

Haiti Earthquake

Assembly outline

Haiti struck by devastating earthquake

On Wednesday 12th January, the people of Haiti were violently shaken by an earthquake and two aftershocks. This was the worst earthquake to hit Haiti in 200 years recording 7.0 on the Richter scale.

The earthquake hit about 10 miles southwest of Port-au-Prince, the densely populated Haitian capital, causing massive damage to property and loss of life.

Summary

This assembly is designed to inform students of the catastrophic events that have taken place in Haiti over the last few days and the devastation that has been left behind. It provides information about how a leading emergency aid organisation such as Save the Children responds to such an emergency and the ways in which pupils are able to contribute and make possible such a response.

Age

This assembly is suitable for use in primary schools and secondary schools.

Objectives

- To help students appreciate the need for swift and effective action in response to a disaster
- To increase students' understanding of factors that can challenge aid agencies in such a response
- To understand how fundraising can make a very tangible difference and that without financial support, aid agencies would not be able to deliver the life saving help and support urgently needed



Save the Children

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Introduction

Begin the assembly by asking if anyone has seen the news over the weekend. Describe the events of the last several days introducing the first slide from the PowerPoint presentation and notes provided.

Main

Using the presentation, explore with the pupils the geographical location of Haiti and learn a little about the country's landscape and infrastructure and how this has added to the complications over the last few days.

Using the set of questions below as a guide, take the pupils through the immediate needs of the devastated people of Haiti, and also the challenges faced by the aid agencies working to get life-saving aid to them. Explore the likely response of Save the Children and how and when aid will be received.

NB if you don't have access to PowerPoint – the notes attached will provide all the background information required in order to answer the following questions

Questions:

Where is Haiti? Does anyone know anything about the country?

What are the immediate needs of the people of Haiti?

How soon can Save the Children be in Haiti?

What items do they need to be delivered?

Save the Children will be providing the equipment that you have just listed - what other ways might they be helping?

How can we help Save the Children continue to deliver this vital aid? Answered below...

If there's a disaster – the following stages spring into action -

1. We'll hear about it from our staff where it's happening, or from the news like you do
2. If our specially trained staff aren't already in the country where the emergency is, we send someone who reports back on what people need.
3. **THIS IS WHERE YOU STEP IN – Meanwhile, you're raising money to help make the next stage happen.....**
4. We buy everything we can in the country where the disaster is happening, or in this case a country close by (it's quicker, better for the environment, and puts money back into the community). If lots more is needed, we plane out the supplies our experts ask for
5. We keep on working in the community, keeping children safe, helping them recover and rebuild their lives

Plenary

If you haven't already, share some of the quotes from Save the Children staff in Haiti. Decide whether as a school you would like to support Save the Children in their response efforts. Take a moment to share what the money you raise could buy. Finally, End by taking a few moments and suggestions on how as a school you might be able to quickly raise money at your school.

- **£12** can buy a shelter kit, containing blanket, mat, mosquito net, torch, jerry can and bucket
- **£15** can buy a hygiene kit with essentials such as soap, detergent, toothpaste and toothbrushes
- **£20** can buy three tarpaulins or plastic sheets to provide cover to protect families
- **£25** can buy a student kit, containing rucksack, crayons, notebooks, lunch box, pencil case, rubber, sharpener, ruler, plastic water bottle
- **£200** can buy a child friendly space kit containing many toys, building blocks, crayons, dolls and sports equipment

Haiti Earthquake Assembly Notes

Haiti is situated on the western part of Hispaniola, the second largest island in the Caribbean. The island is located between the islands of Cuba to the west, and Puerto Rico to the east.

Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere and is prone to experiencing natural disasters, such as flooding and earthquakes.

Additional background information (for full and up to date details go to savethechildren.org.uk)

Officially the population of Port au Prince is 1 million, but the real figure could be as high as 3 million because of the large number of unofficial slums. Very densely populated, the city is built on the side of a mountain so the risk of landslides is high. The shattered streets are presently impassable by car – the best form of transport is by motorbike.

There is no electricity in Port-au-Prince making communication difficult. Save the Children staff are currently communicating via satellite phones. Given the social and political instability in the country, the threat of rioting and looting is considerable.

There are an estimated 6,800 unaccompanied children begging on the streets of the capital alone. Known as 'cockroaches', these children are forced by poverty-stricken families onto the streets to make a living. They're extremely vulnerable to abuse and trafficking.

How are people affected? What are the immediate needs?

Shelter, access to clean water, sanitation and healthcare are of immediate and critical importance to the thousands of people affected. Thousands of children may have lost or been separated from their parents, and desperately need help and protection if they're living on the streets.

We're also very worried about the prospect of an outbreak of disease given the lack of clean water or medical help and that so many live close together in Port-au-Prince.

The rate of malnutrition among children is likely to rocket leaving them even more vulnerable to disease. Already one-quarter of children under five in Haiti are chronically malnourished.

How is Save the Children responding?

Save the Children has worked in Haiti since 1985, primarily in Port au Prince and the Central Plateau region, providing health, education, protection and food security programmes to vulnerable children. A number of staff are presently unaccounted for.

Our team on the ground are, where possible, already assessing the damage. We're bringing in supplies from the Dominican Republic such as food and non-food items, such as hygiene kits so that people have basics until further aid is available.

What form will our response take?

This will be a major emergency response and will include: (NB. The first three points are items to be delivered, the remainder are services and other activities carried out by Save the Children)

- providing tarpaulins for shelter, and blankets and mats
- delivering hygiene and sanitation kits (containing soaps and detergents) and essential household items (including cooking utensils and blankets).

- delivering food and clean water
- creating safe spaces for children where they can play and spend time properly looked after by trained professionals, who will help them recover from their trauma
- reuniting children separated from their parents
- building temporary schools, health facilities and toilets.

Quotes from Save the Children staff working in Haiti

Ian Rodgers, Save the Children's Emergency Response Adviser

"We could hear buildings still crumbling down five hours after the earthquake. Last night houses were down in the area surrounding our office. Debris fills the roads and emergency responders are having a difficult time reaching the wounded. The survivors, especially the children, are going to need a lot of support for weeks and months to come."

"Children are the most vulnerable in this kind of crisis, and many may have lost their parents in the chaos of the earthquake," said Gareth Owen, Save the Children's Emergency Director.

"It's a hugely traumatic experience for any child to go through, and we have to make sure we get help and protection to them fast," Owen continued. "Port-au-Prince is densely populated and sanitation is already very bad — many families don't have toilets and piles of rubbish are strewn around the city — so we also need to prepare for the possibility of a major disease outbreak."

How to make a donation

Donate now to the [DEC Haiti Earthquake Appeal](#) or give to [Save the Children's appeal](#). Raise a cheque made payable to Save the Children and send it to Schools Team, 1 St. John's Lane, London, EC1M 4AR or call the schools team on 020 7012 6400 (Open 9-5pm) and pay over the phone.

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We're the world's independent children's rights organisation. We're outraged that millions of children are still denied proper healthcare, food, education and protection and we're determined to change that. Save the Children UK is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, transforming children's lives in more than 100 countries.

savethechildren.org.uk