



## Improving Access to Water in Dominica

On the night of September 18, Hurricane Maria struck the eastern Caribbean island nation of Dominica as a Category 5 storm. Maria's relentless rains and winds devastated the country, killing at least 27 people and affecting all 71,000 island residents.

Landslides damaged the piped water distribution system that normally serves the coastal, western Mahaut area, forcing residents to rely upon contaminated river water for household water needs. As access to safe drinking water became increasingly limited, health concerns grew among island residents.

Virginia Frampton, a resident of the town of Mahaut, told members of the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) that since the storm residents noticed that children were sickened after drinking river water. Virginia and her neighbors started boiling river water to make it safe for consumption.

To address the need for safe drinking water in Mahaut, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) funded the non-governmental organization Samaritan's Purse to establish a temporary water treatment plant to provide hurricane-affected families with safe drinking water. Located alongside a busy road, the treatment plant allows easy public access, ensuring that anyone passing through the area can stop and fill up water containers.

A local Boy Scout troop is helping with the water distributions, reminding residents to use clean water containers, and providing information about recovery efforts to the people of Mahaut. The troop leader, John Davidson, says that his troop is happy to volunteer their time to support and educate the community on the treatment system and response efforts.

Virginia, who met the DART when she brought her two grandchildren, Trent and Janae, to the treatment plant to pick up water, told the DART, "this facility is helping the community. We're very appreciative!"

While the community is looking forward to the restoration of piped water services in Mahaut, USAID/OFDA and Samaritan's Purse are ensuring that safe drinking water is available in the interim. As of October 4, the treatment plant has provided more than 25,000 gallons of purified water for residents of Mahaut and nearby communities.