

SUCCESS STORY

Meeting the Nutritional Needs of Babies Left Without Mothers

USAID-funded mobile health clinics provide nutrition and breastfeeding support



Photo: USAID

Eight-month-old Witslayenne lost her mother in the January 12 earthquake in Haiti. She was 2 months old at the time, too young to remember what happened that day.

Rather than continuing to grow during the six months following the disaster, Witslayenne lost quite a bit of weight. Noticing the change, a neighbor in the Carrefour area of greater Port-au-Prince told her father, Etienne-Michelet, about the USAID-funded Save the Children health clinic in Gaston Margron camp. The clinic, which provides specialized treatment to help combat Haiti's high malnutrition and infant mortality rates, is critical for babies like Witslayenne who have lost their mothers.

Etienne-Michelet went to the clinic to get help for his daughter, who was admitted into the ready-to-use infant formula program because breastfeeding to nourish and keep her healthy was not an option.

“Every eight days I bring her for weighing,” explains Etienne-Michelet. After she is weighed to ensure she is growing at a healthy rate, the clinic provides him with the next eight days’ worth of formula for Witslayenne.

The USAID-funded mobile clinic in Gaston Margron provides malnourished children with nutritional supplements, such as the fortified peanut paste Plumpy’Nut or, when necessary, ready-to-use infant formula. Clinic staff then counsel caregivers on infant nutrition and encourage weekly visits so that the child’s progress can be tracked.

Having completed her weekly weigh-in, Witslayenne’s growth is on track with the program. Etienne-Michelet smiles, “I’m very lucky. Not everyone has a child.”

As of July 6, USAID had provided nearly \$62 million in health and nutrition assistance to those affected by the January 12 earthquake.