

SUCCESS STORY

USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team: Haiti Earthquake

Saving lives, alleviating suffering, and mitigating the economic and social impact of the earthquake



Photo: Sara Schomrig

At its height, the DART comprised 540 individuals: 511 USAR team members and 34 technical and functional experts.

Within USAID, a select group of staff is prepared to respond to disasters abroad, no matter when or where they occur. They are experienced humanitarian assistance professionals, dedicated to saving lives, alleviating suffering, and reducing the social and economic impact of disasters.

Within 24 hours of the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that rocked Haiti on January 12, the first Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) members arrived in Haiti. They immediately set to work conducting urban search and rescue (USAR) operations, organizing logistics, establishing critical telecommunications support for the team and for the Government of Haiti, and providing information updates on the unfolding situation.

At its height, the DART comprised 540 individuals—511 USAR team members and 34 staff members with expertise in shelter and settlements, protection, health, logistics, food, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene, as well as liaisons to the U.N., the military, and the media.

Led by DART leader Tim Callaghan, the team worked long hours and overcame many challenges to ensure that relief was delivered expeditiously and appropriately. The DART coordinated its efforts through the U.N.-based cluster system and through a network of implementing non-governmental organizations.

The DART coordinated the delivery of more than 40 planeloads of relief, including more than 111,000 water containers, nearly 75,000 hygiene kits, more than 10,000 rolls of plastic sheeting, and 5,000 kitchen sets. In addition, the six USAID-funded USAR teams saved the lives of 47 people trapped in collapsed structures.

Within six weeks, USAID programmed more than \$400 million to address immediate food, water, health, and shelter needs for earthquake-affected populations.