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SUCCESS STORY

Haiti: Helping Communities Rebuild

Through Catholic Relief Services, USAID is providing shelter to families displaced by the January 2010 earthquake.



Photo: Niek de Goeij, CRS

Severe damage in the Nerette neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, where USAID provided transitional shelters to approximately 215 families.



Photo: Niek de Goeij, CRS

In Haiti, USAID's partners have constructed transitional shelters for approximately 144,000 people, providing safe, temporary housing while families and communities rebuild more permanently.

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On January 12, 2010, an earthquake decimated entire urban neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince as concrete structures buckled and slid downhill, demolishing everything in their path. In just 60 seconds, approximately 200,000 buildings were damaged or destroyed, displacing an estimated 2 million people throughout Haiti's West Department.

The neighborhood of Nerette in metropolitan Port-au-Prince suffered vast damage, with hundreds of houses reduced to rubble or damaged beyond repair. Six months after the earthquake, Nerette remained inaccessible by road, preventing organized, large-scale rubble removal. Approximately 45 of Nerette's families were living together in a nearby camp. Familiar with the work of USAID grantee Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the families invited CRS to survey their neighborhood.

With USAID support, CRS facilitated rubble removal and assembled transitional shelters (t-shelters) for the families in Nerette. Using manual rubble-crushers, residents converted rubble into usable building material that they used or sold for income. In a show of solidarity, the original 45 families waited until all of their shelters were complete before moving back and helped construct shelters for people injured in the earthquake.

In total, USAID supported CRS to provide t-shelters for 8,500 families—or approximately 42,500 individuals—affected by the earthquake. Through USAID, CRS also constructed nearly 525 latrines and 400 bathing facilities, trained more than 7,800 people in child protection issues, and reunited nearly 600 children with their families.

Since the earthquake, USAID has supported more than 30 relief agencies to remove rubble and construct t-shelters in neighborhoods, as well as to protect vulnerable children, provide health services, and improve water and sanitation conditions in Port-au-Prince's numerous spontaneous settlements.