



SUCCESS STORY

Preparing Turgeau for the Rains

Cash-for-work crews remove rubble to prevent flooding.



Photo by USAID/Haiti

Workers clear a path for storm water in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Turgeau.

May 2010 – The annual rainy season is upon Haiti. The rains, which last from May to July, have started to come down every day, even though many Haitians remain camped out on city streets in makeshift shelters after losing their homes in the earthquake.

But the discomforts and inconveniences of sleeping on the street pale when compared with the dangers that heavy rains pose. Rubble from collapsed buildings is blocking key canals and storm water routes in many of Port-au-Prince's neighborhoods, and culverts full of debris can easily overflow into the streets where so many have taken refuge.

In Turgeau, however, residents are sleeping a bit better. Anticipating the rains, USAID fielded 10 cash-for-work crews to clear key drainage routes in the hilly neighborhood southeast of the city. More than 425 residents participated in the project, swinging pickaxes, shoveling rubble, and hauling wheelbarrows full of debris out of neighborhood culverts. And after weeks of hard work, just as the rains have started, the crews have finished clearing the major waterways, allowing rainwater to flow harmlessly around and away from the streets.

Alphonse Marseille leads a team that helped clean the drainage ditches, as well as other public spaces. Managing 25 men and women, Marseille prioritized efforts around his area, ensuring that his crew followed safe work practices and had plenty of water to drink. He communicated the team's progress to USAID on a daily basis.

"Everyone in the community is very happy that we are working together to remove the rubble in our community," Marseille said as he inspected a cleared waterway. "They see that the team is working hard to help them clean our community."

Cash-for-work sites are selected in close coordination with local leaders familiar with the priorities and urgent needs of the community. The initiative focuses on clearing rubble that obstructs waterways, main thoroughfares, and public spaces.

Turgeau was one of the hardest hit neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince. Thanks to the work of the crews, the immediate danger of flooding has been mitigated, and residents have one less concern.