

WFD concerned for deaf children in Haiti

World Federation of the Deaf expresses its deepest sympathies and solidarity to all Deaf victims and their families that have been affected by the earthquake. WFD strongly urges international aid organisations to ensure that Deaf people have access to immediate rescue and recovery efforts, and that they are fully involved in the reconstruction process.

WFD has received information from various sources about the Haiti earthquake's impacts on Deaf population, even though received information still remains scattered. World Federation of the Deaf is especially concerned for the needs of deaf children, who are particularly affected by this crisis. However, more information is greatly needed concerning the Deaf community at large.

WFD is working at the moment with its Regional Secretariat in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean and the Deaf Association in Dominican Republic (Asociación Nacional de Sordos de la Republica Dominicana) to find ways how to help Deaf population. However, at this point, WFD can only encourage people to make donations either directly to deaf organisations or through other reputable humanitarian aid organisations. Please note that WFD is not in a position to ensure any reliability of these organisations and how donations are used. Thank you for all those who have expressed their willingness to help.

Up to the present, WFD has obtained information about the following organisations that have been affected by the earthquake:

Institut Montfort Pour Enfants Sourds (Montfort Institute for Deaf Children)

Institut Montfort is a school with over 600 Deaf students. The school was destroyed by the earthquake, but fortunately all the children who lived in the dorm were safe. However, situation of those children who went home after school is still unknown. They have appealed money to build up a fence around their place of relocation and to set up a small warehouse to store furniture.

Website: www.FriendsOfMontfort.org (Friends of Montfort is functioning in the US)

Cappa Sourd

Cappa Sourd's building was completely destroyed by the earthquake. Cappa Sourd, Center for Assistance of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, is a national non-profit organisation working on integration and support of psycho-socio-cultural aspects of people with Deaf and hard of hearing concentrating mainly on children and young adolescents in Haiti.

Website: <http://www.freewebs.com/cappahaiti>

St Vincent School

The school served deaf, blind and other children with disabilities also including a group of children with severe multiple disabilities and wheelchair users. It is supported by Episcopal community. The school was destroyed in the earthquake, but the survived children are evacuated. Some money has been raised for their cause by a religious community.

<http://www.cmmh.org>,

or

<http://www.friendsofstvincents.org>

WFD again stresses that Deaf people must be included in the acute emergency relief phase as well as in the reconstruction process. WFD shares the view with the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that has recently stated that persons with disabilities must not become the forgotten ones during times of crises.