

I. PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Title:	All Hands Volunteers Project Dominica		
Project Duration:	Sept 8, 2015 – Oct 10, 2015 (tentative date)	Date of Report:	September 18 th , 2015
All Hands Project Director:	Sherry Buresh, Director of Disaster Response		
All Hands Project Coordinators:	Sherry Buresh, Emma Bate, Andrew Lem, Ike Go Christian. Katie Rose, April Tatlonghari		

II. GENERAL OVERVIEW

Dominica Demographics

Dominica's population is 72,003 according to the 2013 census. 29% of households and 40% of the general population live in poverty. 11% of households and 15% of the general population live in indigent poverty. An average of 50% of Dominica's children live in poverty.

Tropical Storm Erika

On August 27th tropical storm Erika ravaged the eastern Caribbean Island of Dominica, delivering nearly twelve inches of rain in twelve hours. Rivers and streams surged carrying boulders and debris destroying homes, roads, bridges and land. The heavy rains disturbed mountain sides creating landslides engulfing homes, many becoming inhabited.

The entire villages of Petite Savanne and Dubique, are both uninhabitable, yet some residents remain there in an unsafe environment. The 700 residents will not be allowed to rebuild there. Plans are to relocate and build two new villages containing 400 homes. Helicopters continue making trips to the villages twice a day to deliver supplies. A bridge, the only access to the villages, was washed away with the flood currents, leaving a 50 foot drop. A rope swing bridge has been created spanning the lands for villagers to cross by foot.

6-7 government run shelters remain open with 700 evacuees still staying in them.

22 schools were damaged. Some of the remaining schools are scheduled to reopen next week.

Many have lost not only their homes and vehicles but their jobs as well. Tourism is a large source of employment and many are skeptical if they will have a job due to the disaster.

9 Special Disaster Areas were Declared:

1. Bath Estate / Paradise Valley
2. Dubique
3. Petite Savanne
4. Campbell
5. Coulibistrie
6. Pichelin
7. Petite Soufriere
8. Good Hope
9. San Sauveur

Heavy rains from Tropical Depression Grace further complicated relief efforts and caused additional mudslides early in the week of Sept. 13, cutting off access to at least one community.

Assessment Summary

The All Hands Volunteers (“AHV”) assessment team has been carrying out assessments and liaising with government officials to gain a clear understanding of what and where the help is needed the most. The sheer amount of need within St. George parish (parish AHV has been in thus far) highlights the intensity and destructive power of Erika. Island officials continue striving to restore normalcy to the population with ongoing response work. The Prime Minister has committed to helping the residents affected by Erika; therefore, funding will be provided by the government for recovery as well as response. However, the damage that has occurred and the amount of money it will take to repair the damage will inevitably mean slow progress. The residents who have been evacuated from Petite Savanne will feel this delay the most. It is likely the evacuees will be moved from shelter to shelter while waiting for available housing.

Presently, AHV is the only organization in Roseau, St. George Parish, or the West Cost of Dominica which is providing clean-up assistance (muck & gut, salvaging belongings, removing debris, etc.)

III. PROGRAM UPDATES

- The assessment team arrived in Dominica late evening on Monday, September 7th.
- Making contacts and attending meetings began immediately upon arrival.
- A residential base has been secured in Roseau, Dominica, and sits near the top of a mountain (400 ft. elevation).
- A request was made on Sept. 9th, to begin bringing AHV volunteers in to help with Project Dominica.
- The first AHV job began on Thursday, 9-10. This was a special project requested of AHV by Local and National Disaster Coordinators and Committee Members. The job involved cleaning out a culvert and drain ditch to help alleviate future flooding for the Pioneer Elementary School and surrounding community homeowners. The school was severely flooded and has since been cleaned inside in preparation for getting the children back in school. School supplies, computers, and classroom furniture are desperately needed.
- AHV has been requested by National Disaster Coordinators and Committee Members to assist in cleaning homeowner properties within entire communities, which are piled high with debris, mud, silt and sand.
- On Sept. 14th, heavy rain for upward of 12 hours, caused by the weakening Tropical Depression Grace, led to the government cancelling schools and public offices across the country. AHV was also told to stop work until the waters subsided. Additional landslides were reported at this time, and conditions were deteriorating.
- AHV is the only organization in Roseau, St. George’s Parish and other towns/villages along the West Coast providing clean-up assistance.
- Flyers have been posted in local businesses asking for day volunteers.

IV. Key Recent Events

- During the initial assessment period (9/7- 9/9), AHV met with a number of government officials to offer help and work together on a coordinated response. A number of job requests are flowing from these contacts. Contacts: Don Coriette, National Disaster Coordinator; Careen Provost, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Joshua Francis Chambers, Member of Parliament.
- During assessments the team leaders educated those vulnerable to future flooding of the evacuation procedures and where they can seek shelter as refuge.
- On 9/17 the AHV team met with the Prime Minister and the Honorable Dr. John Collin McIntyre, Minister for Planning, Economic Development and Investment. The officials expressed concern about the lack of available data available documenting damage to houses, schools, etc., and data on health, food, shelter needs. The parties discussed whether AHV could play a role in helping with needs analysis and rebuilding homes for the relocated villages.

V. BIG Issues

- The road to base has been damaged, further rainfall is making it worse. The team is going to work on evacuation routes in the event it becomes impassable.
- Rivers already swollen from previous rainfall and debris blocking bridges and culverts may create future flooding.