

One year on from Hurricane Matthew, Haiti's children still incredibly vulnerable to disasters – UNICEF

5 October 2017 – One year has passed since Hurricane Matthew made landfall in southwest Haiti – leaving terrible destruction in its wake – but children and adolescents on the island still remain highly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and extreme weather events, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has warned.

"Hundreds of thousands of children had their lives turned upside down by Hurricane Matthew," said Marc Vincent, the head of the UNICEF country office in Haiti, in a news release issued by the agency.

"The courage and determination of families to recover and begin to rebuild their lives is admirable and [we are] proud to be one of the organizations continuing to support them."

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, UN mobilized its staff on the ground to respond to the most urgent needs, sending emergency aid for affected children and families, including clean water and sanitation.

Working together with the Haitian Government and partner organizations, over the past 12 months, the UNICEF rehabilitated 120 schools damaged by the hurricane, enabling the return of more than 30,000 children to school. It also provided school furniture to some 139 schools and provided another 26,000 children with psycho-social support.

In the Sud and Grand'Anse departments – two of the worst hit parts of the island – UNICEF helped screen 160,000 children for malnutrition in an ongoing programme, and organized a series of consultations with adolescents to enable them to express their concerns and ideas about risk and disaster management, with the results shared with local authorities.

Recalling the destruction and feeling of despair, Bernard, a fourteen-year-old child from Roche-à-Bateau (in southern Haiti) said: "After [Hurricane] Matthew passed, I thought it would be virtually impossible to continue living. All the trees were uprooted."

"But people are beginning gradually to recover," he added.

Hurricane Matthew (Category 4) made landfall in Haiti on 4 October 2016. At the time, the ["very powerful and slow moving"](#) storm was described as the ["worst storm the country had seen in decades"](#). As it passed over the country, the storm claimed hundreds of lives and destroyed critical infrastructure, including key bridges, communication links, and water and sanitation systems.

Source: UNICEF [[see in full screen](#)]