



## Helping Haiti Recover from Hurricane Matthew

Populations in Haiti, the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation, are highly vulnerable to a variety of natural disasters, including hurricanes and earthquakes. To help communities respond more effectively to disasters, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) has developed a network of local surge capacity consultants. These USAID/OFDA-trained disaster specialists are familiar with the local context and can be activated to assist host government emergency response authorities, ground-truth disaster reports, conduct assessments, and help partners implement response activities more efficiently.

In early October 2016, Hurricane Matthew crossed over southwest Haiti as a powerful Category 4 hurricane, causing widespread devastation that affected an estimated 2.1 million people, damaged tens of thousands of homes, schools, and other buildings, destroyed agricultural crops and public water systems, and increased communities' vulnerability to waterborne diseases, including cholera.

Before the storm, USAID/OFDA activated Haiti-based surge consultants to assist the Government of Haiti's Civil Protection Directorate (DPC) with evacuation and preparedness efforts. After the

storm, consultants conducted damage assessments and supported response activities in Grand'Anse and Sud, two of the most affected departments.

"Our 22 local surge consultants proved invaluable to our response. Some supported DPC's early warning messages encouraging at-risk populations to evacuate to emergency shelters, likely helping to save lives. Others were activated after the storm hit and provided information on impacts and critical needs that helped guide our response approach," said Jonathon Anderson, the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) Leader.

USAID/OFDA also assigned four surge consultants to support partner Haiti Bible Mission for five weeks to rehabilitate roads; deliver food, water, and other relief supplies to vulnerable families; and distribute corrugated metal sheeting, wood framing material, hammers, and nails to repair roofs in affected communities in Grand'Anse. The consultants rebuilt the roofs of 65 houses, while training community members on best practices to ensure the roofs' durability.

"We helped communities in the most difficult of times. To be a USAID/OFDA surge consultant means working from the heart to understand how everything is related, how good planning is the basis of any good result, and how dialogue is essential when making decisions to assist populations. I am proud of the work I do as a surge consultant; but it would not be possible without the support and training USAID/OFDA has provided us," said Grand'Anse native Ralph Simon, a USAID/OFDA surge consultant since 2015.

USAID/OFDA Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan noted, "Throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, our local surge program is an important strategic piece of our response preparedness plan."

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