

When to give time and when to give money?

It all started with the Tsunami in 2004. Many people who saw the stories of loss and devastation wanted to help – they wanted to get out there, roll up their sleeves and just help. For most people, this is an instinctive and apparently rational response – that same response is being shown following the Earthquake in Haiti.

HOW CAN I HELP?

people and places – the award winning volunteer organisation – has the following advice:

“Few of us have the skills needed now by the people of Haiti. They need hard skills – people who are experienced in disaster relief and crisis response – whether they’re doctors, water engineers, logistics and distribution experts. Haiti’s infrastructure cannot yet deal with emergency relief, and will certainly not be able to cope with the care and management of well-meaning travellers with a plethora of skills that are more appropriate for development work.

“If you want to help in Haiti right now, send money to a reputable aid agency. If you can be patient, wait until the crisis is over – which is likely to be years, rather than months – and travel with a reputable and responsible organisation with a clear strategy on the ground. Please don’t just turn up – local resources will be fully stretched for some time,” said Sallie Grayson, programme director at www.travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

“You can register your skills for future use on these sites:

www.haitivolunteer.org/
www.cidi.org/reg_off.htm
www.onlinevolunteering.org/en/vol/index.html
www.healthcarevolunteer.com

“We’ve been approached by a number of people who feel the need to help in Haiti. As we explain, our volunteer programmes look to use the transfer of skills to enable local communities to build the future they would wish for themselves. These will be the very skills Haiti needs in the future.” And if you want to donate be careful – be wary of opportunism!

- Donate to recognized charities that you have given to before.
- Do not respond to any spam. Only open attachments from known senders.
- Be wary of charities that ask you to wire money through services like Western Union.
- Don’t give or send cash
- Ask for identification if you’re approached in person

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