

F O N D A T I O N

Digicel

HAITI

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

March 2010 Edition

FOUNDATION Schools are SAFE !

We are so happy and very fortunate to announce that the thousands of students at the Foundation's 20 schools are safe and sound. All our school buildings withstood the earthquake with the sole exception of one of the classroom buildings at Fond des Blancs, which is in a most severely affected area. No children were injured at any of the schools.

Our engineers have already carried out evaluations of the school buildings and will shortly begin whatever repairs are necessary. Many of our schools resumed lessons in March.

Digicel Haiti Relief Fund quickly at work



Digicel moved quickly to respond to the disaster of 12 January and allocated \$5 million to assist the Haitian people through a Relief Fund. This includes donations to NGOs for emergency relief including food and water distribution. We brought in over 100,000 lbs of medicine and emergency supplies. The Fund is also being used to provide 19,000 tents.

For the medium-term, and considering our continual focus on supporting education for Haitian children, the Foundation is committed to providing up to 50 schools in the Ouest department and this will be our main activity in the coming months, working with the Ministry of Education.

In addition, Chairman of Digicel, Mr Denis O'Brien has personally undertaken to fund the entire restoration of the Marche en Fer. This will renovate the commercial heart of the centre city of Port au Prince, as well as returning an important cultural icon to its former glory. This work is already well-underway with a team of architects and engineers focused on preserving as much as possible of the original structure.



Words from the Director:

On the 12th January 2010, Haiti endured the worst natural disaster in its history. Hundreds of thousands of people died, crushed before the eyes of those who survived the horror, powerless to help. In 35 seconds, our lives were turned upside down as our loved ones, our homes, our employees, our certainties and our dreams disappeared in the cloud of dust that enveloped the city of Port au Prince.

Help has come to us from all corners, from the whole world, from Ireland, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, and we can never say thank you enough for all that has been done! Above all, we appreciate our sister Foundations who have stood by our side to help and support us in this incredibly difficult time.

In the anguish and hope, life returns to its course, its daily rituals and we must return to normality.

We are working to help those without shelter, the disadvantaged, all those who live in difficult conditions. And despite everything, the children have begun to laugh again. It is their laughter that brings hope that tomorrow will come, it is for these children that the Digicel Foundation has not stopped working, that we take on this task with all our abilities and say to all our members, to all our volunteers, to all those who support us: Let us make sure that tomorrow is better than today.

Bon courage to one and all!

A new home for the Ministry of Education

As we recognize the importance of education to children, especially in a time of crisis when more than ever they need routine and security, the Digicel Foundation quickly contacted the Ministry of Education to understand their priorities and needs in planning the restoration of education in Haiti. The Ministry's building was totally destroyed in the earthquake and its staff had no office from which to work together. To address this need, the Foundation brought a tent that can accommodate 500 employees, and is furnishing it with desks, chairs, computers and internet access. This facility can meet the needs of the Ministry for as long as required before they can return to a permanent building.

Thanks to this support, the Ministry is in the process of planning students' return to school throughout Haiti to the benefit of all.



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Bringing food to those in need



On 16 February, the Digicel Foundation distributed essential food packages to 15,000 people who have lost their homes and are living in 16 temporary camps in the areas of Leogane and Petit-Goave, especially women and children.

Badly hit by the earthquake, thousands of families in these towns are without shelter and basic needs. Outside of Port au Prince, they are further from the main centres of aid distribution. Therefore the Foundation distributed kits including t-shirts, powdered milk and juice, rice, corn, beans, spaghetti, cooking oil and even laundry soap.

Thanks to this action, the Digicel Foundation was able to help thousands of families who are facing such huge difficulties and the warmth of their welcome and thanks showed the depth of gratitude and appreciation for this help. A huge THANK YOU to the members and volunteers who made this distribution possible.

School Directors Training Continues...

Directors for our 20 Foundation schools came from all over Haiti for a week-long training programme in general and financial management, delivered by experts Sophides at Port au Prince this month.

This is a follow up to training programmes in November, and was due to take place in January. It is a sign of our return to our core work that we were able to have this important session before Easter.

The purpose is to support the schools as they work towards an independent and sustainable future. Areas covered have included budgeting, cash flow, planning, project management and human resource management. At the moment, the Digicel Foundation provides extensive financial assistance to our schools. The three-year programme of establishment and support will conclude next year and we want to be sure the schools are ready to 'go it alone'!

All the Directors have participated actively and enthusiastically, and report that they regard this training as essential to their future. They also found their new knowledge to be empowering and confidence-building. It is a great thing to be working towards the future, even while we deal with the present.