



## Letter from the President: Haiti

Dear supporters,

As you all know, a devastating earthquake hit Haiti a month ago.

Emergency NGOs have been responding to the crisis, including our grantee and central player in the emergency response in Haiti, Partners in Health. Over the next few weeks, many emergency NGOs will leave and the post-crisis period will begin. MAC will have an important role to play, given its experience in post-crisis assistance and its focus on helping local authorities regain control of the health care infrastructure necessary for long term sustainable services.



The horrific images of the crisis should not mask the fact that, even prior to the earthquake, the situation, particularly in the countryside, was already dire. This is why, in 2009, we funded a Comité d'Aide Médicale exploratory mission facilitated by Partners in Health to identify health needs in the Ennery and Saint- Marc regions. Ironically, while the exploratory mission opened the door for primary health care programs, Haiti was not – at the time - a priority for the institutional funders who can scale up such programs.

We hope that this has now changed and that a small investment by MAC will result in much larger institutional funding for a subsequent health program to support Haiti's long term recovery.

I first worked in Haiti in 1996 and was immediately struck by the lack of infrastructure and immense need for basic services but also by the resilience, friendliness and resourcefulness of the Haitian people. MAC's mission is to initiate programs that the local authorities and the local community can own and use long after MAC and its grantees are gone and funding has ended. I hope that you will help us ensure that Haitians continue to receive the support they need - even as the network news coverage fades away - by donating to MAC.

Pierre Crémieux  
President  
Medical Aid Committee

## Invest in Haiti

### Who We Are

The Medical Aid Committee (MAC) is a non-profit humanitarian organization which supports the provision of health care to communities affected by conflict, natural disasters and epidemics. All of our supported programs are developed in partnership with local communities and prioritize the strengthening of local health capacities and resources. We support primary health care programs of fixed and mobile health clinics, access to safe, clean water, preventative health education and programs supporting traumatized individuals and communities. In this way, we strive to improve the health and wellbeing of communities emerging from crises.

- [Learn More About Us >](#)
- [Invest in Sustainable Health >](#)

## Hospital Beds in Haiti



Haitians have been living through a series of humanitarian crises, whether natural or man-made, for decades but the earthquake of January 12, 2010 is unprecedented in its destruction of life and infrastructure. Prior to the earthquake, MAC had supported primary care efforts at the Saint Nicolas Hospital in Saint-Marc, northeast of Port au Prince. MAC's contribution to this strengthened capacity and infrastructure is small and simple but vital: hospital beds. Though the earthquake destroyed the shipping dock in Port au Prince, the hospital beds had not yet arrived there and were rerouted through the Dominican Republic to Saint-Marc, where they will make a tremendous difference in the ability of our grantee's staff to deliver high-quality care to survivors.

[Learn more about our supported programs in Haiti](#)

## Starting With the Youth: HIV/AIDS Prevention in Angola

In a northern Angolan province – rural, isolated, severely affected by a decades-long war, coping with newly arrived refugees – HIV/AIDS is an all-too-real threat. Our grantee, the Comité d'Aide Médicale has worked in the area, Uige Province, since 2004, meeting needs – primary health care, water and sanitation, and now HIV/AIDS health education – as they arose. As the post-crisis transition gradually changed, so did the work of our partner, which will begin training and awareness building in four secluded villages in close collaboration with an Angolan NGO. Designed to support the Angolan Health Minister's Strategic Plan for the Prevention of HIV/AIDS, this community health program focuses on those who have the potential to make the most change: the youth.



[Learn more about our supported programs in Angola](#)

## Understanding Health Practices, Changing Health Behaviors: Surveys in Darfur



Treating illnesses without addressing their underlying causes is like trying stop a flood with a handful of sand bags; it is a stopgap measure that helps, but does not target the cause of the deluge.

That is exactly what we are trying to do in Darfur, Sudan, as our pro bono health economists work with our grantee, the Comité d'Aide Médicale, to not only learn about the local communities' health needs but to assess local knowledge of preventative health, hygiene and everyday household routines that affect morbidity and mortality.

By regularly measuring the impact of the primary health care, community

health education, and water and sanitation programs, we can not only improve the care the community receives by tailoring programs to local needs; we can also identify gaps in local knowledge to expand and adapt awareness workshops on preventive measures, such as nutrition and immunization, that stop illnesses before they begin.

Survey results provide insight into how effective programs are at teaching and encouraging healthy behaviors (e.g., chlorinating water). According to Sarah Lyon-Caen, an epidemiologist and survey analyst, community health education workshops have had an impact: "More respondents knew that diarrhea could be transmitted through water in 2009 (56%) compared to those respondents in 2008 (33%)." But surveys also shed light on the connection between behavior and health outcomes in general (e.g., the extent to which individuals who drink clean water are less prone to water-borne illness). This is the connection that we hope to learn more about from our forthcoming survey of 280 households (taken December 2009).

Armed with an improved understanding of health needs and behaviors in Darfur, our teams will be better equipped to design and implement programs with maximum impact. According to our economists, the survey results teach us about effective health program design that can be applied far beyond the reaches of Darfur.

[Learn more about our supported programs in Darfur, Sudan](#)

## Field Quote

After eight months working in Chad's refugee camps...

"It gives me great satisfaction to fight each day for health access for the most vulnerable; it is a common right. [We must] not forget that anyone could potentially become a refugee.

It is [my pleasure] to see the children recover their ability to smile; to ensure prenatal care for expectant mothers and to give them access to childbirth free from risk within the health centers; to bring hope to those who hope no more, in sum to learn to live again and not just to struggle along or survive.

Not forgetting, day by day, those who support our humanitarian work."



Dr. Ouanna Coulibaly  
Chad Health Coordinator  
Our grantee, the Comité d'Aide Médicale



[Invest In Sustainable Health – Make A Donation](#)

[Questions or Comments? - Contact Us](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)