



# Disaster-preventive reconstruction and livelihood stabilisation in Haiti

## Context

The extent of destruction in the communities of Léogâne and Gressier was particularly severe due to their proximity to the epicentre of the earthquake on 12 January 2010. Estimates of the number of people injured are far from certain, but it is assumed that between 20,000 and 30,000 people were killed in the region south of the capital.

Buildings throughout both communities suffered considerable damage or were destroyed entirely. The provision of basic social services has largely broken down as a result of so many buildings having been destroyed. The earthquake has led to an increase in the number of vulnerable people who are unable to secure their basic livelihood through their own efforts. This includes orphans, female-headed households, older people without support and people with disabilities.



*Single mother with her children standing at the spot where their house had stood prior to the earthquake*

This array of challenges is being met by a large number of aid organisations, especially in the spheres of health care, provision of water and sanitary facilities, as well as camp

management and the construction of transitional housing. Currently, the communities are able only to a certain extent to coordinate the support services, which are generally being provided in close contact to those for whom they are intended.

Reconstruction poses a major challenge for the communities due to the destruction of administration buildings, the lack of equipment and insufficient management competencies.

## Our approach

In autumn 2010 the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned GIZ to implement a three-year project aimed at improving or re-establishing the basic livelihood prerequisites in the communities of Léogâne and Gressier, which were particularly hard hit by the earthquake. In terms of strategic planning, the project fits in with Haiti's national reconstruction plan, particularly in the areas of economic development and disaster mitigation, as well as in terms of labour-intensive employment measures.

The project also links in with past and present approaches pursued in municipal development planning in Haiti and with the competencies achieved in this sphere through German development cooperation. It is being implemented in close consultation with the UN coordination bodies and in direct cooperation with the communities themselves. The project is further able to draw on the experiences and contacts generated through the currently ongoing project 'Transitional shelters for earthquake victims in Haiti'.

The project's strategic orientation is focused on the communities, which now need support in planning, implementing and coordinating reconstruction measures due to the infrastructural situation and the large number and diversity of actors on the ground.



## Areas of support

The project is active in four areas of support:

- (1) Boosting the capacity of local administrations and civil society structures to plan and perform reconstruction measures

The communities of Léogâne and Gressier are being supported through capacity building and the provision of short-term technical expertise in the planning, monitoring and implementation of reconstruction. Community employees are receiving additional training in important areas of public service. In order to avoid bias in the support provided to the communities in terms of conflicts between state agencies and civil society, yet also to include all relevant and active sections of society in the reconstruction effort, civil society organisations are also being supported.

- (2) Reviving local economies

Local economies were severely weakened by the earthquake and its aftermath, and the few sources of income that had existed for the people were also greatly curtailed. The earthquake directly caused the destruction of the productive infrastructure and also led to the disappearance of households' and companies' capital assets. In order to provide for their most urgent needs in the emergency, many sold their cattle and material goods.



*The region's markets were destroyed by the earthquake*

Given these circumstances, the aim is to revive local economies, in part by reconstructing the infrastructure, e.g. markets. Households are given targeted support through the disbursement of small grants to women's organisations and through the provision of support for fishing cooperatives.

- (3) Improving disaster preparedness, reducing disaster risks

The region is highly prone to disaster risks: in addition to earthquakes, there is a high risk of flooding all year round in the coastal parts of the communities as well as the risk of hurricanes during the rainy season throughout the region. One element of support for the communities' disaster mitigation efforts is the training and equipping of local civil protection committees.

- (4) Improving the social integration of people with disabilities

In cooperation with the Christoffel-Blindenmission (CBM) a centre is being erected in Port-au-Prince which will uphold the rights of people with disabilities in the reconstruction process both individually and collectively. In addition to establishing a personal advisory service for people with disabilities, training sessions are to be offered for Disabled People's Organisations (DPO) as a means of strengthening their organisational capacity and expert capabilities.

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