
GISCorps Volunteers Respond to Crisis in Haiti from Hurricane Matthew

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On 4 October 2016, Hurricane Matthew, a Category 4 hurricane, came ashore on the western half of Haiti, causing extensive flooding, mudslides, and damage to roads, houses, and the water and electricity infrastructure. Over 500 people died, and 2.1 million people are affected. The day before the hurricane arrived, GISCorps volunteers began assisting the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT) by mapping buildings and roads in the affected areas.

Source: UNOCHA HAITI: Hurricane Matthew Situation Report No. 18

Much of western Haiti was previously not mapped in any detail. The HOT effort, led by Dale Kunce (Vice-President of HOT, and Global Lead for ICT and Analytics at the American Red Cross), established 24 HOT Projects over the course of the October 2016 response, focusing on the hardest-hit parts of western Haiti. The mapping focus was on buildings, which yield information on village locations and population density, and provide a baseline for making damage assessments; and the road network, which is needed to provide critical maps for getting help and supplies into the affected areas.

Twenty-six GISCorps volunteers from six countries worked for 225 hours on the project and contributed about 20,000 features. Volunteers who contributed are: Jomals Mathews John, Charles T Carlson, German Whitley, Angel Hassinger, Soumya Dharmavaram, Abedje Nesit Berenger, Jessica Knapp, Amanda Miner, Gouri Vishnubatla, Mohammad Salim Soltani, Jennifer Selfridge, Eleza Boban Kollannur, Parth Gondaliya, David Litke, Claudia Blagu, Gammannagoda Gedara Maheshika Rathnamali Karunarathna, Brou Carême Baudouin, Ariel Simpson, Kra Adjoua Solange, Mary Emily Stonebridge, Kelli Brock, Tom Carlson, Joel Masselink, Maheshika Karunarathna, Elisabeth Smith, and Justin Cole. This effort was led by David Litke, GISCorps Core Committee member and the liaison to GISCorps' OSM subcommittee.

OpenStreetMap of Les Cayes, Haiti, after completion of Hurricane Matthew HOT Project