

Central Library Exhibition to Highlight Edinburgh's Response to World Disasters

A thought-provoking exhibition at Edinburgh's Central Library opens tomorrow, highlighting how Scotland's Capital city has responded to natural disasters occurring across the globe.

"Edinburgh: Saving Lives Across the World" opens at the George IV Bridge library on the first anniversary of the Haiti earthquake, which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

The free photography exhibition, which will run until 31 January, presents striking images capturing the impact of natural disasters upon ordinary people's lives and environment.

✘ In 2009, organisations from across Edinburgh came together to find ways for the people of the Capital to help those affected by major natural disasters. Led by Edinburgh-based charity Mercy Corps and the City of Edinburgh Council, they set up the Edinburgh Disasters Response Committee. Since then, the people of Edinburgh have helped thousands of people across the world.

Lord Provost George Grubb said: "This poignant and thought-provoking exhibition at the Central Library will celebrate our City's commitment to helping those affected by natural disasters across the world. Through the Edinburgh Disasters Response Committee, working in association with other city organisations and the international charity Mercy Corps, the people of Edinburgh are providing invaluable financial aid to countries where a natural disaster has occurred.

"It's fitting that the exhibition should be launching on the anniversary of the Haiti earthquake; the EDRC raised £430,000

for the Haiti earthquake appeal. The Committee is currently seeking further donations to help supply clean water to flood-stricken communities in Pakistan, following the floods which hit parts of the country last summer.”

John Cunningham, Director of Fundraising for Mercy Corps, said: “One year on from the massive earthquake in Haiti, support from across Edinburgh has helped us to make a difference to the lives of more than three quarters of a million Haitians. The people of Edinburgh have been fantastic, raising hundreds of thousands of pounds. We know that there’s so much still to do in Haiti, but we also want to thank everyone in Scotland for their donations and tell them how they’ve helped.

“The exhibition at the Central Library is a way of showing everyone in Edinburgh the difference that their generosity is making to people who need it most. From providing much needed clean water, food and shelter, to helping children recover from the trauma of the earthquake, getting small businesses back up and running and tackling the major outbreak of cholera, funds raised in Edinburgh and across the world have allowed our team to help the people of Haiti with the huge range of challenges that they have faced over the last 12 months.

“There is no quick fix for the situation in Haiti, and we know our teams will be there for a long time to come. But the huge response we saw last year from local people here has made us all very proud that our European headquarters are in Edinburgh, and we’re delighted to have the chance in this exhibition to share the impact that our work is having with everyone who has supported us. We want the people of Edinburgh to know that their support really is helping to save lives and rebuild communities.”

✘ The Edinburgh Disasters Response Committee aims to provide a way for Edinburgh – as the capital city of Scotland – to

help those affected by major natural disasters and emergencies. Working in association with other city organisations, they co-ordinate fundraising across Edinburgh to deliver fast, effective help to communities in desperate need.

To date the Committee has raised more than £430,000 for survivors of the earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010 and is still raising funds to provide lasting sources of clean water for those affected by the floods that hit Pakistan in August 2010.

To donate to the EDRC's current appeal, call 0845 245 0686 or go online at www.mercycorps.org.uk/edinburgh