madrid, Diputación de León, ECHO, Fundación Cooperación y Ciudadanía, Castilla y León, MRI Canadienne, Région Wallone, Sternstunden Foundation, WHO, UNASUR, UNICEF.

TEAMS

- In September 2011: 748 people in Haiti, of which **95% are Haitians**.
- 36 international staff and 712 Haitian staff.



Lovely and Louis

After 12 January, when it came time to relocate families whose homes were damaged, small children stayed with their parents, whilst teenagers were sheltered in tents, sometimes quite far away from their families. This led to an outbreak of births among very young girls, some barely out of childhood themselves. Lovely was certainly not very old when Louis was born. She spent over an hour watching me draw, and I could easily sense that she would not leave until I'd drawn her baby.

Dona and Vénèse

They stand bravely in front of their small clinic. They are ready. Cholera had better watch out!



Marie

Marie welcomed me into her little tent at the Cholera Treatment Centre. Before entering I chlorinated my hands. The chlorine-soaked mat made a squish-splash sound under my feet. But it's a must. Like a princess, she showed me around her nine square metres, a wealth of cleanliness at the edge of a landfill. A single cot. Empty. She lifts the lids of pans as if she had prepared little dishes for me. I nodded and asked her what was the large demolished building over there. She answered me in Creole. I understood half of what she said: it was a university, an architecture school. She used to work there. In her eyes, I could see the students, the excitement, the knowledge, the hopes for the future. Now I saw regrets. She rests, quietly sitting on this lovely staircase that now leads nowhere. When I've finished, she left with a smile: things are slack now; she has no more patients.



Two brothers

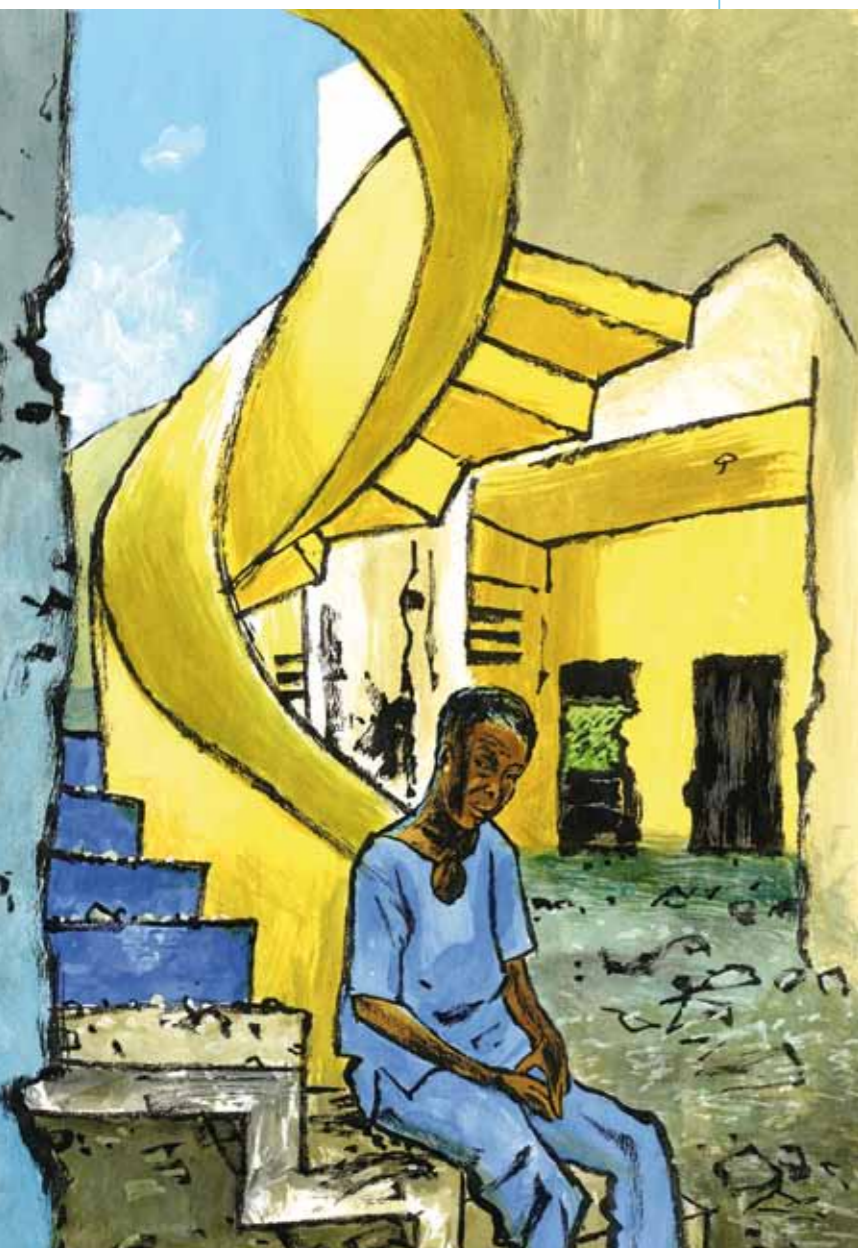
Extending just off Grand Goâve there's large square with rows of tents. A commandeered sports field, just as elsewhere where the earthquake struck. We met two brothers there who lived through the same drama. They spent 48 hours under the rubble, injured, before they were rescued. The eyes of the eldest two are black holes in which fear was still hidden to this day. The eyes of the youngest however were just yearning to laugh.

«Why draw when it's so much easier to take a photo? We say "to take" a picture, but we don't say "to take" a drawing. Instead of using the verb "to take", I prefer to use the verb "to take in".

Author and illustrator, Rémi Courgeon draws Haiti and Haitians for Doctors of the World/ Médecins du Monde. To see An unfinished portrait go to www.medecinsdumonde.org.

The cemetery

At Dano, the little cemetery had not been spared by the earthquake. The dead there were shaken just as much as the living. Here, the cohabitation between the two worlds is very present, Dano is an area where Voodoo rituals are deeply rooted. The mausoleum built to house the bodies of the victims are often more solid than the homes of the survivors. I finished the drawing surrounded by a swarm of excited kids, whose heads were not at all those of zombies.





HAITI

2 YEARS AFTER

Two years after the earthquake, the Doctors of the World teams, present in the country since 1989, remain mobilised for the Haitian people and continue to pay special attention to children under five and pregnant women. Support for primary healthcare and sexual and reproductive health, care for women victims of violence and psychosocial support are among the actions led by Doctors of the World in its intervention areas.

This year, respiratory and skin infections, intestinal diseases, watery diarrhoea and anaemia are the main pathologies encountered by Doctors of the World teams. Particular attention has also been paid to cases of malnutrition, detected and treated in the Goâve region, in Grande Anse and in Port-au-Prince. And since October 2010, in response to the cholera epidemic that hit the island, Doctors of the World has set up activities for the prevention and treatment of cholera cases in several regions.

[FOCUS]

CHOLERA TAKES HOLD

Since the epidemic began in October 2010, more than half a million Haitians have been affected by cholera. At the end of November 2011, more than 6,900 deaths were reported*. From the very first days, Doctors of the World mobilised its human resources and logistics. One year later, both prevention and treatment of cholera are now permanently embedded in the programmes.

According to experts, the cholera epidemic in Haiti will remain for another two to three years before entering its endemic phase. Despite an observed decrease of the epidemic, significant outbreaks occurred in 2011, particularly in Port-au-Prince, in the Artibonite and the Central, North and West departments. If the situation was quickly contained in the capital, thanks to the presence of many humanitarian stakeholders, this is still not the case in the isolated, rural departments with little access to care, such as Grande Anse, and therefore requiring the continuation of Doctors of the World actions.

The programmes set up by Doctors of the World make Haitian communities partners in the care of patients and prevention, an indispensable part in the fight against the spread of the epidemic: dissemination of awareness messages to the people, distribution of protection and hygiene kits, epidemiological monitoring and referral of suspected cases. Home visits, community meetings and workshops in schools help disseminate information and prevention messages, which are also relayed by community radio.

* www.mspp.gouv.ht

In Port-au-Prince, the clinic of Saint-Michel is hemmed in between narrow streets. Every day it receives hundreds of patients, to the delight of the banana and sugar cane merchants.



BUILDING AN EQUITABLE HEALTH SYSTEM

Advocacy for free care for pregnant women and children under 5 years of age in Haiti

Two years after the earthquake, the reconstruction of Haiti's health system is struggling to materialise: the absence of government for many months, a weak and overwhelmed public health system delayed the implementation of a strategy to rebuild the Haitian health system.

A system that must now ensure true access to care for the most vulnerable, including pregnant women and children under five.

Free health care for pregnant women and children under 5 years should be considered as one of the tools to access care. A choice that has proven effective: between 2006 and 2009, Doctors of the World has confirmed in the field the positive impact of free care in the use of health services during an action research in Grande Anse. In late 2011, Doctors of the World teams conducted a new study in the Goâve region on the cost of primary healthcare. It showed a more efficient use of resources in those health facilities that had established free access to healthcare.

A credible strategy: the Haitian Ministry of Health (MSPP) is supporting more and more initiatives and projects promoting social protection in health and free access to care for pregnant women and children under five years, including:

- Developing a programme for the establishment of a national system of social protection in health from an interministerial working group and receiving technical support from the French Cooperation.
- The «Maman ak timoun an Santé»¹, project, supported by PAHO/WHO² and funded by the Canadian Cooperation, consists in providing free obstetric and infant care in nearly sixty hospitals across the country and will gradually extend the system to primary healthcare centres.

- Mortality rate of children under five years of age in Haiti: 86/1,000

- Maternal mortality rate: 630/100,000

Study on Mortality, Morbidity and Use of Services, 2005-2006, Emmus IV

If «Manman ak timoun an santé» represents a new step towards building an equitable healthcare system, this project should become a constituent component of a future national health system and benefit from sustainable funding.

The so-called «free» policies, when they receive sustainable funding and good planning, significantly improve access to care.

Doctors of the World therefore supports free healthcare for pregnant women and children under 5 years throughout the country of Haiti and its adoption into a legal framework by the end of 2012.

The Haitian government and its international donors must quickly provide the resources needed to finance the policy of free access to healthcare for the most vulnerable.

1 - «Mamans et enfants en santé» [Healthy mothers and children]

2 - World Health Organisation / Pan American Health Organisation

MdM organises «mass awareness» tours. The word is scary, but it's great. A sound truck with a DJ passes by every corner of Cité Soleil, emitting thousands of watts of sound to call people's attention to health issues: cholera, breastfeeding, and even the issue of rape. People dance. The word gets out. It works!

