

= We Are the World =

" We Are the World " is a song and charity single originally recorded by the supergroup United Support of Artists (USA) for Africa in 1985 . It was written by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie (with arrangements by Michael Omartian) and produced by Quincy Jones for the album We Are the World . With sales in excess of 20 million copies , it is one of the fewer than 30 all @-@ time singles to have sold at least 10 million copies worldwide .

Following Band Aid 's " Do They Know It 's Christmas ? " project in the UK , an idea for the creation of an American benefit single for African famine relief came from activist Harry Belafonte , who , along with fundraiser Ken Kragen , was instrumental in bringing the vision to reality . Several musicians were contacted by the pair , before Jackson and Richie were assigned the task of writing the song . The duo completed the writing of " We Are the World " seven weeks after the release of " Do They Know It 's Christmas ? " , and one night before the song 's first recording session , on January 21 , 1985 . The historic event brought together some of the most famous artists in the music industry at the time .

The song was released on March 7 , 1985 , as the only single from the album . A worldwide commercial success , it topped music charts throughout the world and became the fastest @-@ selling American pop single in history . The first ever single to be certified multi @-@ platinum , " We Are the World " received a Quadruple Platinum certification by the Recording Industry Association of America . However , the song garnered mixed reviews from journalists , music critics , and the public . Fans enjoyed hearing racially and musically diverse recording artists singing together on one track , and felt satisfied in buying " We Are the World " , knowing that the money was going to charity . Other individuals , including many commentators in the rock press , were disappointed that the song did not challenge listeners as to why famines occur in the first place , and felt that the lyrics were self @-@ aggrandizing .

Awarded numerous honors ? including three Grammy Awards , one American Music Award , and a People 's Choice Award ? the song was promoted with a critically received music video , a home video , a special edition magazine , a simulcast , and several books , posters , and shirts . The promotion and merchandise aided the success of " We Are the World " and raised over \$ 63 million (equivalent to \$ 136 million today) for humanitarian aid in Africa and the US .

Following the devastation caused by the magnitude 7 @.@ 0 Mw earthquake in Haiti on January 12 , 2010 , a remake of the song by another all @-@ star cast of singers was recorded on February 1 , 2010 . Entitled " We Are the World 25 for Haiti " , it was released as a single on February 12 , 2010 , and proceeds from the record aided survivors in the impoverished country .

= = Background and writing = =

Before the writing of " We Are the World " , American entertainer and social activist Harry Belafonte had sought for some time to have a song recorded by the most famous artists in the music industry at the time . He planned to have the proceeds donated to a new organization called United Support of Artists for Africa (USA for Africa) . The non @-@ profit foundation would then feed and relieve starving people in Africa , specifically Ethiopia , where around one million people died during the country 's 1983 ? 85 famine . The idea followed Band Aid 's " Do They Know It 's Christmas " project in the UK , which Belafonte had heard about . In the activist 's plans , money would also be set aside to help eliminate hunger in the United States of America . Entertainment manager and fellow fundraiser Ken Kragen was contacted by Belafonte , who asked for singers Lionel Richie and Kenny Rogers ? Kragen 's clients ? to participate in Belafonte 's musical endeavor . Kragen and the two musicians agreed to help with Belafonte 's mission , and in turn , enlisted the cooperation of Stevie Wonder , to add more " name value " to their project . Quincy Jones was drafted to co @-@ produce the song , taking time out from his work on The Color Purple . Richie also telephoned Michael Jackson , who had just released the commercially successful Thriller album and had concluded a tour with his brothers .

Jackson revealed to Richie that he not only wanted to sing the song , but to participate in its writing

as well . To begin with , " We Are the World " was to be written by Jackson , Richie , and Wonder . As Wonder had limited time to work on the project , Jackson and Richie proceeded to write " We Are the World " themselves . They began creating the song at Hayvenhurst , the Jackson family home in Encino . For a week , the two spent every night working on lyrics and melodies in the singer 's bedroom . They knew that they wanted a song that would be easy to sing and memorable . The pair wanted to create an anthem . Jackson 's older sister La Toya watched the two work on the song , and later contended that Richie only wrote a few lines for the track . She stated that her younger brother wrote 99 percent of the lyrics , " but he 's never felt it necessary to say that " . La Toya further commented on the song 's creation in an interview with the American celebrity news magazine People . " I 'd go into the room while they were writing and it would be very quiet , which is odd , since Michael 's usually very cheery when he works . It was very emotional for them . "

Richie had recorded two melodies for " We Are the World " , which Jackson took , adding music and words to the song in the same day . Jackson stated , " I love working quickly . I went ahead without even Lionel knowing , I couldn 't wait . I went in and came out the same night with the song completed ? drums , piano , strings , and words to the chorus . " Jackson then presented his demo to Richie and Jones , who were both shocked ; they did not expect the pop star to see the structure of the song so quickly . The next meetings between Jackson and Richie were unfruitful ; the pair did not produce any additional vocals and got no work done . It was not until the night of January 21 , 1985 , that Richie and Jackson completed the lyrics and melody of " We Are the World " within two and a half hours , one night before the song 's first recording session . The line , " There 's a choice we 're making , we 're saving our own lives , it 's true " is very similar to the line , " A star , a star , dancing in the night , With a tail " from the famous Christmas song Do You Hear What I Hear ? .

= = Recording sessions = =

The first night of recording , January 22 , 1985 , had tight security on hand , as Richie , Jackson , Wonder , and Jones started work on " We Are the World " at Kenny Rogers ' Lion Share Recording Studio . The studio , on Beverly Boulevard in California , was filled with musicians , technicians , video crews , retinues , assistants , and organizers as the four musicians entered . To begin the night , a " vocal guide " of " We Are the World " was recorded by Richie and Jackson and duplicated on tape for each of the invited performers . The guide was recorded on the sixth take , as Quincy Jones felt that there was too much " thought " in the previous versions .

Following their work on the vocal guide , Jackson and Jones began thinking of alternatives for the line " There 's a chance we 're taking , we 're taking our own lives " : the pair was concerned that the latter part of the line would be considered a reference to suicide . As the group listened to a playback of the chorus , Richie declared that the last part of the line should be changed to " We 're ' saving ' our own lives " , which his fellow musicians agreed with . Producer Jones also suggested altering the former part of the line . " One thing we don 't want to do , especially with this group , is look like we 're patting ourselves on the back . So it 's really , ' There 's a choice we 're making . ' " Around 1 : 30 am , the four musicians ended the night by finishing a chorus of melodic vocalizations , including the sound " sha @-@ lum sha @-@ lin @-@ gay " . Jones told the group that they were not to add anything else to the tape . " If we get too good , someone 's gonna start playing it on the radio , " he announced .

On January 24 , 1985 , after a day of rest , Jones shipped Richie and Jackson 's vocal guide to all of the artists who would be involved in " We Are the World " ' s recording . Enclosed in the package was a letter from Jones , addressed to " My Fellow Artists " :

Ken Kragen chaired a production meeting at a bungalow off Sunset Boulevard on January 25 , 1985 . There , Kragen and his team discussed where the recording sessions with the supergroup of musicians should take place . He stated , " The single most damaging piece of information is where we 're doing this . If that shows up anywhere , we 've got a chaotic situation that could totally destroy the project . The moment a Prince , a Michael Jackson , a Bob Dylan ? I guarantee you ! ? drives up and sees a mob around that studio , he will never come in . " On the same night , Quincy Jones ' associate producer and vocal arranger , Tom Bahler , was given the task of matching each solo line

with the right voice . Bahler stated , " It 's like vocal arranging in a perfect world . " Jones disagreed , stating that the task was like " putting a watermelon in a Coke bottle " . The following evening , Lionel Richie held a " choreography " session at his home , where it was decided who would stand where .

The final night of recording was held on January 28 , 1985 , at A & M Recording Studios in Hollywood . Michael Jackson arrived at 9 pm , earlier than the other artists , to record his solo section and record a vocal chorus by himself . He was subsequently joined in the recording studio by the remaining USA for Africa artists , who included Ray Charles , Billy Joel , Diana Ross , Cyndi Lauper , Bruce Springsteen and Smokey Robinson . Also in attendance were five of Jackson 's siblings : Jackie , La Toya , Marlon , Randy and Tito . Many of the participants came straight from an American Music Award ceremony , which had been held that same night . Invited musician Prince , who would have had a part in which he and Michael Jackson sang to each other , did not attend the recording session . The reason given for his absence has varied . One newspaper claimed that the singer did not want to record with other acts . Another report , from the time of " We Are the World " ' s recording , suggested that the musician did not want to partake in the session because organizer Bob Geldof called him a " creep " . Prince did , however , donate an exclusive track , " 4 The Tears In Your Eyes " , for the We Are the World album . In all , more than 45 of America 's top musicians participated in the recording , and another 50 had to be turned away . Upon entering the recording studio , the musicians were greeted by a sign pinned to the door which read , " Please check your egos at the door . " They were also greeted by Stevie Wonder , who proclaimed that if the recording was not completed in one take , he and Ray Charles , two blind men , would drive everybody home .

Each of the performers took their position at around 10 : 30 pm and began to sing . Several hours passed before Stevie Wonder announced that he would like to substitute a line in Swahili for the " sha @-@ lum sha @-@ lin @-@ gay " sound . At this point , Waylon Jennings left the recording studio for a short time when it was suggested by some that the song be sung in Swahili . A heated debate ensued , in which several artists also rejected the suggestion . The " sha @-@ lum sha @-@ lin @-@ gay " sound ran into opposition as well and was subsequently removed from the song . Jennings returned to the studio and participated in the recording , which bears his name in the end credits . The participants eventually decided to sing something meaningful in English . They chose to sing the new line " One world , Our children " , which most of the participants enjoyed .

In the early hours of the morning , two Ethiopian women , guests of Stevie Wonder , were brought into the recording studio ? it had been decided that a portion of the proceeds raised would be used to bring aid to those affected by the recent famine in Ethiopia . They thanked the singers on behalf of their country , bringing several artists to tears , before being led from the room . Wonder attempted to lighten the mood , by joking that the recording session gave him a chance to " see " fellow blind musician Ray Charles . " We just sort of bumped into each other ! " The solo parts of the song were recorded without any problems . The final version of " We Are the World " was completed at 8 am .

= = Music and vocal arrangements = =

" We Are the World " is sung from a first person viewpoint , allowing the audience to " internalize " the message by singing the word we together . It has been described as " an appeal to human compassion " . The first lines in the song 's repetitive chorus proclaim , " We are the world , we are the children , we are the ones who make a brighter day , so let 's start giving " . " We Are the World " opens with Lionel Richie , Stevie Wonder , Paul Simon , Kenny Rogers , James Ingram , Tina Turner and Billy Joel singing the first verse . Michael Jackson and Diana Ross follow , completing the first chorus together . Dionne Warwick , Willie Nelson and Al Jarreau sing the second verse , before Bruce Springsteen , Kenny Loggins , Steve Perry and Daryl Hall go through the second chorus . Co @-@ writer Jackson , Huey Lewis , Cyndi Lauper and Kim Carnes follow with the song 's bridge . This structuring of the song is said to " create a sense of continuous surprise and emotional buildup " . " We Are the World " concludes with Bob Dylan and Ray Charles singing a full

chorus , Wonder and Springsteen duetting , and ad libs from Charles and Ingram .

= = USA for Africa musicians = =

= = Release and reception = =

On March 8 , 1985 , " We Are the World " was released as a single , in both 7 " and 12 " format . The song was the only one released from the We Are the World album and became a chart success around the world . In the US , it was a number one hit on the R & B singles chart , the Hot Adult Contemporary Tracks chart and the Billboard Hot 100 , where it remained for a month . The single had initially debuted at number 21 on the Hot 100 , the highest entry since Michael Jackson 's " Thriller " entered the charts at number 20 the year before . It took four weeks for the song to claim the number one spot ? half the time a single would normally have taken to reach its charting peak . On the Hot 100 , the song moved from 21 to 5 to 2 and then number 1 . " We Are the World " might have reached the top of the Hot 100 chart sooner , if it were not for the success of Phil Collins ' " One More Night " , which received a significant level of support from both pop and rock listeners . " We Are the World " also entered Billboard 's Top Rock Tracks and Hot Country Singles charts , where it peaked at numbers 27 and 76 respectively . The song became the first single since The Beatles ' " Let It Be " to enter Billboard 's Top 5 within two weeks of release . Outside of the US , the single reached number one in Australia , France , Ireland , Italy , New Zealand , The Netherlands , Norway , Sweden , Switzerland and the UK . The song peaked at number 2 in only two countries : Germany and Austria .

The single was also a commercial success ; the initial shipment of 800 @, @ 000 " We Are the World " records sold out within three days of release . The record became the fastest @-@ selling American pop single in history . At one Tower Records store on Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood , 1 @, @ 000 copies of the song were sold in two days . Store worker Richard Petitpas commented , " A number one single sells about 100 to 125 copies a week . This is absolutely unheard of . " By the end of 1985 , " We Are the World " had become the best selling single of the year . Five years later it was revealed that the song had become the biggest single of the 1980s . " We Are the World " was eventually cited as the biggest selling single in both US and pop music history . The song became the first ever single to be certified multi @-@ platinum ; it received a 4 x certification by the Recording Industry Association of America . The estimated global sales of " We Are the World " are said to be 20 million .

Despite the song 's commercial success , " We Are the World " received mixed reviews from journalists , music critics and the public following its release . American journalist Greil Marcus felt that the song sounded like a Pepsi jingle . He wrote , " ... the constant repetition of ' There 's a choice we 're making ' conflates with Pepsi 's trademarked ' The choice of a new generation ' in a way that , on the part of Pepsi @-@ contracted song writers Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie , is certainly not intentional , and even more certainly beyond the realm of serendipity . " Marcus added , " In the realm of contextualization , ' We Are the World ' says less about Ethiopia than it does about Pepsi ? and the true result will likely be less that certain Ethiopian individuals will live , or anyway live a bit longer than they otherwise would have , than that Pepsi will get the catch phrase of its advertising campaign sung for free by Ray Charles , Stevie Wonder , Bruce Springsteen , and all the rest . " Author Reebee Garofalo agreed , and expressed the opinion that the line " We 're saving our own lives " was a " distasteful element of self @-@ indulgence " . He asserted that the artists of USA for Africa were proclaiming " their own salvation for singing about an issue they will never experience on behalf of a people most of them will never encounter " .

In contrast , Stephen Holden of The New York Times praised the phrase " There 's a choice we 're making , We 're saving our own lives " . He commented that the line assumed " an extra emotional dimension when sung by people with superstar mystiques " . Holden expressed that the song was " an artistic triumph that transcends its official nature " . He noted that unlike Band Aid 's " Do They Know It 's Christmas " , the vocals on " We Are the World " were " artfully interwoven " and

emphasized the individuality of each singer . Holden concluded that " We Are the World " was " a simple , eloquent ballad " and a " fully @-@ realized pop statement that would sound outstanding even if it weren 't recorded by stars " .

The song proved popular with both young and old listeners . The public enjoyed hearing a supergroup of musicians singing together on one track , and felt satisfied in buying the record , knowing that the money would go towards a good cause . People reported they bought more than one copy of the single , some buying up to five copies of the record . One mother from Columbia , Missouri purchased two copies of " We Are the World " , stating , " The record is excellent whether it 's for a cause or not . It 's fun trying to identify the different artists . It was a good feeling knowing that I was helping someone in need . "

According to music critic and Bruce Springsteen biographer Dave Marsh , " We Are the World " was not widely accepted within the rock music community . The author revealed that the song was " despised " for what it was not : " a rock record , a critique of the political policies that created the famine , a way of finding out how and why famines occur , an all @-@ inclusive representation of the entire worldwide spectrum of post @-@ Presley popular music " . Marsh revealed that he felt some of the criticisms were right , while others were silly . He claimed that despite the sentimentality of the song , " We Are the World " was a large @-@ scale pop event with serious political overtones .

" We Are the World " was recognized with several awards following its release . At the 1986 Grammy Awards , the song and its accompanying music video won four awards : Record of the Year , Song of the Year , Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal and Best Music Video , Short Form . The music video was awarded two honors at the 1985 MTV Video Music Awards . It collected the awards for Best Group Video and Viewer 's Choice . People 's Choice Awards recognized " We Are the World " with the Favorite New Song award in 1986 . In the same year , the American Music Awards named " We Are the World " " Song of the Year " , and honored organizer Harry Belafonte with the Award of Appreciation . Collecting his award , Belafonte thanked Ken Kragen , Quincy Jones , and " the two artists who , without their great gift would not have inspired us in quite the same way as we were inspired , Mr. Lionel Richie and Mr. Michael Jackson " . Following the speech , the majority of USA for Africa reunited on stage , closing the ceremony with " We Are the World " .

= = Track listing = =

Vinyl Single :

" We Are the World " (USA for Africa) ? 7 : 14

" Grace " (Quincy Jones) ? 4 : 56

= = Marketing and promotion = =

" We Are the World " was promoted with a music video , a video cassette , and several other items made available to the public , including books , posters , shirts and buttons . All proceeds from the sale of official USA for Africa merchandise went directly to the famine relief fund . All of the merchandise sold well ; the video cassette ? entitled We Are the World : The Video Event ? documented the making of the song , and became the ninth best @-@ selling home video of 1985 . All of the video elements were produced by Howard G. Malley and Craig B. Golin along with April Lee Grebb as the production supervisor .

The music video showed the recording of " We Are the World " , and drew criticism from some . Michael Jackson joked before filming , " People will know it 's me as soon as they see the socks . Try taking footage of Bruce Springsteen 's socks and see if anyone knows who they belong to . " Jackson was also criticized for filming and recording his solo piece privately , away from the other artists . The singer 's supporters reasoned that Jackson was a perfectionist ; recording in front of other big name artists would leave him awestruck and unable to perform at his best . He was also known for his shy nature , and the idea of singing solo in front of 44 other famous artists probably

sounded terrifying to him .

The song was also promoted with a special edition of the American magazine Life . The publication had been the only media outlet permitted inside A & M Recording Studios on the night of January 28 , 1985 . All other press organizations were barred from reporting the events leading up to and during " We Are the World " ' s recording . Life ran a cover story of the recording session in its April 1985 edition of the monthly magazine . Seven members of USA for Africa were pictured on the cover : Bob Dylan , Bruce Springsteen , Cyndi Lauper , Lionel Richie , Michael Jackson , Tina Turner and Willie Nelson . Inside the magazine were photographs of the " We Are the World " participants working and taking breaks .

" We Are the World " received worldwide radio coverage in the form of an international simultaneous broadcast later that year . Upon spinning the song on their local stations , Georgia radio disc jockeys , Bob Wolf and Don Briscar came up with the idea for a worldwide simulcast . They called hundreds of radio and satellite stations asking them to participate . On the morning of April 5 , 1985 (Good Friday of that year) at 10 : 25 am , over 8000 radio stations simultaneously broadcast the song around the world , showing support for the relief of famine in Ethiopia . As the song was broadcast , hundreds of people sang along on the steps of St. Patrick 's Cathedral in New York . The simultaneous radio broadcast of " We Are the World " was repeated again the following Good Friday .

" We Are the World " gained further promotion and coverage on May 25 , 1986 , when it was played during a major benefit event held throughout the US . Hands Across America ? USA for Africa 's follow @-@ up project ? was an event in which millions of people formed a human chain across the US . The event was held to draw attention to hunger and homelessness in the United States . " We Are the World " ' s co @-@ writer , Michael Jackson , had wanted his song to be the official theme for the event . The other board members of USA for Africa outvoted the singer , and it was instead decided that a new song would be created and released for the event , titled " Hands Across America " . When released , the new song did not achieve the level of success that " We Are the World " did , and the decision to use it as the official theme for the event led to Jackson ? who co @-@ owned the publishing rights to " We Are the World " ? resigning from the board of directors of USA for Africa .

= = Humanitarian aid = =

Four months after the release of " We Are the World " , USA for Africa had taken in almost \$ 10 @.@ 8 million (equivalent to \$ 23 million today) . The majority of the money came from record sales within the US . Members of the public also donated money ? almost \$ 1 @.@ 3 million within the same time period . In May 1985 , USA for Africa officials estimated that they had sold between \$ 45 million and \$ 47 million worth of official merchandise around the world . Organizer Ken Kragen announced that they would not be distributing all of the money at once . Instead , he revealed that the foundation would be looking into finding a long @-@ term solution for Africa 's problems . " We could go out and spend it all in one shot . Maybe we 'd save some lives in the short term but it would be like putting a Band @-@ Aid over a serious wound . " Kragen noted that experts had predicted that it would take at least 10 to 20 years to make a slight difference to Africa 's long @-@ term problems .

In June 1985 , the first USA for Africa cargo jet carrying food , medicine and clothing departed for Ethiopia and the Sudan . It stopped en route in New York , where 15 @,@ 000 T @-@ shirts were added to the cargo . Included in the supplies were high @-@ protein biscuits , high @-@ protein vitamins , medicine , tents , blankets and refrigeration equipment . Harry Belafonte , representing the USA for Africa musicians , visited Sudan in the same month . The trip was his last stop on a four @-@ nation tour of Africa . Tanzanian Prime Minister Salim Ahmed Salim greeted and praised Belafonte , telling him , " I personally and the people of Tanzania are moved by this tremendous example of human solidarity . "

One year after the release of " We Are the World " , organizers noted that \$ 44 @.@ 5 million had been raised for USA for Africa 's humanitarian fund . They stated that they were confident that they

would reach an initial set target of \$ 50 million (equivalent to \$ 108 million in 2016) . By October 1986 , it was revealed that their \$ 50 million target had been met and exceeded ; CBS Records gave USA for Africa a check for \$ 2 @. @ 5 million , drawing the total amount of money to \$ 51 @. @ 2 million . USA for Africa 's Hands Across America event had also raised a significant amount of money ? approximately \$ 24 @. @ 5 million for the hungry in the US .

Since its release , " We Are the World " has raised over \$ 63 million (equivalent to \$ 136 million today) for humanitarian causes . Ninety percent of the money was pledged to African relief , both long and short term . The long term initiative included efforts in birth control and food production . The remaining 10 percent of funds was earmarked for domestic hunger and homeless programs in the US . From the African fund , over 70 recovery and development projects were launched in seven African nations . Such projects included aid in agriculture , fishing , water management , manufacturing and reforestation . Training programs were also developed in the African countries of Mozambique , Senegal , Chad , Mauritania , Burkina Faso and Mali .

Elias Kifle Maraim Beyene , a survivor from Ethiopia remembers : " I won 't ever forget Michael Jackson because his contribution to the song We are the World had a very significant effect on my life . Lots of people became sick and many more died (...) . In 1984 Michael Jackson , along with a number of other leading musicians , made the song We Are the World to raise money for Africa . We baked a special bread from it (...) . When you have been through such hard times you never forget events like this . If you speak to anyone who was in Addis Ababa at that time they will all know what Michael Bread is and I know I will remember it for the rest of my life . (...) "

= = Notable live performances = =

" We Are the World " has been performed live by members of USA for Africa on several occasions both together and individually . One of the earliest such performances came in 1985 , during the rock music concert Live Aid , which ended with more than 100 musicians singing the song on stage . Harry Belafonte and Lionel Richie made surprise appearances for the live rendition of the song . Michael Jackson would have joined the artists , but was " working around the clock in the studio on a project that he 's made a major commitment to " , according to his press agent , Norman Winter .

An inaugural celebration was held for US President @-@ elect Bill Clinton in January 1993 . The event was staged by Clinton 's Hollywood friends at the Lincoln Memorial and drew hundreds of thousands of people . Aretha Franklin , LL Cool J , Michael Bolton and Tony Bennett were among some of the musicians in attendance . Said Jones , " I 've never seen so many great performers come together with so much love and selflessness . " The celebration included a performance of " We Are the World " , which involved Clinton , his daughter Chelsea , and his wife Hillary singing the song along with USA for Africa 's Kenny Rogers , Diana Ross and Michael Jackson . The New York Times ' Edward Rothstein commented on the event , stating , " The most enduring image may be of Mr. Clinton singing along in ' We Are the World ' , the first President to aspire , however futilely , to hipness . "

As a prelude to his song Heal the World , " We Are the World " was performed as an interlude during two of Michael Jackson 's tours , the Dangerous World Tour from 1992 to 1993 and the HIStory World Tour from 1996 to 1997 . Jackson planned to use the song for his This Is It comeback concerts at The O2 Arena in London from 2009 to 2010 , but the shows were cancelled due to his sudden death .

Michael Jackson died in June 2009 , after suffering a cardiac arrest . His memorial service was held several days later on July 7 , and was reported to have been viewed by more than one billion people . The finale of the event featured group renditions of the Jackson anthems " We Are the World " and " Heal the World " . The singalong of " We Are the World " was led by Darryl Phinnessee , who had worked with Jackson since the late 1980s . It also featured co @-@ writer Lionel Richie and Jackson 's family , including his children . Following the performance , " We Are the World " re @-@ entered the US charts for the first time since its 1985 release . The song debuted at number 50 on Billboard 's Hot Digital Songs chart .

= = 25 for Haiti = =

On January 12 , 2010 , Haiti was struck by a magnitude 7.0 earthquake , the country 's most severe earthquake in over 200 years . The epicenter of the quake was just outside the Haitian capital Port au Prince . Over 230 ,000 civilians have been confirmed dead by the Haitian government because of the disaster and around 300 ,000 have been injured . Approximately 1.2 million people are homeless and it has been reported that the lack of temporary shelter may lead to the outbreak of disease .

To raise money for earthquake victims , a new celebrity version of " We Are the World " was recorded on February 1 , 2010 and released on February 12 , 2010 . Over 75 musicians were involved in the remake , which was recorded in the same studio as the 1985 original . The new version features revised lyrics as well as a rap segment pertaining to Haiti . Michael Jackson 's younger sister Janet duets with her late brother on the track , as per a request from their mother Katherine . In the video and on the track , archive material of Michael Jackson is used from the original 1985 recording .

On February 20 , 2010 , a non-celebrity remake , " We Are the World 25 for Haiti (YouTube Edition) " , was posted to the video sharing website YouTube . Internet personality and singer-songwriter Lisa Lavie conceived and organized the Internet collaboration of 57 unsigned or independent YouTube musicians geographically distributed around the world . Lavie 's 2010 YouTube version , a cover of the 1985 original , excludes the rap segment and minimizes the Auto-tune that characterizes the 2010 celebrity remake . Another 2010 remake of the original is the Spanish-language " Somos El Mundo " . It was written by Emilio Estefan and his wife Gloria Estefan , and produced by Emilio , Quincy Jones and Univision Communications , the company that funded the project .

= = Legacy = =

" We Are the World " has been recognized as a politically important song , which " affected an international focus on Africa that was simply unprecedented " . It has been credited with creating a climate in which musicians from around the world felt inclined to follow . According to The New York Times ' Stephen Holden , since the release of " We Are the World " , it has been noted that movement has been made within popular music to create songs that address humanitarian concerns . " We Are the World " was also influential in subverting the way music and meaning were produced , showing that musically and racially diverse musicians could work together both productively and creatively . Ebony described the January 28 recording session , in which Quincy Jones brought together a multi-racial group , as being " a major moment in world music that showed we can change the world " . " We Are the World " , along with Live Aid and Farm Aid , demonstrated that rock music had become more than entertainment , but a political and social movement . Journalist Robert Palmer noted that such songs and events had the ability to reach people around the world , send them a message , and then get results .

Since the release of " We Are the World " , and the Band Aid single that influenced it , numerous songs have been recorded in a similar fashion , with the intent to aid disaster victims throughout the world . One such example involved a supergroup of Latin musicians billed as " Hermanos del Tercer Mundo " , or " Brothers of the Third World " . Among the supergroup of 62 recording artists were Julio Iglesias , José Feliciano and Sérgio Mendes . Their famine relief song was recorded in the same studio as " We Are the World " . Half of the profits raised from the charity single was pledged to USA for Africa . The rest of the money was to be used for impoverished Latin American countries . Another notable example is the 1989 cover of the Deep Purple song " Smoke on the Water " by a supergroup of hard rock , prog rock , and heavy metal musicians collaborating as Rock Aid Armenia to raise money for victims of the devastating 1988 Armenian earthquake .

The 20th anniversary of " We Are the World " was celebrated in 2005 . Radio stations around the world paid homage to USA for Africa 's creation by simultaneously broadcasting the charity song . In addition to the simulcast , the milestone was marked by the release of a two-disc DVD called

We Are the World : The Story Behind the Song . Ken Kragen asserted that the reason behind the simulcast and DVD release was not for USA for Africa to praise themselves for doing a good job , but to " use it to do some more good [for the original charity] . That 's all we care about accomplishing . " Harry Belafonte also commented on the 20th anniversary of the song . The entertainer acknowledged that " We Are the World " had " stood the test of time " ; anyone old enough to remember it can still at least hum along .

= = Charts and certifications = =