UNESCO in action
Working together for Haiti
Foreword

Making our commitment to Haiti into a model of international cooperation

The widespread movement of solidarity that was born the day after the earthquake in Haiti must now be transformed into sustainable and effective commitment, enabling this country, which was hit so hard, to undertake the long and immense task of reconstruction.

As soon as the earthquake was reported, our Organization was immediately mobilized at the service of the Haitian people, standing beside its government to face this terrible ordeal together.

It is in this same spirit of long-term commitment that I appointed the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean as Special Envoy of UNESCO for Haiti. I am sure that her great experience of international cooperation, her intimate knowledge of the field and of the Haitian people and her dynamism will be major assets in this enormous enterprise, which is a priority for UNESCO.

Our medium and long term cooperation strategy for Haiti was drafted in close cooperation with the Haitian authorities. It was approved by the Executive Board of UNESCO, and includes action that our Organization intends to carry out by mobilizing extrabudgetary funding.

In this brochure, you will find detailed information about the different programmes and projects for Haiti in UNESCO’s fields of competence: education, science, culture and communication.

I appeal to the generosity and commitment of all our bilateral and multilateral partners in supporting the action of UNESCO for Haiti, which is so dear to us. The fate of this country is also our shared responsibility, and we can make it into a model of international cooperation. For nearly one year, I have put all my energy and force of conviction into this action, and I invite you to join us.

Irina Bokova
UNESCO Director-General
What the Haitian people need most is a solid network of partners. They need partners who are ready to invest in their ability to get things done, to create and produce for themselves; partners who are ready to support their quest for viable means to break free of the vicious circle of dependence and aid that the country has been sinking into for decades.

The present circumstances are indeed very difficult. It sometimes appears as if Haiti were cursed with bad luck, with one catastrophe following another. But the deplorable and dangerously chaotic situation that has prevailed since the terrible earthquake of 12 January 2010 clearly illustrates that this is not only a humanitarian crisis.

Getting Haiti back on its feet also requires a triumph of values such as equity and justice, citizenship and inclusion, sharing, solidarity, and the courage to take responsibility.

It is therefore essential to provide effective support for the bodies that underpin good governance, to strengthen the role of institutions, to nourish the life force of Haitian civil society and to join with them in cultivating a sense of common well-being. It is vital to act in the interests of Haiti’s children and youth; to protect them by building quality public education and health systems accessible to all.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization can – and intends to – contribute to this effort, through concrete action and with your valuable support. For Haiti’s renaissance, we need to forge a new, fraternal pact, fostering and nurturing all the hopes, aspirations and efforts of the country’s men, women and children.

We must succeed. We must show what can be achieved by working together. I believe we can. And by doing so, we will send the rest of humanity a powerful message of just what can be achieved. And that a humanistic ethic of sharing can triumph over the worst of situations.

Michaëlle Jean
UNESCO Special Envoy to Haiti
Context

UNESCO has a long history of fruitful cooperation and friendship with the people of Haiti, dating back to when the country first joined the Organization, in 1946. So, it was quite natural for UNESCO to commit itself to the Haitian people when they were so severely tested by the terrible earthquake of 12 January 2010. From the very outset, UNESCO joined with the efforts of national authorities and international partners to respond to the most urgent needs of the population.

The full force of the earthquake hit Haiti, just as it was recovering from the devastating hurricanes of 2008. It only took 35 fatal seconds for the earthquake, measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale, to claim the lives of 220 000 people and to injure another 300 000. The capital, Port-au-Prince, suffered enormous losses, as did the neighbouring communities of Martissant, Carrefour and Gressier. The towns of Jacmel and Petit-Goave were not spared either and 80% of Léogâne was destroyed.

The earthquake had a devastating effect on the country’s education system. Some 4 000 schools were damaged and most of the country’s university buildings destroyed, with massive loss of life. An estimated 1.5 million children and adolescents under 18 were directly or indirectly affected by the earthquake, including about 750 000 school-age children (aged six–12 years). 600 000 people fled the towns for less affected provincial areas.

The media, cultural and scientific institutions and a large part of Haiti’s cultural heritage also suffered huge losses, both materially and in human terms. Added to this, the government’s capabilities for warning against further natural disasters were also seriously damaged or destroyed.

Alongside the essential rebuilding of infrastructure, housing and buildings, humanitarian support, and development of knowledge networks and appropriate public policies, it is also essential to reinforce national capacities and social cohesion so that the people of Haiti can regain their confidence and consolidate their resilience.

UNESCO is convinced that, to be sustainable, any attempts at reconstruction for and by Haitians must involve the revitalization of the social, cultural and intellectual fabric of the country. The reconstruction and recovery of Haiti are challenges that involve the Haitian government, civil society and all Haitians, where the overriding responsibility is to forge a new social pact out of the debris. UNESCO is at the disposal of the Haitian people, to accompany them as best it can in this difficult task, and in its respective areas of competence — education, science, culture and communication.

Some examples of actions underway or completed

UNESCO immediately joined with the national authorities and the other United Nations agencies to lend its support to the Haitian people. Besides helping to identify needs and providing institutional support for the Ministry of Education and Professional Training and for the protection and preservation of works of art and national heritage, some of the Organization’s other actions are presented below.
Training of 250 skilled masons in earthquake-resistant house construction: Two months after the earthquake, in partnership with the Camp-Perrin centre, a training course was set up to address basic housing needs. 250 masons were trained and materials meeting earthquake-resistant norms provided.

Psychosocial support for secondary school children: In June and July 2010, some 1,700 schoolteachers in the Ouest department, which was affected by the earthquake, were given training in the prevention of and response to the risks of natural disasters in the classroom. The training will be repeated in six other departments seriously affected by the earthquake.

Equipment for 28 lycées: 100 desks for teachers, 106 filing cabinets for the administration, 2,800 pocket dictionaries, 280 maps of Haiti, and 280 geometry kits for teachers were distributed to help get teaching in secondary schools started again.

Rebuilding and equipping secondary schools and vocational colleges: Work began at the end of December in Port-au-Prince, Carrefour, Croix des Bouquets, Thomazeau and Grand Goave.

Journalism and psychological stress: Post-trauma training was given to 170 journalists in March 2010, with the assistance of CECOSIDA and the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma. Other similar sessions are envisaged.

Support for community radio stations: 55 young people in 7 multimedia community centres were trained in new information and communication technologies, in cooperation with SAKS (Sosyete Animasyon Kominikasyon Sosyal). Equipment is being purchased and installed, while a new community radio station was set up in December in Cap Rouge, near Jacmel in the Sud-Est region. Also, 15 presenters and journalists have been given training in radio production techniques, and in providing more balanced coverage of gender issues.

Humanitarian programmes in refugee camps: UNESCO and the Médialternatif group have set up a mobile multimedia unit, or “Télécentre mobile”, consisting of 8 computers equipped with Wi-Fi, to provide Internet access for people living in six refugee camps in Port-au-Prince. The project aims to help homeless people living in the camps to remain better informed and to extend their educational and professional opportunities, as well as social ties, with a blog for each camp. The project also received support from the AFP Foundation, Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF), and the Collectif Haïti de France (CHF).

Archives and Libraries: Emergency aid for public and private heritage institutions to safeguard written heritage, manuscripts, documents and publications.


Rapid reestablishment of Haitian coastal hazard warning services: Installation of a high-level seismic station and a national data and coordination centre.
UNESCO’s medium and long-term commitment to Haiti

Inclusion in the list of national priorities


This strategy includes initiatives put in place by UNESCO in the emergency phases of the aftermath and is coherent with the principle areas of intervention identified by the Action Plan, notably: (i) territorial rebuilding (ii) social rebuilding (iii) economic rebuilding and (iv) institutional rebuilding. Economic rebuilding determines the nature of UNESCO’s interventions in the three other areas, as a cross-cutting theme.

Discussion and coordination with national authorities and partners

This cooperation strategy was put together as a result of constant negotiations with the national authorities and further validated during an intersectoral mission by UNESCO to Port-au-Prince. Discussions were also held within the United Nations system, and the priority lines put forward by UNESCO have been integrated with the framework of cooperation for the United Nations country team in Haiti. Also, within the framework of the various discussions involving all partners, there is always a search for complementarities, whether sectoral (Groupe Sectoriel Education – GSE) or global (Interim Haiti Recovery Commission – IHRC). Confronted with the enormity of the task, UNESCO is convinced that success can only be achieved through close coordination, overseen by the Haitian government, where the keys to sustainable recovery are convergence, synergy and unity in action.

Strategy content

“A fair, just, united and friendly society living in harmony with its environment and culture; a modern society characterised by the rule of law, freedom of association and expression and land management...”

Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti

The overall objective is to support the Haitian authorities in promoting sustainable recovery and stability by strengthening institutional capacities, encouraging dialogue between communities, improving the quality and equality of basic service provision, as well as a revitalisation of the principal public and private sectors which, together, will play an essential role in promoting sustainable economic development, the construction of a democratic and inclusive state apparatus and the reduction of risks associated with natural disasters.

The strategy revolves around three key initiatives: territorial rebuilding, social rebuilding and institutional rebuilding, where each has an effect on the fourth, economic rebuilding.

Each of the three key initiatives includes programmes and projects abridged as short descriptions under four headings: summary of the activities, objectives, budget and duration of the initiative, with expected results.
Territorial rebuilding

“Territorial rebuilding involves identifying, planning and managing new development centres, stimulating local development, rebuilding affected areas, implementing economic infrastructure required for growth (roads, energy and communication), and managing land tenure, in order to protect property and facilitate the advancement of large projects.”

Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti

For this priority, UNESCO is supporting the Haitian government in the reconstruction and economic development of the affected areas, while seeking to reduce the vulnerability of the country to future disasters and strengthening national response capabilities. UNESCO’s actions in this area will also aim at promoting cultural and crafts skills, and at cleaning up urban areas by training and involving young people in rebuilding their neighbourhoods, with associated job creation opportunities. The conservation of biodiversity and the development of biosphere reserves will also be valuable aids to the development of a tourism that respects the environment and Haitian cultural heritage.

Projects

- Safeguarding and development of the National History Park “Citadelle Sans Souci”
- Early recovery of Haiti’s warning services for coastal hazards
- Enhancing disaster preparedness at community level through education in four coastal communities in Haiti
- Medium- and long-term water resources strategy for the sustainable development of Haiti
- Man and the Biosphere post-disaster support initiative
- Capacity Building Initiative to develop an STI Policy Framework
- Culture and development for urban neighborhoods in Haiti with a priority for disadvantaged neighborhoods
Social rebuilding involves prioritising a system of education guaranteeing access to education for all children, offering vocational and university education to meet the demands of economic modernisation... The integration of culture into economic life, apart from the promotion of cultural products, stems not only from a desire to develop the creativity, the imagination and the investments of cultural entrepreneurs but also to prepare the introduction in full force of Haitian society to the economy of the immaterial.”

Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti

Social rebuilding, including access to basic services for all Haitian people, especially the most vulnerable, is considered by the Haitian government to be a crucial element in the recovery, economic growth and well-being of the nation. The ultimate objective is to define and promote a new form of solidarity between the various strands of Haitian society. This new governance touches the very basis of Haitian society, its local development, the management and distribution of resources, as well as the foundations of living together, thus forming the basis for a society that is more responsible, independent and resilient. UNESCO will contribute to this through two priority areas identified by the Haitian government – education and culture. In these areas, UNESCO is planning both strategic and practical actions, in order to improve the quality of life for Haitian people in concrete, visible and sustainable ways.

Education

UNESCO will be supporting the reconstruction of the education system in its entirety, and, more specifically in:

- Institutional rebuilding, by concentrating on the establishment of a legal framework, the implementation of an effective funding mechanism, decentralisation, promotion of public-private partnerships as well as restructuring of the Ministry of Education.
- Strategic rebuilding of the education sector by drafting a roadmap, revising the school information system, the catchment procedure for assigning school places, the definition of educational norms and quality standards and curriculum reform.
- Reinforcing the monitoring and assessment system and building the capacities of civil servants in the Ministry of Education and Professional Training.
- Rebuilding an efficient vocational education system, concentrating on teacher training throughout the range, from primary and secondary to technical, vocational and higher education; the development of higher technical training institutes, particularly in the fields of construction and medicine.

Projects

- Support to strategic management education and training sector and human resources development in health and habitat in Haiti
- Education Management Information System
- Strengthening the quality of basic and secondary education
- Support to the elaboration of the national school health education policy
- Socio-economic integration of displaced youth through vocational and life skills training
- Microscience systems for Haiti’s secondary schools and TVET centers
Culture

- Haiti is a country of creators and innovators, overflowing with history and cultural traditions with diverse origins. It is at the crossroads of several civilizations, so culture will naturally be a motor for the indigenous recovery of Haitian society, rooted in its own identity, while remaining open, as always, to other cultures.
- The UNESCO Executive Board, at its 184th session (April 2010) set up an International Coordination Committee (ICC) for safeguarding Haiti’s cultural heritage, which held its first meeting in July 2010. It has made recommendations in four main areas: world heritage (cultural and natural), intangible heritage, built heritage (museums, archives and libraries) and cultural industries.
- Regarding cultural and natural heritage, the ICC recommended the involvement of Haitian technicians in immediately drawing up inventories for the town of Jacmel, which has been nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List, and Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital. The committee has also suggested that UNESCO sets up a monitoring body to look at the health of the nation’s intangible heritage, in order to identify the forms of cultural expression that are in greatest danger, especially in areas most heavily affected by the earthquake. It also recommended safeguarding archives, books and other cultural artefacts, and the training of local conservation and restoration experts. Finally, the ICC called for the development of methodological tools for the collection of data on cultural industries. Crafts have been one of the major sources of national creativity and a factor in the social, economic and cultural development of Haiti.
Institutional rebuilding aims at strengthening essential national institutions; at defining a legal framework for managing the reconstruction process; at promoting governance, transparency and participation in and support for democratic institutions, thus contributing to the political consensus needed for rebuilding. UNESCO intends to participate in this process by promoting the role of the media in the democratic process.

UNESCO intends to support the promotion of free and independent media through a number of actions:

- Strengthening journalism by improving the quality of training and encouraging the sensitive and unbiased coverage of conflicts.
- Support for community radio, through training and awareness-raising activities, in order to strengthen freedom of expression.
- Encouraging the implementation of a legal and regulatory framework to promote media pluralism through the creation of an independent regulatory body.
- Creation of a Master’s degree in journalism at the University of Quisqueya in Haiti.

Projects

- Establishing a journalism school in Haiti
- Reinforcement of community radio and rural multimedia community centers
- Building the capacities of media professionals through enhancing the quality of training supported by a legal and regulatory framework for Haiti media

“Institutional rebuilding will immediately focus on making state institutions operational again by prioritising the most essential functions; redefining our legal and regulatory framework to better adapt it to our requirements; implementing a structure that will have the power to manage reconstruction; and establishing a culture of transparency and accountability that deters corruption in our country.”

Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti
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