



Haiti: Relief, Rebuilding and Recovery

The devastation from the January 12 earthquake in Haiti is horrific. Loss of life and survivors' injuries are at an unprecedented scale for this region. The extent of building collapse and damage will soon become clearer but is extremely widespread. A significant percentage of homes and commercial/municipal buildings will need to be rebuilt – “built back better”. Many thousands of Haitian families are now without shelter. Beyond the immediate imperative to provide medical care, food and water for survivors, assistance to Haiti must further the longer-term goals of rebuilding and recovery.

World Shelters and our collaborating partners are initiating projects based on assessments of needs from the field. Your support of World Shelters' Haitian relief efforts will provide a maximum value in delivering medical facilities and context-appropriate shelter.

Transitional Materials Are Key to Success

Shelter materials brought into Haiti need to be transitional in nature: they should provide immediate relief utility, but must also be useful towards construction of permanent housing. Tents, for example, have little or no transitional value, whereas frames made of locally available materials that can be covered with relief sheeting, and later with corrugated roofing panels, will have both immediate and transitional uses.



Reconstruction = Economic Recovery

The need to rebuild Haiti represents an opportunity to create paid work for Haitians and to grow the local economy. The positive impact for local workers is very significant and must be maximized, beginning with the relief process. Rebuilding starts now.

Outside cash spent in Haiti will circulate from five to eight times in the local economy, providing significant and desperately needed fuel and spark for the local economic engine. If that cash is instead spent outside of Haiti on well-intentioned but short-use deliverables such as tents, rather than being paid out for local labor, local materials and local construction activity, that shelter donation's economy-building potential is wasted.

Certainly there are significant amounts of materials that need to be brought into Haiti for relief, rebuilding and recovery. While the news media focus on relief, the greater value for shelter-related materials and finances provided to Haiti will be derived from resources for rebuilding and recovery. The average Haitian family is multi-generational with only one of five employed and an average family annual income of under \$700 per year. If offered either a tent and some other compact non-food items, or the tent's delivered cost of \$1,400 (US) cash, which do you think would have the most value to this family? Tents are temporary. Delivery of foreign bought and made “solutions” for disaster relief creates a cycle of dependency and minimizes the local economic development value of these financial resources. What Haitians need from outside are shelter materials they can use to build transitional and permanent housing, and to complete



other construction. The financial resources for relief, rebuilding and recovery should be spent within Haiti to the greatest extent possible, to the direct benefit of Haitians while equipping them to make their own decisions and efforts towards recovery.



Conforming to Disaster Relief Standards

It is imperative that materials and supplies brought into Haiti conform to minimum standards for disaster relief, as defined by the Sphere international consortium and adopted by relief agencies worldwide. For shelters, a minimum of 3.5 square meters per person is mandatory. For a family of five, shelter must be a minimum of 18 square meters.

What is World Shelters Doing?

World Shelters is working to provide transitional shelter frame kits of 18 m² for \$149 apiece (the JAS Shelter). These

traditional-shape truss-roof shelters are sized to utilize the 4x6 meter relief sheeting as the initial roof covering, as these sheets are now coming to Haiti in large volumes from the UN, the International Red Cross, the USAID Office of Disaster Assistance, and other relief agencies. The JAS Shelter frames can then be roofed with the corrugated galvanized roofing sheets that will be the most common construction material following the disaster. These transitional shelters can then be built on or integrated into other structures and readily adapted to local architectural details and with various local construction materials "built back better".

As there is an enormous amount of rubble and a need for rapid rebuilding of walls, we are also working to provide wire frame gabions to convert rubble into reinforced walls. We are also assisting in provision of larger sized tensile structures for necessary temporary and permanent uses such as field hospitals, clinics, schools, municipal centers, and other common purposes.

For the longer term, the TranShel transitional shelter will also be evaluated for its appropriateness in the Haiti context. The frameless hard-panel TranShel is designed to the standards of the international Transitional Shelter Consortium as a low cost complete shelter that is readily adaptable into permanent structures.

Please contact World Shelters (www.worldshelters.org) for effective shelter relief, recovery and rebuilding in Haiti. We request your support for World Shelters' initiatives towards relief, rebuilding and recovery in Haiti.

How Can I Help?

Please go to WorldShelters.org and click on the "Donate Now" button to make your generous contribution. All current contributions are dedicated to Haiti. With your help, the recovery in Haiti starts now.

World Shelters is an NGO - US non-profit 501(c)(3)
550 South G St., Suite 3, Arcata, CA 95521 USA phone +1 707 822 6600 * fax +1 707 633 1737
www.worldshelters.org info@worldshelters.org