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CARE Haiti: Water, Sanitation & Hygiene

CARE Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Programs



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Program Overview

- Delivering Water, Sanitation and Hygiene services in emergencies
- Empowering poor people to have a say in water management decisions
- Promoting sustainability through capacity building at local level
- Promoting gender equality in public health and water related issues
- Building partnerships for development in Water and Sanitation
- Advocating for access to water & sanitation for vulnerable populations

Program Budget: 6,8 Mio. USD

In the aftermath of the devastating January 12, 2010 earthquake, CARE Haiti scaled up its activities in water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH). When 1.5 million homeless people were forced to live in spontaneous settlements, safe access to water and proper sanitary facilities became a major concern. CARE worked to prevent the outbreak of diseases and to guarantee a minimum standard of dignity for the most vulnerable. After the immediate relief, CARE has concentrated its efforts on the most affected regions of Léogâne and Carrefour to provide camp residents with safe drinking water, latrines and hand-washing stations while supporting the return to their neighborhoods with the provision of basic services. Since the cholera outbreak in late October 2010, CARE has equally stepped up its work in the North and South of Haiti, promoting proper hygiene behavior, chlorinating water sources and improving water and sanitation infrastructure for medical facilities.

Situation

Haiti's water and sanitation infrastructure has at best times been inadequate. Before the earthquake, the country already lacked a comprehensive and functioning system of water delivery and sanitary facilities. An estimated **83 percent** of the population does not have access to proper latrines. **37 percent** lack clean drinking water, according to UN estimates. The destruction caused by the earthquake only worsened the situation. All over the capital of Port-au-Prince and its surroundings, spontaneous camps have sprung up, most of them densely populated with makeshift shelters and tarps. The hygienic conditions in these camps remain a challenge. Since the outbreak of cholera, providing clean drinking water, decent sanitary facilities and information on proper hygiene behavior has now become more important than ever.

CARE's approach

Emergency service delivery remains one of the cornerstones of CARE Haiti's WASH strategy. But beyond these imminent needs, CARE believes that water, sanitation and public health challenges in Haiti can only be sustainably solved through local solutions driven by communities. This empowerment equally strengthens their resilience and preparedness for future disasters. CARE's rights-based approach prioritises vulnerable groups, particularly women, by helping them to make informed decisions and ensuring that their needs and priorities are catered for. As part of the emergency response, CARE identifies, establishes and strengthens local structures to ensure long term impact and a sense of ownership. CARE equally promotes partnerships with and among local civil society, private actors, and authorities to find lasting solutions.

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Water

Immediately after the earthquake, CARE's WASH team ensured access to clean water for many of the spontaneous displaced camps. At the peak of the emergency relief, CARE delivered water to 23 camps. The teams also monitored vulnerable sites and organized targeted distributions of aquatabs to prevent diarrhea and other diseases. After the cholera outbreak in October 2010, CARE extended its efforts to the departments of Upper Artibonite, Northwest and Grande Anse, ensuring safe water through aquatabs distributions, water trucking and chlorination of water at wells. CARE also scaled up water provisions in earthquake-affected areas and continues water chlorination of private water trucks in and around Port-au-Prince, thus ensuring access to safe water for more than 500,000 people.

More than a year after the earthquake, CARE seeks to transition from emergency water delivery to longer-term solutions led by communities and local leaders. CARE teams have started constructing and improving water sources at community level, in schools and health centers. Most importantly, CARE also establishes and trains water management committees, thus empowering communities to ensure sustained access to water.

Sanitation

To prevent the spread of diseases and maintain basic hygiene in crowded and unsafe living conditions of camps, CARE constructs and maintains latrines, hand-washing facilities and bathing shelters. In adherence to international humanitarian standards such as SPHERE, showers and latrines are set up to separate men and women, allowing for much-needed privacy and safety. CARE engages paid attendants to ensure that latrines are being kept clean and that hand-washing stations dispose of soap and water. These attendants receive a salary and the necessary equipment to complete their work.

CARE's sanitation work has broadened to constructing family latrines as well as latrines at schools and health centers in Ouest, North West, Artibonite and Grande Anse provinces. In earthquake affected areas, these activities support and encourage families to return to more permanent settlements and start rebuilding their community.

Hygiene Promotion

CARE's hygiene promotion activities help communities know about and adapt to necessary behavioral change to stay healthy. During construction of water and sanitation facilities, hygiene promotion teams consult and engage with the communities to get their input on the design, location and construction of the facilities. CARE encourages and supports the formation of hygiene clubs to help communities organize lasting change. Hygiene promotion teams distribute materials like soap, oral rehydration salts and water containers to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases. CARE also trains educators, for example in schools or health centers, to explain proper personal hygiene, and other issues. House visits, public screenings of videos, radio messages and hygiene workshops are additional means of outreach. Besides, CARE also uses national celebrations or commemorative days such as International Women's Day to organize festivities and spread hygiene messages.

The road ahead

CARE's goal is to contribute to the recovery efforts and to strengthen partnerships and the capacity of communities and local actors to ensure sustainable access to water and sanitation in Haiti. In earthquake affected areas, this means scaling up interventions in zones of return, in addition to maintaining services in displaced camps. In regions affected by cholera, CARE is shifting from quick impact short-term measures such as distribution of aquatabs to longer term sustainable approaches like repairs of water infrastructure. CARE focuses on water and sanitation to meet basic health needs. But water is equally important for agricultural activities. Therefore, CARE aims to enhance livelihood security of rural and urban communities through equitable access, efficient use and sustainable management of limited water resources.

Major Donors

CARE's WASH activities are supported by the following donors: U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), and private donors.

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