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‘Carrefour Can Be Beautiful’

The municipality is challenging residents’ attitudes about trash disposal.



Trash and debris overwhelm a street corner in Carrefour.



Students can walk near the curb instead of in the street following the USAID-supported cleanup campaign.

Photos: USAID/OTI

February 2011 – “Carrefour is not a trash can – Carrefour can be beautiful,” so translates *Kafou pa poubèl, Kafou ka bèl* from the rhythmic Creole.

The slogan was adopted and broadcast through a variety of means—radio, vehicle-mounted intercoms, and print advertising—as an initial step to raise citizen awareness of a project to clean up the commune of 800,000.

Even before the January 2010 earthquake, Carrefour had issues with trash: pickup was unreliable for various reasons and residents were lackadaisical about proper disposal. After the quake, the problem increased, and Styrofoam containers and packaging handed out with food and other aid only added to the piles of trash littering walkways and streets.

USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives worked with the municipality of Carrefour as it attacked its solid waste disposal problem, which was posing health risks, hindering traffic and endangering pedestrians, and impeding commerce. The program supported the municipality’s efforts not only to clean the streets and establish workable operational practices but also to change citizen attitudes and trash disposal habits.

The Carrefour mayor’s office coordinated efforts with SMCRS, the national refuse collection agency, and the grant provided SMCRS with assistance to repair and place 80 medium-sized trash bins and six large dumpsters in and around Carrefour.

The cleanup started in May, amid much local media attention, and provided short-term employment to more than 600 people, who gathered daily in bright orange shirts to fill the dumpsters. Neighborhood committees also got behind the effort, raising money to buy trash bags and enlisting volunteers in the cleanup.

Toto from the Bizoton neighborhood said he was proud of the progress being made to clean up his community.

The municipality has enacted fines for littering and improper trash disposal and tightened enforcement for the worst offenders, showing that the government intends to ensure that Carrefour remains a beautiful place to live.

Telling Our Story

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