The Mw 7.0 earthquake that struck the Republic of Haiti on January 12, 2010 was among the most devastating events in recent history. Many factors contributed to the scale of the disaster. The proximity of the earthquake rupture to the capital city of Port-au-Prince exposed a dense urban area to strong ground shaking. Geological and geotechnical conditions in the epicentral area include artificial fills, soft alluvial soils, and topographic features that caused ground motion amplification and ground failure. The lack of an effective building code, inadequate seismic design and detailing, inferior construction materials, and lack of quality control during construction all contributed to the poor performance of structures in the earthquake-affected area. Typical reinforced concrete frame buildings with concrete block infill were particularly vulnerable to seismic damage, including such design elements as slender columns and inadequate transverse reinforcement. The earthquake demonstrated not only the weakness of Haiti’s physical infrastructure, but also the more fundamental weakness of its institutions and government. This disaster, perhaps more than any other in recent history, illustrated the role of sociological vulnerability in a natural disaster. With every segment of civil society impacted—government, schools, universities, businesses, health clinics, orphanages, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and churches—it was often difficult to understand who could provide relief and assistance to the earthquake victims. One year after the earthquake, however, there are hopeful signs of coordination between the Haitian government, NGOs, and religious organizations. Haiti’s long-term recovery depends on building capacity at all levels—technical, institutional, and governmental.