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HAITI

SNAPSHOT

Resettling Families in Port-au-Prince

USAID pilot program provides housing options to displaced families.



Young people play soccer on Place St. Pierre, a public square that was recently home to hundreds of displaced people.

By providing economic, social, and community development assistance, USAID is working to ensure that displaced Haitians successfully transition from temporary shelters to longer-term situations.

Telling Our Story

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Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

November 2011 – Residents of Pétion-ville joined Haitian President Michel Martelly on November 11 to celebrate the successful resettlement of hundreds of Port-au-Prince’s internally displaced families. The event marked the completion of a USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) pilot project that since September has provided resettlement assistance to more than 1,300 people who were living in temporary shelters in Place St. Pierre and Place Boyer, two of the city’s public squares.

Following the January 2010 earthquake, thousands of Haitians took up temporary residence in public spaces throughout Port-au-Prince. Parks and squares that once served as neighborhood gathering sites were transformed into overpopulated encampments.

President Martelly assumed office last spring vowing to immediately help Port-au-Prince’s displaced families. Launching the 16-6 Initiative this summer, Martelly pledged to rebuild 16 neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince and resettle residents living in six camps, including the two Pétion-ville squares.

Responding to this urgent need, USAID/OTI launched the pilot program in Pétion-ville, which was identified by Martelly as a key neighborhood. Working closely with the mayor of Pétion-ville and the International Organization for Migration, USAID/OTI designed a program that offered families three relocation options: housing repairs to structurally sound, existing homes; installation of temporary shelters; or one-year rental vouchers.

The program experienced incredible success: within three months, all of the families had safely moved out of the squares and into longer-term accommodations.

The psychological impact of the transformation cannot be underscored. From a park once covered by tents to one where young people may once again play soccer illustrates the importance of restoring these public spaces. As one Pétion-ville resident said, “It was like losing something really important and then suddenly finding it again. It makes me very happy.”

Relocating the thousands of internally displaced families remains a paramount concern in Haiti. Building on the success of the pilot program, USAID/OTI is coordinating with the U.S. Embassy and international partners to bring this initiative to scale. By safely resettling families, USAID/OTI aims to restore normalcy and rebuild communities.

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