

WE WON'T FORGET

PSYCHOLOGISTS FOR THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD FOR THE HAITI EMERGENCY

Preparation

Psychologists for the Peoples of the World, within the broader commitment undertaken by Italian federation of *Psicologi per i Popoli*, immediately mobilized to provide aid to the people of Haiti who were severely impacted by the earthquake of January 14, 2010.

The Association's availability to participate in assistance operations was immediately communicated to the Department of Civil Protection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Cooperation Office of the Region of Lombardy. In addition, through the CoLomba network (NGO association of Lombardy), of which the Association is a part, we contacted NGOs already working in the field to arrange partnerships for psychosocial interventions.

At the same time, Psychologists for the Peoples of the World took action to find among our members, and members of associations in the *Psicologi per i Popoli* federation, human resources available to depart at short notice who had international experience, experience with the emergency in Abruzzo and knowledge of French. We drew up an initial list of about fifty experienced and reliable psychologists, social workers and logistics specialists who could be immediately operative.

Then all contacts were made needed to organize a mission on site to plan interventions to provide psychosocial support to earthquake survivors.

Fundraising

In order to fund the interventions, a fundraising campaign was launched in collaboration with the Italian federation of *Psicologi per i Popoli*, and the *Psicologi per i Popoli* - Milan association. Important fundraising projects included four screenings of the film "Haiti Cherie" by Riccardo Del Punta, two in Milan, one in Novara and one in Cuneo, with excellent audience turn-out.

In addition, cash donations came from the Fondazione Credito Valtellinese, private individuals and members of the *Psicologi per i Popoli* associations of Sondrio, Cuneo, Lazio and Emilia Romagna. The IBM Foundation donated two laptops for local professionals working on site. First aid materials, medicines, clothing and toys were collected from organizations and individuals to donate to Haitian children sheltered at the Parish of Santa Cecilia in Santo Domingo.

The mission to Haiti and the Dominican Republic

The support of the Advisory Council of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic in Italy (CONDEX), which made on-site logistics available, and the help offered by the Società Air Italy, which provided free transportation for materials collected for donation and provided airline tickets at reduced prices, made it possible to implement a mission between March 4 and 20, 2010 for two representatives of the association to define projects.

The mission reached Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, where essential supplies were delivered to Father Manuel Ruiz, pastor of the parish of Santa Cecilia, and the border area of the province of Jimaní, on the road to Port au Prince, after which visits were made to the Fond Parisien camp in Haiti, where about 5000 displaced people were sheltered.

In this area, as well as in others on the border between the two countries, professionals worked from the Dominican Ministry of Health, headed by the Department of Mental Health, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and interpreters, enthusiastic but lacking the technical and economic resources necessary to effectively carry out their difficult task. A collaboration agreement was signed with the Department to implement a cooperation for structural improvements and training of mental health teams to support Haitian earthquake survivors.

Support project for the program of psychological support and recovery for survivors of the earthquake in Haiti

The project organized by Psychologists for the People of the World is designed to support a program of psychosocial support and recovery for earthquake survivors in Haiti, and was implemented in part in the days following the earthquake by the Department of Mental Health of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Care (MISPAS) of the Dominican Republic.

The project seeks to integrate interventions in the field of mental health and psychosocial support provided by mental health teams and psychosocial support teams in the border areas, both in Haiti and in the Fond Parisien and Croix de Bouquet camps, which are in the Dominican Republic, in shelters for families and children who survived the earthquake.

The project, planned for implementation throughout 2011, is divided into three types of actions:

- A first community development program, called "Espacio Esperanza" for displaced Haitians staying in a camp in Jimaní,
- The provision of equipment, materials and essential pharmaceuticals to make three mental health centers operational and permanent in three hospitals in the provinces of Pedernales, Independencia and Elías Pina;
- Training, counseling and supervision for professionals working in the support and psychosocial recovery program, related to issues of community psychosocial support, mental health, psychomotor re-education, rehabilitation, processing of post-trauma emotions, cultural and linguistic mediation and developing tools for collecting and recording data.

For the project's full implementation, we need additional funding, which means that fundraising continues with an appeal to individuals, businesses and institutions not to forget Haiti.

**Donations can be deposited to:
Bank account no. 7809
payable to PSICOLOGI PER I POPOLI NEL MONDO
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Reason: "Emergenza terremoto Haiti 2010"**