

Cash Transfers—Rental Subsidies

Project title: *Ann Ale Lakay* (“Let’s Go Home” in Haitian Creole)

Location: Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Date of disaster: January 2010

Type of disaster: 7.0 Richter magnitude scale earthquake with massive numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Type of response: Urban

Program budget: \$1.2 million (Catholic Relief Services private funds for Haiti earthquake response)

Project period: October 2011 to present (camp closure generally takes two months)

Accomplishments

- All 474 families from three targeted IDP camps resettled to individual housing (rentals and transitional shelter).
- 100% camp closure occurred within six months in all areas that CRS targeted.
- The three camps targeted by CRS were completely and permanently closed by the project.
- Program was fully integrated with government of Haiti strategy.

THE INNOVATION

As of February 2012, there were approximately 490,545 IDPs (120,791 households) remaining in 660 IDP camps. Of those remaining in camps, 78% were renters before the earthquake, and so offering transitional shelters is not effective because the renters have no place to build their T-shelters. *Ann Ale Lakay* directly addresses this gap in the emergency response by offering a cash/market-based solution (rental support for one year) to those families who were renters before the earthquake, combined with life skills training, household livelihood planning and psychosocial services. *Ann Ale Lakay* also focuses on mainstreaming protection.

DELIVERY MECHANISM

- Three options are offered: rental accommodation, T-shelters or repair and retrofitting of yellow houses.
- CRS technical team constructs T-shelters for those choosing that option.
- Payment is transferred directly to landlord via a money transfer service.
- Local mayor’s office signs all rental agreements.
- Any balance for rental subsidy (HTG 20,000) after payment of rent is transferred to IDP household head—PIN system.
- CRS provides customized support services before IDPs leave the camps.
- Hotline is established for program beneficiaries to report problems.

CHALLENGES

- Sometimes rental payments went through too slowly so landlords changed their minds and refused to rent to a beneficiary.
- Some tent “owners” pressured the “renters” to share the leftover money from the rental with them.

REFLECTIONS

- Program participants emphasized that they considered the complementary activities to be vital to the project.
- Rental mechanisms were effective in preventing program abuse.
- The majority of renters reported using any funds remaining from the rental subsidy to support their micro-enterprise activities (*ti komès*).
- Humanitarian actors should capitalize on opportunities to build IDP knowledge and skills, including in shelter disaster risk reduction (DRR), before IDPs relocate from camps (CRS is prioritizing shelter DRR and small business management training in Phase II).
- Program is ongoing; CRS needs to monitor sustainability and future outcomes for those assisted.



The camp before closure. Photo by CRS staff.



Moving day to their new rental properties. Photo by CRS staff.



Renters moving into their new home. Photo by Lauren Merrill.