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**HAITI**

## SNAPSHOT

# Supporting Culture and Arts in St. Marc

**Center in gateway city provides creative and educational space.**



Artists perform at Le Troquet in St. Marc.

***“This is our challenge: to use the performing arts to engage the intellectual curiosity of our young people.”***

***—Patrick Adé  
manager of  
Le Troquet***

**Telling Our Story**  
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**August 2011** – On a warm Thursday evening, a group of young people are gathered at Le Troquet, a new cultural center in the heart of downtown St. Marc. It is Social Night, a weekly event where local young people get together to play board games, dance, and watch movies, and all eyes are on the big screen to watch “Les Chemins de la Mémoire” (The Paths of Memory), a historical documentary about daily life in Haiti during the first half of the 20th century.

St. Marc is a growing coastal city two hours north of Haiti’s capital, Port-au-Prince. The January 2010 earthquake led to mass migrations of homeless people from the capital region, and St. Marc has absorbed significant numbers of these internal migrants seeking a fresh start.

Looking for ways to engage longtime residents and new arrivals in positive pursuits, St. Marc community leaders have sought to develop new social and cultural activities. Responding to the need, USAID worked with the Centre d’Initiative pour le Développement de la Commune de Saint-Marc (CiDEC) to rehabilitate Le Troquet.

USAID provided funds for construction and audio equipment and also assisted with efforts to publicize the center in the community, helping it gain popularity, particularly among young people.

Since opening in April 2011, Le Troquet has received high marks as a venue for artistic performances and educational programs. Friday nights are reserved for lectures given by nationally recognized writers, historians, and scholars. Saturdays feature talent shows and artistic performances.

In addition to providing a stage for performances by high-profile artists and variety shows that showcase the talents of local youths, the center hosts graduation ceremonies and receptions, uses that further enhance its reputation as a community gathering space.

The project is part of a larger USAID effort to support culture and the arts in St. Marc, as a vibrant social scene will encourage economic growth in the region, which will help relieve pressure on Haiti’s overburdened capital city.

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