

## A.10 Haiti – 2010 – Earthquake

**Overview:** **Keywords:** Returns, Unplanned camps, Planned and managed camps, Urban neighbourhoods, T-shelter, Rental support, Housing repair and retrofitting, Cash / vouchers, Mass communications.

### Summary

In October 2010, ten months after the Haitian earthquake, a humanitarian organisation began a project to close a small camp of around 200 families. Families were given rental support cash grants to cover the costs of renting accommodation for one year and to support the transition from camps to their new accommodation. The project succeeded in its aims and became a test case for a much wider programme of rental support.

Promoted by a small number of organisations, the rental support approach relied on donors' willingness to take a risk on a project-type with few precedents. By mid 2011, rental support cash grants had become a key part of the return strategy and by November 2012 over 23,000 households had received grants.

Early indications are that rental support cash grants have been successful. A survey of households that have completed their year of rental subsidy found that all of the respondents (90% of the total caseload) had been able to organise their own housing for the foreseeable future. None had returned to camps or moved to informal settlements.



Le Marron Inconnu (the unknown slave) statue surrounded by shelters in the Champ de Mars camp in early 2012. Photo: IOM



The statue in April 2012 after the Champ de Mars camp closure. Photo: IOM

### Background

The Haiti earthquake of January 2010 caused massive loss of life and damaged or destroyed 180,000 houses. (See [Section A.4 Shelter Projects 2010 for more background on the Haiti response](#))

Responses generally took one of three forms following the distribution of non-food items in the initial emergency phase:

- T-shelters: This was the main response by many organisations. Transitional shelters (T-shelters) were built using basic frames which could later be adapted into more permanent structures.
- Yellow House repair: Buildings were assessed by engineers and classified as Green (safe), Yellow (to be repaired) or Red (to be demolished).

- Permanent housing reconstruction: Rebuilding irreparably damaged houses.

The lack of buildable space in densely-populated urban areas and complex issues over land rights meant that the three main responses would only benefit those with land rights or those who owned houses.

Those displaced in camps overwhelmingly did not own either land or housing before the earthquake. Consequently, only a quarter of T-shelters built went to Haitians who were living in camps. Not only did this mean that camp populations were being reduced at a slow rate but it proved almost impossible to close camps completely. If only a small proportion of a camp had a durable solution available for them it wasn't long before the empty

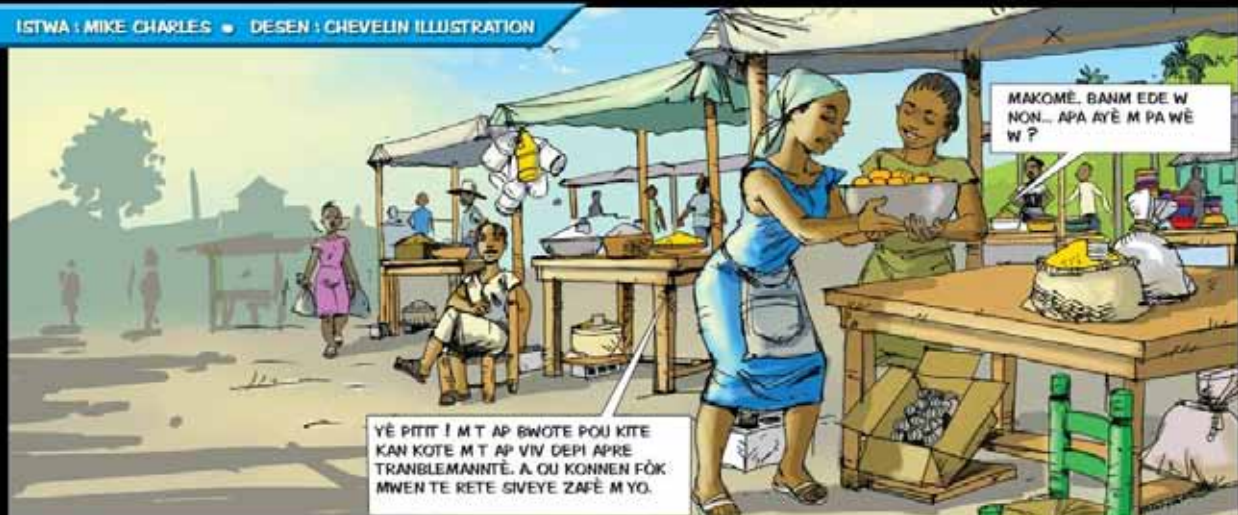
plots in the managed camps were taken by others moving in from spontaneous settlements.

Camps were not only bad for the displaced people but they also prevented occupied public spaces from being rehabilitated.

In this context some Haitian officials began suggesting that displaced people should be paid to leave camps. These proposals were dropped due to protection concerns as it would be impossible to verify if the families had found a durable solution. However, interest in properly planned rental support cash grants grew and presentations were made to donors to encourage adopting the approach.

# Men nan men ak pwojè 16/6 gouvènman Ayisyen an

ISTWA : MIKE CHARLES • DESEN : CHEVELIN ILLUSTRATION



An edition of Chimen Lakay, a graphic newspaper, featuring the 16/6 program and a newly cleared market place. Designed by: Chevelin Pierre, Script: Mike Charles.

## Neighbourhood approach

Rental support was closely combined with the neighbourhood approach to reconstruction.

The concept of the neighbourhood approach is that projects such as rubble clearance, rebuilding, water, sanitation and livelihoods programming should be joined together across sectors and that agencies create a coordinated and efficient response supporting families to move from camp to community. As of December 2012, this goal had not been fully realized, but efforts were being made to take a more holistic approach.

This approach minimises the possibility of families "rebounding" back into camps. For example, "rebounding" could be caused by a lack of employment opportunities or extremely poor sanitation standards in the neighbourhoods to which people return.

## The 16/6 program

The 16/6 program, led by the Haitian government, targeted income regeneration in sixteen neighbourhoods coupled with the closure of six camps.

The programme focus on neighbourhoods meant that livelihoods grants were not allocated to families leaving the camps. Instead, a targeted livelihoods program was implemented, aimed at support-

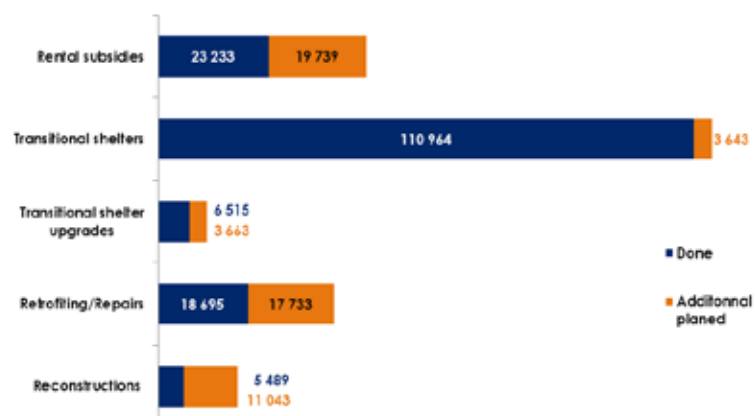
ing neighbourhood businesses to start-up or expand in order to offer those returning real income generation opportunities. The grants were available to anyone with a business idea and not restricted to those returning from camps.

The 16/6 programme relied heavily on the use of rental support cash grants to offer all families living in camps a realistic housing option.

## Rental support

Rental support projects differed between agencies but largely followed the same pattern:

- **Registration:** Emphasis on obtaining accurate beneficiary lists through other health or distribution activities, in collaboration with Haitian authorities
- **Protection and assistance:** Identification of vulnerable families who qualify for additional help
- **Beneficiary communication:** Facilitation of informed choices by beneficiaries using wide range of multi-media and face-to-face communications
- **Choosing a housing option:** Either T-Shelter, Yellow-house repair or rental support cash grant
- **Choosing a rental property:** Family chooses a property (independently assessed for safety) and negotiates the rent
- **Cash grant transferred:** The year's rental cost of US\$ 500 is transferred directly to the landlord and the family receives the money left over



Graph to show completed and planned housing solutions, November 2012  
Source : E-Shelter and CCCM Cluster

- **Camp closure:** Families are given a US\$ 25 cash grant to help in transporting their possessions to their new home
- **Surprise visit:** Agency awards a US\$ 125 bonus to families continuing to live in their chosen rental accommodation following a surprise visit made a few months later.

In addition to the US\$ 650 grant costs, the relocation of one household incurred an additional US\$ 350 in programming costs, making a total cost of the return of one household rise to around US\$ 1,000. Programming costs include beneficiary registration, communication of activities and protection activities such as providing two-years rental for vulnerable families.

In comparison, a T-shelter costs around US\$ 2,000 and a permanent house around US\$ 6,000.

### Concerns and safeguards

There have been vigorous discussions around the appropriateness of a rental support approach as a durable solution.

Some of the key concerns and corresponding safeguards were:

- **Cash distributions can act as a pull-factor to camps:** Announcements about rental support programs were made publicly only after accurate beneficiary lists were made. Negligible pull-factors were noted.
- **Rental properties may not meet minimum standards:** All rental properties were assessed for safety and sanitation issues. The emphasis was therefore on moving people out of the much worse conditions in camps.
- **Cash grants would inflate rents:** Rents were monitored by organisations using the prices agreed between families and landlords. Rents had not risen by the end of 2012.

### Indicators

The rental support approach shows the following early indicators of success:



The ruined National Palace surrounded by shelters before the Champ de Mars camp closure.

Photo: IOM



The ruined National Palace after the Champ de Mars camp closure.

Photo: IOM

- A survey of households who rented for one year achieved a 90 per cent response rate. Out of those households responding, all had found their own housing solutions and none had been forced to return to camps or informal settlements.
- Nearly 100 per cent of respondents reported that their situation is better or much better than it was in camps.
- 77 per cent of landlords used two-thirds of the rent money to improve the standards of the properties that they were renting out.

### Lessons

- Rental support could have been implemented earlier if it had been considered or picked up by other donors.
- Better links to livelihoods programmes could be made to further support families to continue to cover rental costs themselves in the future.
- The neighbourhood approach offers more chances for better coordination between sectors and organisations as well as between emergency and development actors.
- The approach has been popular with the general public, particularly as it emphasises beneficiaries' rights to actively choose where to live. Haitian politicians have been keen to promote and be involved in rental support programs.

## A.11 Haiti – 2010 – Earthquake

**Case Study:** **Keywords:** Returns, Unplanned camps, Urban neighbourhoods, T-shelter, Rental support, Housing repair, Cash, Training.

### Country:

Haiti

### Project location:

Port au Prince

### Disaster/ conflict:

Earthquake

### Disaster/ conflict date:

January 2010

### Total number of houses damaged or destroyed:

180,000

### Project target population:

1,208 families relocated from 5 IDP camps

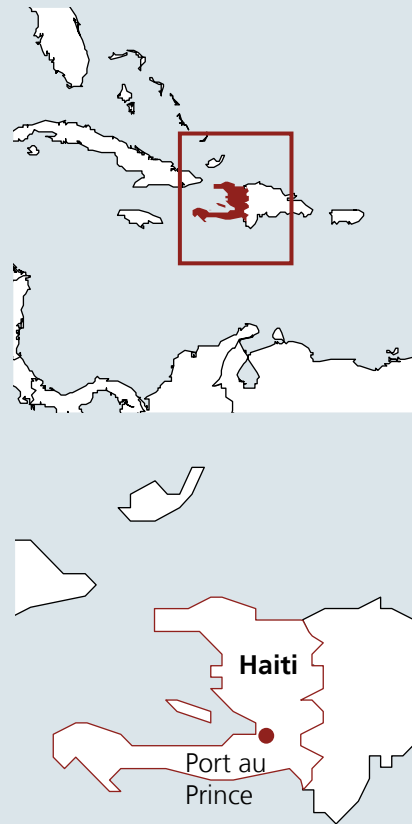
10,518 T-shelters built with services and support

### Occupancy rate on handover:

95 per cent

### Project cost per household:

Approximately US\$ 990 / family  
T- shelter programme costs were higher



### Project timeline



### Project description

The project offered several service packages, including rental assistance, transitional shelter construction and repairs to damaged homes, to incentivise families to leave camps and find suitable housing solutions. Central to this project were life skills training, household livelihood planning, temporary health insurance and psychosocial services. Over one year, the project closed all five camps that were targeted and helped more than 1,200 families resettle.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- ✓ The organisation fully achieved its target of closing five camps.
- ✓ Life-skills training was delivered in time to prepare families for their resettlement.
- ✓ Effective mechanisms to prevent fraud and to minimise inflation of rent prices.
- ✓ Participants were given a choice in their resettlement option.
- ✓ Good mechanisms for preventing programme abuse and to reduce the chance of housing price inflation.
- ✓ Use of mechanisms such as a hotline improved the organisations accountability.
- ✓ Strong support from local government.
- ✗ Some landlords canceled contracts due to the organisation making late payments.
- ✗ Personnel costs were comparatively high due to the large number of staff required to provide a personal

service to families.

- ✗ Early beneficiaries could have been better prepared for the risks of receiving cash.
- ✗ Staff safety was a serious concern due to the challenging sites chosen (site selection based on level of need rather than ease of implementation).
- ✗ With a large part of camp residents making a living from small commerce, there was an opportunity to work with IDPs before they relocated to improve their small commerce activities. This component was not added until the second phase of the project.
  - The rental subsidy lasted one year which gave the family time to save and plan for their future and recover from living in a camp for two years.
  - Despite early scepticism from many humanitarian staff, rental subsidy programmes did not noticeably lead to rental price inflation.



The project offered various options, including cash for rent, and provided additional support to help close camps. Photo: Jack Reybold (CRS)

## Background

(See the overview section [A.10, Haiti – 2010](#).)

The organisation created the Ann Ale Lakay project (meaning “Let’s go home” in Haitian Creole) in September 2011. The project aimed to support families remaining in camps to leave those camps. The project was a response to the fact that pull factors alone (the setting up of services in return neighbourhoods) were not sufficient to get families to relocate.

The project began as a 6-month, US\$ 600,000 pilot project to close three camps (460 families). It was extended for six more months to close an additional two camps.

The project was aligned with the Haitian government’s “16/6” programme. This programme aimed at closing six camps and rehabilitating sixteen return neighbourhoods.

## Selection

The five camps were chosen in coordination with other actors and had been identified as priority sites for closure. Some camp dwellers were “renting” tents from those who have moved out of the camp. The organisation ensured that these families, rather than the tent “owners”, received project services by conducting a “surprise census” to ensure that the genuine residents were registered. Beneficiaries were

given photo ID cards to prevent further disputes.

## Coordination

In line with government strategy, the project offered a standardized package of resettlement options. The goal was for all agencies engaging in camp closure projects to operate using a standard approach, as this prevented families from refusing the services of one organisation in the hope of receiving a better deal from another.

**“With the conflict resolution [training], I can find solutions to all my other problems”**

**Project beneficiary**

## Implementation

The project offered households three choices: one year’s rental subsidy, construction of a transitional shelter or support to repair a damaged house.

Of the 1,205 families supported, 98 per cent chose to take the one-year rental subsidy and 2 per cent chose to receive a t-shelter.

As few of the families living in the camps had owned a house before the earthquake, there were no housing repair services requested.

Most families moved to houses in neighbourhoods near the camps, while others moved to areas with more open spaces such as Carrefour and Croix des Bouquets.

The rental subsidy was worth US\$ 500 and if the family could negotiate a lower price with a landlord they were able to “keep the change”. For example, if they find a place for US\$ 400, they could keep US\$ 100. This helped prevent rent price inflation as project participants had an incentive to negotiate the best deal possible

Although the housing market in Haiti had not even begun to recover, it was flexible enough to absorb more people capable of paying rent.

Around 60 per cent of the people receiving rental subsidies found accommodation for less than US\$ 500. The median rental price was US\$ 375. In informal interviews, the majority of beneficiaries reported using the remaining funds from the rental subsidy to support their activities in small commerce, such as purchasing a small quantity of goods for resale.

There was a risk that people would be harassed and pressured to give the money to groups such as the police and the camp committee. As a result the money was transferred directly to the landlord



Life skills trainings were an essential component of the project, preparing residents for life outside the camps. Photos: Nathan Jayne



Camps were slowly turning into permanent shanty towns and many had poor sanitary conditions. Photos: Nathan Jayne

via a money transfer service. The remainder was transferred to the head of the household via a mobile phone base transfer system.

Some tent “owners” pressured the “renters” to share the leftover money from the rental. In later phases of the project, it was suggested that everyone should keep information to themselves on whether or not they received leftover money. It was suggested that renters immediately moved out of the camp, and that they should not share their address with the tent “owner”.

The project team had 19 people: an international programme manager, a project manager, two project officers, a monitoring and evaluation officer, two psychologists and twelve social workers.

### Accountability

The organisation took some specific steps to provide accountability to service recipients, including setting up:

- notice boards in all communities with information about the organisation and the project
- a free telephone hotline to deal with any questions
- regular community meetings – for information dissemination and feedback to the organisation
- contracts with Beneficiaries, outlining mutual responsibilities
- posters and trainings for all project staff on the

- organisation’s Code of Conduct
- field teams based within the camps
- an official, organisation-wide accountability framework.

### Protection

Protection issues were dealt with in different ways:

- Training included a family communication and conflict-management module, which focused on positive ways to solve problems (including disciplining children) without resorting to physical punishment.
- Social workers checked the safety and adequacy of all houses before families moved in. The families who chose to receive rental support were not allowed to choose houses marked as damaged, nor homes located in or along a ravine.
- The municipality signed all rental agreements to give the

contracts greater legal weight in favour of the family. The aim was that this would help to prevent evictions and reinforce the government’s leadership in this project.

### Trainings

Cash transfers were accompanied by a life-skills training module. According to participant interviews and focus groups, this training was crucial to the success of the project.

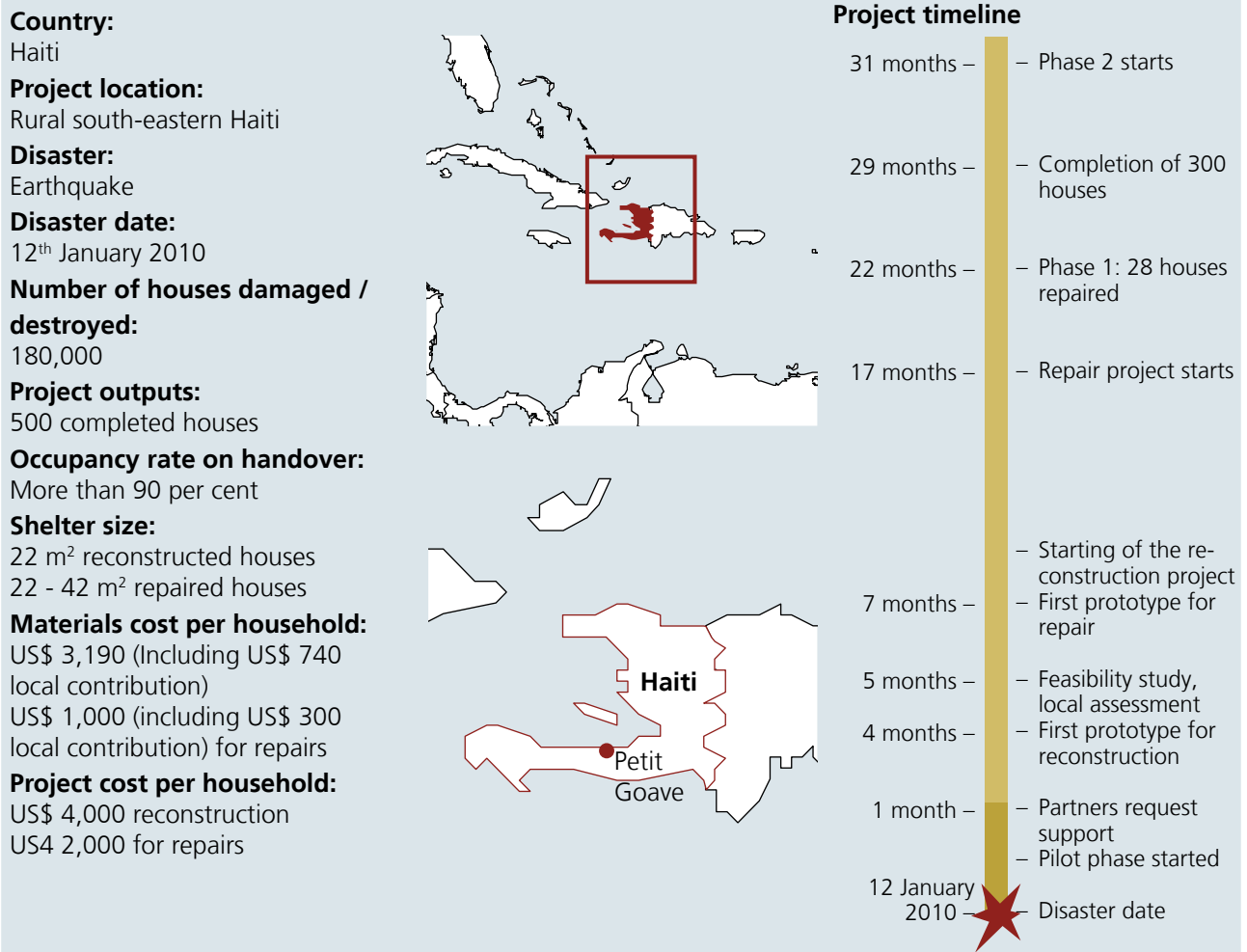
These six-module trainings prepared camp residents with life skills they would need for a successful transition. To help people develop a sense of responsibility for their future, families developed a “family plan”, a personal road map for resettlement and recovery. The plan not only helped families think about their goals for the future but also helped them plan for potential setbacks.

### Summary of Training modules

Module	Details
Family communication	Interpersonal skill development and conflict resolution
Personal responsibility and problem solving	Role within the country of Haiti, larger community, neighborhood and family
Prioritising needs, planning for the future	Helps families to identify needs and create a family plan.
Financial planning	Banks, savings, lending options, health and other insurance, negotiation
Small business management	Key concepts to improve the profitability of a small business

## A.12 Haiti – 2010 – Earthquake

**Case Study:** **Keywords:** Dispersed, Construction materials, Housing repair and retrofitting, Training, Guidelines and training materials .



### Project description

This project worked in rural areas of Haiti beginning with an in-depth assessment of local building practices. Builders were then trained in improvements to existing construction. This was followed by building assessment and repair construction programme resulting in the construction of 500 houses to date. The overall project goal was to improve local communities' resilience to hazards and to improve living conditions through housing improvements and construction-based economic stimulus.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- ✓ The project was designed to be replicable by Haitians without external support.
- ✓ A detailed assessment of cultural practices meant that social structures were enhanced instead of ignored by the project.
- ✓ Good ownership by local stakeholders.
- ✓ The project strengthened the capacities of existing local organisations and created jobs linked to local market.
- ✓ Construction skills training enhanced livelihoods opportunities and has improved the general safety of construction.
- ✗ Detailed assessment of local capacities meant that the construction phase started relatively late.
- ✗ Slow to demonstrate impacts. There was no significant impact in the first years of the project on households which were not provided with construction support.
- ✗ There is a low visibility of improvements as they are difficult to identify by a non-professional.
- ✗ It was difficult to persuade local partner organisations to repair more houses as they considered repaired houses to be less safe than new houses.
- ✗ Technical, management and administrative capacities of partner organisations were not properly assessed.
- This project is ongoing and has received some interest from other organisations following positive impacts on other projects and national strategies.
- The Ministry of Public Work, Transport and Communications gave its agreement for the use of the designs and technical recommendations for housing reconstruction in Haiti.



The project approach was adopted by other organisations. Left: shelter built by the project, Right: An adaptation by another organisation in an urban area of Port au Prince. Photo: Left: PADED / MISEREOR Right: CRAterre.

### Before the earthquake

(See the overview section A.10, Haiti – 2010)

In many of the rural communities in south-eastern Haiti incomes are low and there is no access to power or running water. The public infrastructure that existed was in a poor state of repair.

Most people in the region owned their own houses, grouped or dispersed over a large territory. Many houses were in a poor condition, and homeowners often lacked the knowledge and resources to maintain them. Regular damage was caused by cyclones.

### After the earthquake

In south-eastern Haiti, more than 50 per cent of rural houses were partially damaged by the earthquake. However, very few people were injured or killed by building collapse. As the affects of the earthquake were relatively less severe in rural areas compared to urban areas, there was a migration to rural areas immediately after the earthquake.

### Selection of beneficiaries

Project areas were selected according to level of damage and whether partner organisations had a presence before the earthquake.

Lists of affected people were drawn up by the local organisations immediately after the earthquake. A community meeting at the start of the project was attended by 200 people from all the project areas, and the following selection criteria were decided upon:

#### Compulsory:

- The house of the beneficiary was damaged by the earthquake.
- The beneficiary is the owner of the house plot.
- The beneficiary agrees to the rules of the project.

#### Preferred:

- The household hosts displaced families.
- The household head is female.
- The household head is a widow.
- The household includes many children and the adults have limited income-generating opportunities.
- Households are committed members of the local organisation (this was a condition of the partner organisations).
- The beneficiary is regarded as having a good behavioural record.

Land issues were resolved by the local partner organisation.

### Approach

Affected people were involved as much as possible, and five partner organisations implemented the project.

The following steps were followed:

- Local organisations defined and managed the reconstruction projects.
- Specific designs and technical solutions were developed depending upon the context.
- An external expert was embedded in each local organisation for one month to build up their training capacity.
- Building models were monitored and evaluated. If necessary, changes and adaptations were made.

### Implementation

Households were put into groups of 5 or 6 households. These groups had to work together to repair their houses.

Existing administrative staff from partner organisations worked on the project. A social mobiliser was hired to assess up to 50 households. Two engineers were hired per partner organisation.



House owners bore part of the responsibility for monitoring on-site construction. Photo: PADED / MISEREOR



There were two monitoring and evaluation missions each year, and the project was managed by a full time foreign expert based in Haiti.

During the house repairs, the inhabitants were given a guided tour of a damaged house to point out defects and reasons for failure. With this new knowledge, people were able to take on part of the responsibility for the quality of construction and repairs to their own houses.

A registration card was completed for each household. This included: identification details; reason for their selection; ownership of the land; access to water; proposed repairs; beneficiary contributions to the shelter and construction completion dates. An agreement was then signed with the householder.

Households selected a builder, paid for by the organisation, from a list of craftsman who had completed the training programme. Local site supervisors made technical checks on each building.

New houses were constructed in groups, while repairs were made on a house by house basis.

### Technical solutions

As many of the families were poor, technical shelter solutions had to ensure low maintenance costs.

The core technical criteria was that shelter failure would not lead to further injury and death.

Traditional local houses were built on wooden posts dug directly into the ground which were quickly weakened by rot. The new design added a proper foundation.

Masonry skills were very basic in the area and filling this knowledge gap was an important part of the construction training.

Cross-bracing was used in the walls. This reduced the risk of the wall collapsing in cyclones and earthquakes.



The project included repairs and had a strong social mobilisation component. Photo: PAPDA/ VEDEK / Secours Catholique.

To resist high winds, houses were built with a low profile, and households were encouraged to grow high vegetation surrounding the house to reduce potential impacts of cyclones.

Houses were built with four roof slopes to prevent there being a weaker gable end. In some areas, people preferred a traditional roofs design with two slopes as they could use the space under the roofs for storage.

### Training

The project involved three stages of training: a training of trainers, a training of artisans and a more basic training for house owners.

Participants were trained on the different ways hazards can affect buildings.

As part of the repairs programme, each household group was given training on water and sanitation issues and provided with a community water tank.

Trainings materials included printed illustrations of best practice in Créole.

Artisans were trained in groups of 20 for 2 to 4 weeks, during which they constructed a prototype house. Payment for participants to attend trainings depended upon the partner organisation. In some case, only food was provided, in other case, full salaries were paid.

### Logistics

Each partner organisation procured construction materials from local suppliers, though these suppliers imported part of their materials.

In some cases the partner organisations formed a procurement collective in order to negotiate better prices.

### Broader impacts

Most of the newly built houses in the project area that were not funded by this project had small improvements to bracing, stone masonry, and stone foundations. Although it is too early to really understand the broader impact of this project, it is hoped that it has led to a change in construction culture.

Other organisations have adopted this project approach and are conducting their own trainings in other areas.

### Materials list

Materials	Quantity
<b>Repairs (for 100 houses)</b>	
Corrugated iron sheet (34 gauge)	2,000
Cement Bag	1,500
Local wooden pole	1,500
Roofing nails	100 lbs
<b>Reconstruction (for 100 houses)</b>	
Corrugated iron sheet (34 gauge)	3,000
Cement Bag	1,100
Wooden rafter imported	4,600
Wooden plank imported	1,500
Roofing nails	700lbs

## A.13 Haiti – 2010 – Earthquake

**Case study:** **Keywords:** Returns, Unplanned camps, Urban neighbourhoods, Infrastructure, Community engagement

### Country:

Haiti

### Project location:

Port au Prince

### Disaster/ conflict:

Earthquake

### Disaster/ conflict date:

12 January 2010

### Number of houses damaged / destroyed:

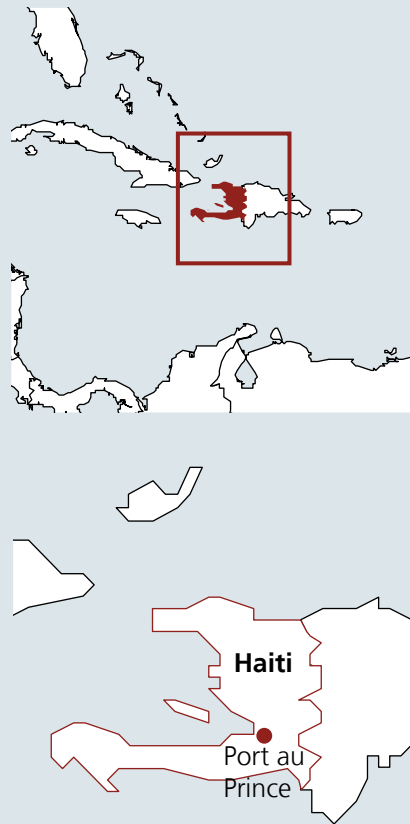
180,000

### Project target population:

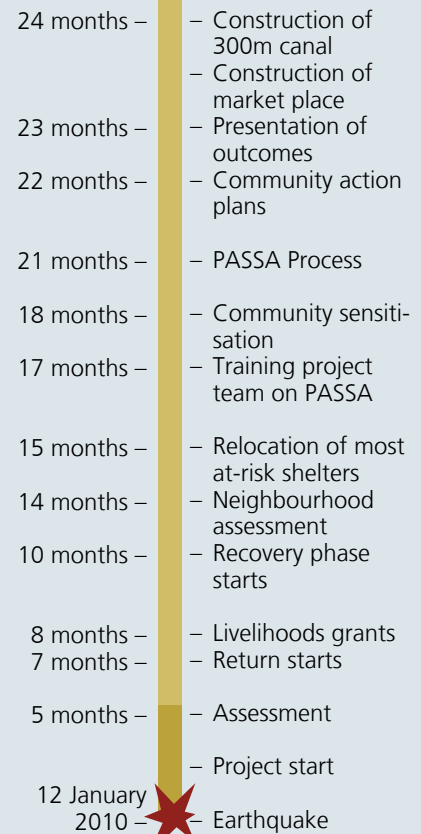
700 families

### Project outputs:

Increased awareness on safer construction,  
Cadastral map,  
Community Action Plan,  
300m of canals  
Community Market Place



### Project timeline



### Project description

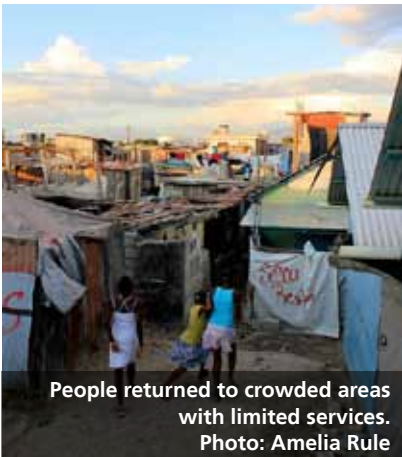
The organisation used the Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA) process to support the community make the transition to neighbourhood recovery. A range of participatory activities were carried out to decide both a comprehensive community plan for reconstruction, and a detailed list of related programme activities by the organisation. The identification of problems and solutions enabled the community to make plans for their own long-term recovery activities.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- ✓ A participatory planning approach promoted a high level of engagement by the community which led to a programme that responded to people's self-determined needs.
- ✓ The process empowered and gave a voice to members of the community who are not often heard.
- ✓ The plans that were developed cut across a number of different sectors which resulted in an integrated approach to settlement planning.
- ✓ The project built on relations with camp residents early in the response to support recovery.
- ✓ Enabled the community to directly act in their neighbourhood to improve their quality of life.
- ✗ PASSA was not used in the first year of the response leading to delays in the recovery planning.
- ✗ Participatory tools are only the first step for reconstruction. Additional training, planning and

technical skills are required for safer construction.

- ✗ More time was needed to explain that participatory tools only informed planning, and expectations for concrete results needed to be managed.
- PASSA was developed in rural contexts, the focus on 'shelter' needed to be adapted to 'habitat' to encompass the infrastructural and social aspects of living in an urban context.
- "PASSA" can be carried out simultaneously with other assessment techniques.
- GIS mapping was essential to monitor progress.
- Considerable time is required to plan the participatory process and analyse the information from workshops.
- Local terms needed to be used to ensure a full understanding of issues.
- Participatory tools developed for rural contexts can be adapted for urban contexts.



People returned to crowded areas with limited services.  
Photo: Amelia Rule



The organisation used a PASSA process: residents identified their own problems and the actions needed to address them.  
Photo: Mandy George

## Before the earthquake

After land was reclaimed from the marshes in the 1980s, an informal settlement developed in Delmas 19, Port au Prince. The houses were self-built structures made with poor-quality materials such as concrete blocks, corrugated iron and wood, and constructed with little knowledge of safe building techniques.

Infrastructure was poor with limited water and sanitation services, and the site was badly drained with limited access.

## After the earthquake

The earthquake destroyed half of the houses in the settlement and damaged half of the remaining structures. The main drainage canal was also damaged and blocked by rubble and debris.

Many water reservoirs belonging to individual households and commercial suppliers were damaged and pit latrines were inaccessible or broken. There were more than 100 families, with only one public latrine, living in makeshift shelters.

## Selection of beneficiaries

Following the earthquake the organisation provided emergency assistance in the targeted camp, and identified the clear need for joint livelihoods and shelter support.

In June 2010, the private landowner offered US\$ 200 to families to leave the site. Consequently two-thirds of the camp population relocated. The majority were from the adjoining neighbourhood, and the organisation followed them as they returned home to de-

molished houses, makeshift shelters and a lack of services.

The groups with the highest shelter vulnerability were renters and those who lived next to the canal on land that could be reclaimed by local authorities. Those facing possible eviction had a broad range of backgrounds in terms of education levels, livelihood strategies and home ownership.

Direct support was given to specific households based on vulnerability assessments developed with the community, while the whole community benefited from improvements to site drainage and public spaces such as the market.

## Implementation

The participatory process began with an explanation to participants of how a detailed planning process would result in the best solutions for reconstruction. The coordination of different sectoral projects, such as solving drainage issues before providing shelter solutions, achieved a joint approach to settlement rehabilitation.

The organisation used the "**Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness**" (or **PASSA** see - *PASSA, Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness, IFRC 2011*). PASSA was a relatively new, and formally structured approach to participation in shelter projects. It was based on a tool commonly used in WASH programming.

The PASSA process involves working with a group of 40 representative people. This group was selected by the community and did

not include the existing committee members. However, all activities were carried out in coordination with the committee members.

PASSA comprised eight participatory activities, which were carried out over two to three months:

1. historical profile and everyday problems
2. community mapping and visit
3. frequency and impact of hazards
4. safe and unsafe habitat
5. options for solutions
6. planning for change
7. problem box (future planning)
8. monitoring plan (future planning)

After each activity, the group shared their work with family and neighbours to encourage understanding of the process across the community.

At the end of the process, all the work, findings and plans were shared firstly with the committee members for feedback and input, and secondly presented to the whole community at an open day held in the community centre. The PASSA group members shared what they had done and received their participation certificates.

The main problems faced by the community were:

- weak infrastructure and flooding
- public health, water, sanitation and waste management issues
- safe access routes and personal safety
- unsafe shelter and settlement.



Both the market (left) and the path (right) were identified needs and both were built by residents with the support of the organisation. Photo: Amelia Rule

The identified solutions were to:

- construct the canal
- install solar street lighting
- construct shared latrines
- improve waste management
- improve housing and planning
- improve technical expertise through supervision and training.

### Community projects

Planning for change started with mapping the issues in the neighbourhood and understanding their relationships. This enabled the community to take into account issues, including gender, protection and security. Once the issues had been identified the groups discussed each problem in turn.

Working groups, called 'cells', took on each subject and carried out further work, before creating an overall Plan of Action.

A security cell positioned solar lighting while a community waste management group cleared waste.

Community contracts were written for people from the neighbourhood to build the canal. This employed over 300 people.

Materials and technical supervision were provided by the organisation and fifteen shared latrines were constructed by the families themselves.

Community construction teams that had received training before working on the canal also built the market.

All of these activities started with awareness raising and engage-

ment with relevant authorities. The projects also aimed to improve skills for the housing construction and repairs which would follow.

### Challenges with PASSA

The community had raised expectations about what PASSA could provide. They thought they would immediately receive the solutions they identified. The facilitators spent a lot of time explaining that the participatory approach would help to identify priorities and the solutions that the community themselves could achieve. It would also analyse where support was needed from the organisation and the local authorities.

The PASSA tool was developed in a rural context with a specific focus on 'Shelter'. As a result, some limitations were found using the tool in an urban context and within an integrated approach. The team adapted the activities to take into account the wider issues of infrastructure, water sanitation, urban issues such as spatial planning and security problems.

### DRR components

The area was suffering from poor drainage, poor waste management, poor housing construction and poor infrastructure. All these aspects made the population vulnerable to flooding, the effects of hurricanes, outbreaks of disease and earthquake risks.

PASSA raised understanding of how risks to health and safety were caused not only by natural disasters but also by the everyday practices of the community.

Poor waste management and lack of upkeep of the canal lead to serious blockages and subsequent flooding of low-lying houses with waste and sewage.

To mitigate against these problems the PASSA process helped participants to identify simple actions that they could conduct. These included improved construction and environmental management, and how to prepare, plan and respond to a natural disaster.

### Technical solutions

When provided with the materials and technical support necessary to carry out the reconstruction the PASSA process had ensured that the community was highly motivated.

At the end of 2012, Haiti had no official building codes and material standards were not enforced. The general level of understanding by architects and builders of seismic construction techniques was limited. A great deal of time was spent with engineers, seismic specialists and construction professionals to ensure that the shelter solutions were safe and that the community understood the reason behind the application of new techniques.

This knowledge was transferred outside of the participatory planning sessions, delivered instead through on-site practical training sessions.



Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA) is a participatory method of disaster risk reduction (DRR) related to shelter safety. It is a variation of Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST), which has been used by many Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies in water and sanitation programmes since the late 1990s.

The aim of PASSA is to develop local capacity to reduce shelter related risk by raising awareness and developing skills in joint analysis, learning and decision-making at community level.

PASSA is a process, facilitated by volunteers, that guides community groups (called PASSA groups in this manual) through eight participatory activities which enable the participants to do the following progressively:

- Develop their awareness of shelter safety issues in their community
- Identify hazards and vulnerabilities that create risk related to shelter
- Recognize and analyse causes of shelter vulnerability
- Identify and prioritize potential strategies to improve shelter safety
- Make a plan to put those shelter safety strategies into place, based on local capacities
- Monitor and evaluate progress.

Source *PASSA, Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness, IFRC 2011*



**“PASSA helped us to see that many problems in our area are not complicated to fix, they are small things that can have a large negative impact – such as the rubbish blocking the canal and causing flooding.”**

PASSA participant  
Delmas 19

**Defining the community:**

**In this complex urban context, the community was defined by: housing typologies, level of poverty, physical boundaries of roads (making the area a pedestrian community), a representative committee and the familial and neighbourly networks that were already in place.**

Drainage was identified as a key safety issue. 300m of drains were cleared and covered to make a path.  
Photos: Amelia Rule