Community Resettlement and Recovery Program in Haiti

On January 12, 2010, Haiti endured its strongest earthquake in 200 years. Homes, schools and businesses crumbled, government services came to a standstill and security deteriorated. The Haitian government reported that more than 200,000 people lost their lives. Survivors were left traumatized.

Internally displaced people spontaneously formed some 1,280 camps, which became home to a total of 255,500 households. Although the camp population decreased from 1.5 million people to 580,000 people by the end of September 2011, the remaining camp residents are considered to be the most vulnerable. In addition, hundreds of thousands live in unsafe houses, tents or rudimentary shelters in devastated neighborhoods.

Catholic Relief Services immediately responded to the earthquake with lifesaving food, water, shelter and sanitation. In June 2010, CRS started the next phase of its response by transitioning from providing emergency relief to helping individuals return to their neighborhoods. This 30-month, US$38 million Community Resettlement and Recovery Program (CRRP) will help at least 25,000 families to resettle in communities with integrated shelter, water and sanitation, infrastructure, protection and livelihoods solutions.

CRS is partnering with churches, clinics, schools and other community organizations to employ a holistic push and pull approach that simultaneously phases out services in camps and provides incentives for families to return to their neighborhoods. Most relief and development organizations in Haiti each focus on one or two development issues. CRS aims to provide a complete package of services to address the population’s interwoven needs. All programs include strong monitoring and evaluation components. CRS will gradually hand over implementation responsibilities to its local partners.

**SHELTER AND HOUSING**

The Haitian Ministry of Public Works, Transportation and Communications (MTPTC) estimates that as many as 80,000 buildings collapsed or were damaged beyond repair during the earthquake. The Community Resettlement and Recovery Program will...
remove debris and demolish unsalvageable “red” houses, repair “yellow” houses, build transitional shelters and repair community infrastructure.

With support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), CRS collaborated with DAI, Chemonics and CHF International to demolish red houses and build transitional shelters. CRS hopes to receive support for demolition and rubble removal, which will help people in camps resettle in neighborhoods. CRS envisions demolishing as many as 120 red buildings in fiscal year 2012 and up to 30 red buildings in fiscal year 2013.

There are at least 10,869 damaged but repairable yellow houses in the CRRP target areas. Repairs and retrofits are technically very complex given substandard local construction techniques and materials. CRS will pilot the repair or retrofit of up to 100 small houses for the most vulnerable families. Nongovernmental organizations or contractors will lead the implementation process. If CRS develops a safe and successful program model, it will save as many as 500 yellow houses.

As of November 30, 2011, CRS has completed building 6,650 transitional shelters, which are expected to last a minimum of three to five years. Although they are a temporary solution, transitional shelters are strong enough to withstand a category 1 hurricane, and many people continue to make additions and improvements to extend their shelters’ lifespans. CRS aims to complete a total of 6,710 transitional shelters by the end of December 2011 plus an additional 3,850 shelters that will be completed by partners.

CRS plans to invest in the rehabilitation or construction of key community buildings and infrastructure. CRRP area teams will work with the community to identify which infrastructure initiatives would significantly improve public safety, access to services or overall quality of life. CRS has already rehabilitated an important portion of road in Delmas 62 and constructed a transitional pharmacy and clinic in Christ Roi. As part of CRRP, CRS anticipates completing as many as 20 community infrastructure projects per year during fiscal years 2011 and 2012.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

According to the United Nations Children’s Fund, only 30 percent of the Haitian population uses adequate sanitation facilities, and only 54 percent drink water from treated sources. A study conducted by CRS in April 2011 revealed that fewer than a third of households in CRS communities actually use safe hygiene practices, such as proper hand washing, solid waste disposal and fecal matter disposal. CRS intends to work with at least 20 community groups and community-based organizations to develop and implement hygiene and sanitation action plans, reaching at least 72,000 individuals through education, infrastructure and partnership initiatives.

CRS will train student groups and teachers to be active voices for hygiene and sanitation promotion. The program will reach as many as 80 schools. CRS will provide hygiene and sanitation education through role-playing, games, puppet shows and an animated film that No Strings International is developing in Creole. University partners and the Haitian government will work with CRS to integrate environmental health education in school curricula.

CRS will conduct participatory hygiene and sanitation information sessions at markets, clinics, churches and other meeting areas. The agency will develop an action plan with community groups for outreach and monitoring. CRS will provide support for community action plans and will conduct household visits to beneficiaries of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure facilities. Participants will work closely with university and government partners to improve information, education and communication tools.

Some estimates suggest that Port-au-Prince produced approximately 1,400–1,600 metric tons of solid waste every day in 2005, although the exact amount is unknown. Trash often piles up for weeks. It attracts rodents, contaminates water and spreads diseases, including cholera. CRS plans to gradually and sustainably improve solid waste management through multiple activities. A six-month emergency solid...
waste collection period will lead to partnerships with communities and action plans for solid-waste management. Sanitation committees will sensitize communities and help establish waste collection points. The committees will work with Le Service Metropolitan de Collecte de Residues (SMCRS) to bridge the gap between community needs and government resources. CRS expects to install a geographic information system in waste-collection vehicles. CRS will also work with SMCRS to design a handover implementation plan for sustainable solid waste management.

As of September 2011, CRS has built or rehabilitated 383 latrines in Port-au-Prince. The agency will continue to use local labor, materials and transportation to create household sanitation facilities for a total of 4,500 latrines. Team members will pilot an ecosanitation project to construct 100 household-level compost latrines and set up a compost treatment facility, which will convert human waste into fertilizer that can be sold to improve livelihoods.

CRS has already installed 2,636 rainwater catchment systems for transitional shelters in Haiti. CRRP will equip 6,710 transitional shelters with catchment systems and install or rehabilitate 30 communal rainwater catchment systems. Community members will receive training in catchment operation, chlorination and maintenance. CRS will also work with municipal governments to explore possibilities such as extending water lines and setting up additional water kiosks.

PROTECTION

CRS will continue to expand its protection activities in Haiti. Five psychologists, with the assistance of the area teams, will identify vulnerable people in need of psychosocial care. Initially, these psychologists will work with vulnerable people in orphanages and the community to identify problems. Staff will either work to resolve the issues or refer individuals to existing services.

CRS would like to give special attention to adolescent girls through a project called Espas Pa Mwen (which is Haitian Creole for Space for Me or Room for Me) or through a similar initiative. As part of Espas Pa Mwen, staff would encourage the most marginalized girls, who are typically between 10 and 19 years old, to join girls’ groups that use social networks, regular meetings and reliable mentors to build social, financial, health and security assets. Consistent interactions with an adult mentor and a strong social circle of support have been linked with less sexual harassment and reduced violence. Mentors would be trained to conduct participatory sessions on hygiene and sanitation, reproductive health, financial literacy, leadership and other life skills. This type of experience helps adolescents to gain better understandings of risks in their communities.

LIVELIHOODS

More than 10,800 Haitians have benefited from CRS’ emergency cash-for-work programs. CRS is now rolling out a variety of market-based initiatives for medium-term development, including business certification, rubble recycling, savings and lending communities, microinsurance and entrepreneur development.

The new certification system will require that local contractors complete a course on business management, work safety and contracting standards to qualify as a preferred service provider. These “certified” businesses may then bid on small contracts for demolition, community infrastructure and reconstruction work. Those contractors that fail to adhere to the standards will lose their certifications. CRS anticipates training and certifying 150 construction entrepreneurs.

The Rubble to Reconstruction (R2R) project gives manual rubble crushers to community members who become rubble recycling entrepreneurs. Participants collect and crush debris to produce sand and gravel, which are useful and salable building materials. CRS will provide block-making machines to turn sand and gravel into bricks. R2R entrepreneurs will need to earn certification in order to participate.

To recapitalize businesses and encourage the adoption of good business practices, CRS initiated a pilot project that...
supported 300 micro and small enterprises. Participants who completed a series of five courses on business and financial management could then qualify for a US$500 cash grant for start-up capital. More than 60 percent of the participants were women. By requiring participants to open bank accounts and accept microinsurance, the project has established links between entrepreneurs and the formal financial sector. CRS plans to expand the project and help entrepreneurs scale up their projects.

Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILCs) help families to create assets and increase incomes while promoting financial discipline. Each group consists of approximately 25 adults, usually women, who save and lend small amounts of cash. Members decide on the most important rules of participation, including how much should be saved per month, the rate of interest on loans and penalties for noncompliance. CRS will help establish 150 SILCs in Port-au-Prince by providing training and support.

CRS will give six months of microinsurance to all CRRP entrepreneurs and their immediate family members through a partnership with Développement des Activités de Santé en Haïti. This will ensure that beneficiaries can use their cash and assets for their businesses rather than for unexpected health bills. The program will also expose participants to the benefits of health insurance so that they will be more likely to enroll in microinsurance for a nominal fee after CRS’ subsidies expire. As many as 11,000 entrepreneurs and family members will benefit from this program.

Urbanization and lack of educational opportunities have led many young people to spend their time in the streets. CRS will collaborate with government-accredited vocational training institutions to help youth gain employment skills. The program will provide complementary instruction courses, facilitate market assessments and provide postgraduation employment opportunities. CRS hopes to work directly with as many as 750 young people.

Haiti has no shortage of humanitarian actors, but tremendous gaps in services persist in Port-au-Prince. CRS is one of the few organizations capable of implementing a holistic approach in each target community. Through integrated shelter and housing construction and repairs, WASH improvements, protection projects and livelihood development, the Community Resettlement and Recovery Program will help families and individuals rebuild in clean and safe neighborhoods.

For more information, please contact CRSHaiti.Info@crs.org.