



## SUCCESS STORY

### Community Rallies Around Cleanup Effort in Tabarre

#### Local government supports residents with cleanup.



Photo by USAID/Haiti

Vice Mayor Jean Bernard Chassagne encourages workers during a visit to a site in Tabarre.



Cash-for-work crews have cleared mountains of debris from the streets of Tabarre.

**May 2010** – In January, Moise Sergo was enrolled in school in Tabarre, a municipality in Port-au-Prince, working to finish his education and improve his future. However, when the earthquake struck, his school, and his educational hopes, collapsed.

In the weeks following the earthquake, the 23-year-old sought work but had little success. His desperation for employment eventually led him to the Tabarre Town Hall, where, to his surprise, he was offered work on a project to clean up the community.

Municipal officials in Tabarre have been very engaged in cleanup efforts funded by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). Vice Mayor Jean Bernard Chassagne visits work sites daily, distributing water to workers and handing out replacements for broken tools. "Contrary to traditional donations of goods, programs like cash-for-work give beneficiaries back their dignity," Chassagne said. "This project is very different from any other I've seen; it is conducted with discipline and with constant follow-up. Payroll is always on the due date...operations are flawless," he said.

Workers in OTI's cash-for-work programs are employed on projects in the communities where they live, which helps ensure that they bring a sense of ownership to the cleanup activities. Since February, the cash-for-work project in Tabarre has provided 973 people with short-term employment at 33 work sites. Currently, 322 men and women are removing rubble from 12 sites in the municipality.

Workers in Tabarre are motivated by the hands-on engagement of their leaders and the collaborative nature of the project. "My team and I are encouraged by the project's success," said Chassagne. "One site had an overload of debris and USAID automatically agreed to add an extra team on the job. It is not easy to find a partner donor organization that welcomes such an open collaboration," he continued.

Since it is not possible to provide a job to everyone that wants one, OTI rotates workers through the program as projects are initiated and completed. This strategy provides opportunities to as many beneficiaries as possible and spreads income across the community. Some workers have reported that they have started small businesses with money they were able to set aside from cash-for-work employment.

And although the project Moise is working on will end soon, he is ready for new opportunities that will arise as Haiti starts to rebuild. He's also waiting for the day when he can return to school.