



Access for all

Because of discrimination, and multiple discrimination, many men, women and children of all ages are excluded from humanitarian relief.

'Agencies who respond to emergencies are also in danger of maintaining or even worsening the entrenched exclusion and prejudice experienced by many people before an emergency... Children, as an already powerless group, may be particularly at risk of discrimination in an emergency. These risks can be multiplied if children are subject to discrimination because they are girls, have a disability or are members of oppressed religious, ethnic or linguistic groups.'ⁱ

'Poor, older people, especially women, are systematically challenged and disempowered by poverty and lack of access to social services. These are often compounded by displacement from traditional homes and/or the destruction of traditional social structures.'ⁱⁱ

Addressing discrimination is essential to providing access to relief for all.

Image: CBM/Shelley

ⁱ Save the Children - Non-discrimination in Emergencies Training manual and toolkit, 2008
ⁱⁱ Older people in disasters and humanitarian crises, Guidelines for Best Practice - HelpAge International/ UNCHRs



Access to information

'Search and rescue, disaster relief and recovery teams will need to consider the needs of persons with disabilities in their efforts.'ⁱ

This photo shows two students in Haiti communicating in sign language. It reminds us of the right to communication, enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. All information provided to communities in emergency contexts must be made accessible for all people.

Image: CBM / Shelley

ⁱ *United Nations Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, January 2010*



Overcoming barriers

The Haitian Government estimates that the number of people with disabilities in Haiti may have risen to 1.1 million following the earthquake.

Sebastian, pictured above, is finding a new way of life and adapting well even in this environment.

It is essential that reconstruction in Haiti takes universal accessibility into consideration, in line with Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This means all public buildings should be accessible for all people.

The opportunity is here to rebuild a society for all.

Image: CBM/Shelley



Local services getting back on their feet

When asked about what it means for her son, Leonel, who has an intellectual disability, to be enrolled in an Early Intervention Programme, Leon said, “At six months of age he couldn’t sit or keep his balance like the other children his age. Some of my friends and neighbours started noticing and told me about Pazapa. They said they could help. So I decided to bring him here and I am so pleased with the programmes. Now he is sitting and standing on his own, and more mobile than he has ever been!”

In Haiti, CBM has focussed on providing immediate and appropriate rehabilitation care, while at the same time helping local rehabilitation services, like Pazapa, get back on their feet.

Image: CBM/Shelley



Disability and Vulnerability Focal Points

Due to the massive need for follow-up/medical care CBM, in partnership with Handicap International (HI) and the State Secretariat for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (SEIPH), set up nine Disability & Vulnerability Focal Points, known locally as 'Antennes Handicap'. These temporary tent facilities were located in close proximity to the main displaced population centres throughout Port-au-Prince.

The idea of the 'Antenne' was to provide a 'one-stop-shop' for vulnerable persons or people with disabilities, create awareness about rehabilitation services available for survivors, and identify beneficiaries in need of further medical or rehabilitative care, all right in their own backyard.

The photo shows Jean Rosemond, worker in the Antenne Handicap at Champs de Mars.

Image: CBM



Magolie

Magolie stands amid the rubble of her former home. She was trapped for several hours after the earthquake and her four year old nephew died in her arms while they were awaiting rescue. Magolie is a participant in a CBM psychological support programme.

“I used to have panic attacks when trying to sleep under a cement roof so I have lived in a tent for a long time. Right now I am more at peace, I can sleep in a house. Coming here helps with my healing process. I feel more in control of my emotions now than I did the first time I came here. It’s getting better day by day,” says Magolie.

Image: CBM/Shelley





Most at risk in emergency situations

Following a disaster, the World Health Organization estimates that 5-7% of people in camps or temporary shelters have a disability. This photo shows people with disabilities after the Haiti earthquake.

CBM staff are working with partners in disaster and emergency situations to try to ensure persons with disabilities are provided with relief and protection on an equal basis with other people.

Article 11 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls for all State Parties to take necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, like the earthquake in Haiti.

Image: CBM/ Scherrer

Source: WHO, 2005





The right to play

Sebastian lost his leg in the earthquake. He has had a prosthesis fitted. Because he has had access to rehabilitation, he now spends his days playing football, marbles and other games with children in the camp.

Children with disabilities have the same rights as other children; not only in education, but also in play.

Article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities obliges governments to take measures to ensure 'that children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities'

Image: CBM/Shelley



Restoring livelihoods

60 year old Emmanuel David has been living on the streets since the death of his parents. Before the earthquake, he was a day labourer delivering items from one place to another. During the earthquake he was sleeping on the sidewalk against a wall, which fell on him causing him to lose the lower part of one leg. Now he gets around in a wheelchair, which gives him increased mobility. However, returning to work is difficult. The barriers to employment Emmanuel faces are not only a Haitian phenomenon. Worldwide, people with disabilities face barriers to employment. Physical accessibility, lack of access to training, stereotyping and preconceptions about people with disabilities persist globally.

Recognising the barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities, Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires States Parties to prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of disability and enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to technical and vocational training.

Post emergency livelihood interventions should pay particular attention to inclusion of people with disabilities.

Image: CBM/Shelley



Restoring education for all

Immediately after the earthquake, CBM and partner Centre d'Education Speciale (CES) opened six child day care centres throughout Port au Prince, supporting 800 children. These centres provided children – both with and without disabilities – with a safe place to gather, play and learn.

According to UNICEF, 80% of schools within Port au Prince were either damaged or destroyed by the earthquake and forced to close. This included many schools providing services for children with disabilities.

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies has developed guidelines for including children with disabilities in education, describing emergencies also as opportunities to promote inclusive education:

'Sometimes emergency education initiatives bring new training, resources and other means of support to teachers and their schools. This offers a chance to change the physical environment and update the practice of teachers or other trained adults working with children or young people in emergency education – encouraging them to be more inclusive in a range of ways.'ⁱ

Image: CBM/Shelley

ⁱ *The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) 2010*

Partnerships

Comprehensive, well coordinated emergency response programmes depend on strong partnership. CBM has focused on building capacities and supporting the work of local Disabled Peoples Organisations and service providers and collaborating closely with government, international partners and donors across the world.

CBM would like to thank the following organizations, supporters of our work in Haiti

- Action Medeor
- American Society International
- Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft (BEH)
- Bensheim Hilft
- Caribbean Council for the Blind International
- Centre d’Education Spéciale
- ChildFund /Christian Children’s Fund
- CURE International
- Electric Aid
- Rhein-Main-Zeitung/FAZ
- German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)
- Haitienne Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population (MSPP)
- Handicap International
- Healing Hands for Haiti
- HELP e.V.
- Hôpital Adventiste d’Haiti (Adventist Hospital International)
- International Child Care - Grace Children’s Hospital
- International Eye Foundation
- Kindernothilfe (KNH)
- Lion’s Club International
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)
- Loma Linda University International
- Medical Ministry International
- New Zealand Aid Programme
- Orbis
- ORLO
- Pazapa
- PLAN International
- Project Hope International
- Prosthetika International
- St. Boniface Haiti Foundation/Hôpital St. Boniface.
- Scottish Government
- Sight Savers International
- Société Haitienne d’Aide aux Aveugles (SHAA)
- State Secretariat for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (SEIPH)
- UESA – National, Child Day Care Centers
- University Hospital (HUEH)
- University of Montemorelos – Eye Department (AIES)
- URAMEL
- Visualiza
- Vosh
- World Blind Union

CBM would also like to thank the many Haitian residents who supported us during the first few weeks of our response and who continue to support us today. You have played a very valuable and important role in our work and without you our efforts would not be possible.





Empowerment of people with disabilities

This photo shows the Haitian Association of the Blind carrying out a food distribution for their members. This was supported by CBM.

Disabled Peoples Organisations are the best placed to know where people with disabilities are in emergency situations, what assistance they need, and how to get it to them.

Image: CBM/ Van Drunden





Training local professionals

It is estimated that as many as 300,000 Haitians may have sustained injuries as a result of the earthquake. Prior to the earthquake, rehabilitative care was non-existent. There are still no official training facilities for physiotherapists or occupational therapists within the country. In many emergency contexts, as in Haiti, anyone who sustained an injury is at risk of developing a long-term impairment leading to disability.

Since July CBM has provided services to over 2000 people, providing over 26,000 treatments. CBM has also invested in rebuilding local services and training local professionals.

Image: CBM/Shelley



Family

Rodenson lost his right foot in the earthquake when he ran into his crumbling house to save his younger sister Anne. Not many would be so brave.

When CBM asked Rodenson’s mother if her son realised he was a hero, Caroline said, “Yes he knows. When people give him a hard time or try to pick on him because he has a short foot, Rodenson simply says ‘Yes I do, but at least the house did not fall on Anne.’”

In many situations children do not get to live within their families.

‘States Parties shall ensure that children with disabilities have equal rights with respect to family life. ...States Parties shall undertake to provide early and comprehensive information, services and support to children with disabilities and their families.’ⁱ

Image: CBM/Shelley

ⁱ UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



Independent living

Inaccessible environments prevent people with disabilities from taking part independently in economic and social activities, and can also be dangerous, directly causing injury and disability.

Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities guarantees people with disability the right to live independently and be included in the community.

The reconstruction period following an emergency offers the opportunities of rebuilding an inclusive society.

Attitudes are also critical. According to Dr. Michel Pean, State Secretariat for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (SEIPH), Haitians have a word for people with a disability – ‘Cocobe’ - a Creole word meaning ‘can’t do anything.’

Dr. Pean says the collaboration of organisations like SEIPH and CBM is vitally important to change the attitude of Haitians towards disability. Dr. Pean says if people with a disability are ever going to be included in mainstream society in Haiti, the attitude of the general public towards disability and people with a disability has to be changed first.

By creating accessible, inclusive, non discriminating environments, more people can exercise their right to live independently.

Image: CBM/Dard



The right to protection

‘Persons with disabilities are extremely vulnerable to protection violations, ranging from physical, sexual and emotional abuse to lack of access to justice systems and documentation. Children with disabilities are three to four times more likely to be physically or emotionally abused.’ⁱ

How can emergency response address this?

- Target male and female persons with disabilities of all ages in all protection monitoring initiatives
- Assist persons with disabilities with communication difficulties in complementing relevant forms, replacing lost documentation
- Provide all information in simple language, using at least two means of communication (eg. written and oral)
- Include people with disabilities, their families and assistants in psychosocial initiatives

Image: CBM/ Shelley

ⁱ *Forced Migration Review, Issue 35, July 2010*