

PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE?

Post-earthquake accountability to affected populations in Haiti

From November 2021 to January 2022, Ground Truth Solutions (GTS) did a mixed-method study to find out what people affected by 14 August earthquake think about the humanitarian response. We conducted a phone survey with 1251 respondents and spoke to 86 people in qualitative interviews.



PHONE SURVEY

- 505 WOMEN (40%)
- 746 MEN (60%)
- 1106 NON-AID RECIPIENTS (88%)
- 144 AID RECIPIENTS (12%)

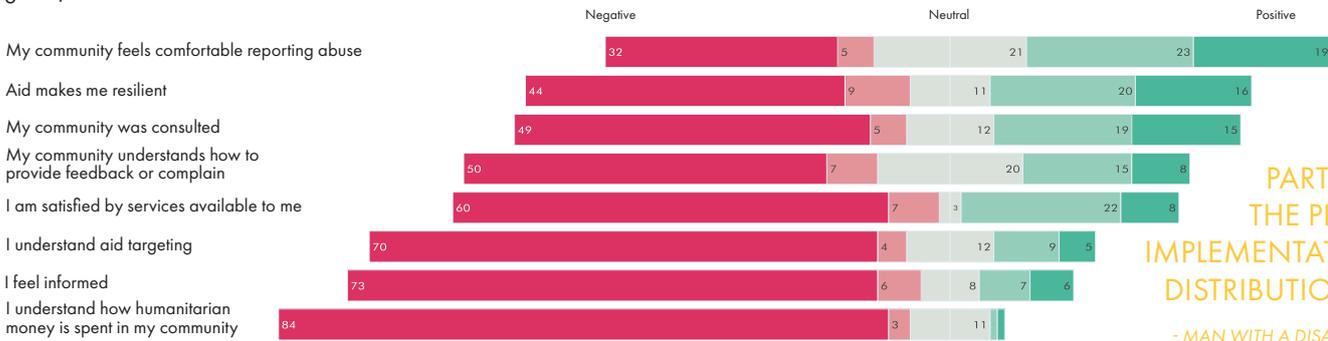
QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

- WOMEN
- MEN
- YOUTH
- PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
- COMMUNITY LEADERS
- LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

- Earthquake epicentre
- Districts covered by our phone survey
- Communes covered by our qualitative interviews

RESULTS

To explore communities' priorities for the post-earthquake humanitarian response, we contrasted the perceived importance of key accountability indicators with communities' experiences. Respondents deemed all themes we asked about very important, the extent to which recipients feel about them happening, however, varies. These graphs show the percentages of responses given to the different questions on a scale from 1 to 5, ranging from negative (dark red) to positive (dark green).



“ WE MUST PARTICIPATE IN THE PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF AID. ”
- MAN WITH A DISABILITY, LES CAYES

SATISFACTION WITH HUMANITARIAN AID

- 67% of respondents in our phone survey say they are not satisfied with the available humanitarian services.
- Dissatisfaction is linked to limited access to aid, especially in rural areas, quantities insufficient to meet their needs, poor quality of aid, or aid that did not correspond to their priorities.
- People also reported negative experiences during aid distributions due to disorder, crowding, and even violence, and feelings of not being respected and shame. Some even considered refusing aid due to these negative experiences.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- 54% of respondents say their community was not consulted on aid.
- People lack power to make decisions around humanitarian aid, both during needs assessments and distributions.
- Generally, people do not have opportunities to participate in aid.
- In contrast, people feel quite strongly about having the right to influence aid.

INFORMATION

- Only 13% of people feel informed about what aid is available to them.
- 14% know how it is decided who receives aid and who does not.
- There is a shared feeling that targeting is not done fairly.
- Other information gaps include knowing where aid comes from, who distributes it and when, and how humanitarian money is spent.

FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS

- Just 23% of people think their community knows how to provide feedback or make a complaint about humanitarian aid.
- People express not having access to complaints mechanisms.
- People feel that complaining will not bring any real change.
- People don't want to complain to those who they think are part of the problem.

AUTONOMY

- 36% of people think that aid helps their community to live without aid in the future.
- Despite finding aid useful as a short-term relief, people don't think it helps them in the long-term.
- People have hope to be independent from aid.
- Most people mentioned wanting work or livelihoods, and to be able to reconstruct their community.

“ WE DON'T WANT TO BE MADE VICTIMS FOR A BAG OF RICE. ”

- WOMAN, LES CAYES

TRUST

- People want aid to be given by those they can trust, are respected by, and are closest to them.
- Because people are not implicated in aid processes, they have low levels of trust in humanitarians and the authorities involved in distributing aid.
- Some voiced allegations of corruption linked to the selection of beneficiaries. A major complaint was that humanitarians do not visit their communities to “see the reality” – suggesting that people perceive that they are not as in touch with affected populations as they should be.
- While communal actors are most often mentioned as best placed to provide and distribute aid, it is not only about “who” does aid, but “how” it is done.

For more detail, you can read more in our full report here.



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We held a workshop with members of the humanitarian community in March 2022 to formulate recommendations on how to act on our findings. Participants included representatives from the government, humanitarian sectors, NGOs and organisations working with persons with disabilities, and accountability to affected people focal points. To ensure recommendations lead to concrete action, active follow up from the relevant stakeholders in-country is key.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Targeting and communication around selection criteria

- Create a coordination body with community and civil society organisations to identify vulnerable groups and pre-identify vulnerabilities through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour's national vulnerability database (SIMAST);
- Apply standardised selection methods among aid providers;
- Conduct needs assessments specifically for persons with disabilities in conjunction with national and local organisations for persons with disabilities (OPDs);
- Base the response on multisectoral rapid needs assessments, including in remote areas; adapt it to different local contexts; and make sure it is gender- and age-sensitive by using the Gender- and Age Marker (GAM) tool.
- Raise awareness about targeting and selection criteria through markets, radios, schools, and religious organisations, making sure to include remote areas;
- Display a list of targeting criteria at distribution sites.

Complaints and feedback mechanisms

- Establish and harmonise independent, anonymous, and confidential complaints mechanisms, for example by establishing a centralised hotline and by designating focal points at distribution sites;
- Provide training for community organisations and associations (such as OPD and women's associations) on complaints and feedback mechanisms;
- Increase awareness of complaints and feedback mechanisms, for example by displaying complaints and feedback mechanisms at distribution sites and by informing communities on how complaints are processed and how to access and use feedback and complaint mechanisms;
- Implement systemic monitoring of complaints, for example by implementing policies on response time for certain types of complaints;
- Communicate results and any actions taken after complaints are made.
- Seek feedback on the quality and relevance of delivered aid through post-distribution monitoring.

Safe and dignified access to aid

- Provide aid in secure locations and distribute aid early in the morning;
- Anticipate the number of people coming to the distribution and implement appropriate crowd control measures;
- Vary the location of distributions so they are not always in the same place;
- Involve local leaders in distributions, and train staff and distribution partners (Civil Protection) in safe distribution practices such as crowd control;
- Conduct a mapping of accessible areas as a preparedness measure;
- Hold separate or door-to-door distributions for vulnerable groups, such as pregnant or nursing women and people with reduced mobility.
- Reinforce quality assurance norms and standards for distributed goods, including at the organisational level, and prioritise locally sourced products and services.
- Train humanitarian field staff on humanitarian principles and conduct.

Community participation

- Consult community leaders and local authorities to identify distribution strategies appropriate for the community;
- Gather community input in the definition of vulnerability criteria;
- Commission an inclusive management guide with national and local OPDs to facilitate the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all phases of the project cycle and to contribute to the empowerment of persons with disabilities;
- Train organisations' staff on community consultation.

Transparent information

- Integrate community organisations and religious actors in information sharing.
- Establish joint communication strategies among the various actors to ensure coherent messaging;
- Adapt communication strategies to different contexts and community preferences;
- Ensure information is accessible for persons with disabilities by dissemination through OPDs.

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