

HAITI

Community Transformation Towards a Resilient Future



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Country: Haiti

Project location: Grand Ravine, Martissant, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Disaster: Haiti Earthquake 2010

Disaster date: January 12, 2010

Project timescale: February 1, 2013 – December 21, 2017

Target Population: 20,000 residents of Grand Ravine

Project Budget (USD): \$3,706,767.99

Donor: European Union

Partners: Concern Worldwide, Architecture for Humanity (AfH), MSAADA Architects



What did CRS do?

In partnership with Concern Worldwide, Architecture for Humanity (AfH) and MSAADA Architects, CRS delivered programming for creating decent and secure living conditions for residents of Grand Ravine, Port-au-Prince, Haiti through comprehensive strategies for the improvement of infrastructure, access to secure housing, provision of basic services, revitalization of the economy and reinforcement of owner driven solutions. Working with local partners and engaging with community groups and families, CRS succeeded in delivering a development plan that was operable and implementable, and corresponded to the visions and needs of the population while adhering to the policies and orientations set forth by governing officials. As well, CRS led the construction of permanent housing, slope rehabilitation, erosion control, improved drainage, roads, paths, parks, a community center and other infrastructure facilities.

Background

The magnitude 7 earthquake that struck Haiti on 12th January 2010 devastated large areas of the capital city of Port-Au-Prince and surrounding communes. Around 222,570 people were killed and a further 300,572 injured. Displacement peaked at close to 2.3 million people, including 302,000 children. At least 188,383 houses were badly damaged and 105,000 were destroyed by the earthquake. In slums, such as Grand Ravine, Martissant, the impact of the earthquake was aggravated by decades of political instability, chronic underinvestment in infrastructures and poor enforcement of urban regulation. Urban development had largely been unplanned with little consideration for access and services, with many parts of the city occupying land that was steep and unstable.

Problem Statement, including core questions

As other poor neighbourhoods of Port-au-Prince, the development of Grand Ravine did not follow any urban development plan. Grand Ravine is the result of the intense rural exodus experienced in Haiti over the past 30 years. Due to the lack of financial resources, families are living in unsafe houses illegally built on the hills of Martissant. These challenges were exacerbated when the 20,000 residents of Grand Ravine, who found themselves homeless following the 2010 earthquake, moved into any available lands and started to rebuild their houses on steep hills and ravines at risk of flash flooding, landslides and other disasters.

An assessment carried out by Concern Worldwide in Grand Ravine in 2012 revealed the following core issues that needed to be addressed:

1. Lack of an urban plan

Grand Ravine is crossed by multiple ravines regularly causing flooding and landslides. The development of Grand Ravine was done in an anarchic way without urban planning. The houses were built in staircases with no space between them for roads, waste collection or water points, or any other infrastructures.

2. Access to income

Over the last 30 years, the Haitian economy has been deteriorating drastically. The situation worsened following the 2010 earthquake. Grand Ravine, a poor and overcrowded neighborhood, affected by the violence and the lack of basic infrastructures, offers none of the conditions required for economic development. The limited local capacities and lack of access to credit, as well as the informal economy further limit the ability of local businesses to create income-generating opportunities.

3. Lack of infrastructures, public utilities and public service providers

Roads: Grand Ravine has only 60 meters of roads built in 2011. Vehicle circulation inside the neighborhood is impossible. Access can only be done by foot using unsafe corridors, the ravines and/or narrow and steep staircases. The lack of access leads to various problems: insecurity, it limits medical evacuation, as well as waste collection and economic development.

Water and sanitation: Grand Ravine does not have any legal access to the public water system. In order to access drinking water, the community is connected to the water distribution system through illegal taps controlled by the local gangs. There is no waste collection service. Households use the local ravines to dump the waste, blocking the flow of water during the rainy season and resulting in flooding the neighborhoods downstream. Open defecation is a widespread practice. According to Concern Worldwide's assessment, only one house in fifteen is equipped with a latrine. In such a situation, the population is continually exposed to the risks of infectious diseases.

Electricity: The transformer serving Grand Ravine has been broken for years. Access to electricity is done through illegal connections to the public system. These practices have increased the risk of fires and electrocution. As for the water, illegal access to the electricity

system is controlled by the local armed groups and constitutes a source of revenue for these gangs. The lack of electricity, and especially street lighting, increases insecurity and hinders the development of the local economy.

4. Low local capacities

According to the Government, 36% of Grand Ravine's houses were marked as 'red' (structurally not safe) after the earthquake. This is due to the inappropriate positioning of the houses, but also to the poor quality of the constructions. This poor quality may be explained by poverty, but also by the limited number of local skilled labor trained on relevant building technics.

Project Process

In 2012, a consortium led by Concern Worldwide secured funds to work with the Grand Ravine community to plan the development of the neighborhood. The primary aims of the project were to build local capacity, support the development of economic activities, build and strengthen relations between the population and public bodies providing basic services. It aimed to do this by addressing core issues identified in the assessment.

Within the consortium, CRS took the lead on the following activities:

1. Collaborated with Concern and AfH to undertake a **participatory diagnostic analysis of the geospatial and social aspects** of the community to contribute to the comprehensive masterplan developed by AfH and a local planning expert.
2. **Managed the construction elements of the neighborhood development plan**, which included improved housing, access to basic services and disaster risk reduction through improved infrastructure and environmental protection projects.
3. **The assessment of skills and capacities of local businesses**, trades and organizations to facilitate the redevelopment activities, and provided training to increase capacity where needed.
4. **Recruited and appointed local leaders and workers** to undertake the construction and infrastructure work.
5. **Assisted Concern in establishing a community platform**, and trained members in socio-economic and technical diagnosis, interpretation and planning.
6. **Facilitated dialogue between these newly-organized community groups, local government and civil service bodies** so that they could advocate for the extension of public services into the neighborhood.
7. **Facilitated the land certificate title transfer to 48 affected families by coordinating with the DGI** (General Direction for Taxes in Haiti) under the account of the Ministry of Economic and Finance, prior to the HH beneficiaries transferred to the newly completed permanent home.

Infrastructure Improvements and Developments

- In total, 659.5m of gully were completed and gabion stabilized to ensure slope protection, stabilize water run-off and protect the community against flash flooding.

- A total of 315m buried water pipes are installed for future taping to the National Water network (DINEPA) along primary thoroughfares, and electricity supplies were upgraded with a partnership between CRS and the national electricity regulator (ED'H).
- A new concrete bridge was erected to facilitate the connection and communication between the quartier where circulating is completely inexistent in rainy period. This Project is the completion the FdP#3 according to the urbanized plan of HFH.
- Approximately 313.5meters of main paths and thoroughfares were stabilized and blacktop sealed to improve access into the community especially during the rainy season.
- The Community in Grand-Ravine, EU, CRS and the Municipality in Port-au-Prince inaugurated a Mini park to improve the development of youth in the area with the capacity of 500 people along with a 72.00 square meter multipurpose Community Center. This facility is equipped by Concern for the Community Platform as an attractive center for new investment in the neighborhood of Martissant.
- A formal marketplace was constructed with capacity for up to 400 merchant stalls, vastly improving the conditions for the regular vendors of the neighborhood. A Merchant's Association was established and trained in order to maintain it.
- Six families and a school received assistance to construct latrines.



Permanent housing and community infrastructure along main road.
Photo: Gesner DeVilmar / CRS

Homes and Latrines

243 families were assisted to construct their homes using the qualified workers associations, and supervised by CRS. The homes constructed were of a design that was new to the residents, but was agreed following consultation. They were typically rowhouses with apartments on the ground and first floors.

Training and mobilization

161(120 by CRS and 41 by Concern) skilled construction workers received training to increase their capacity in the trades related to the industry such as bricklaying, gabion laying, scrapers, plumbing, so that they could provide services to the construction activities of the project, and to improve their future employment prospects. They were also organized into an Association of Skilled Workers.

193 Youths and heads of families received training in entrepreneurship and micro-enterprise.

A drinking water management association was formed to ensure that the drinking water infrastructure was maintained and to represent the community to the DINEPA. 24 members of the association were trained in management and representation.

A community platform was formed to represent the community with authorities and public offices, to address the concerns of the residents and to try to manage the conflicts between gangs. 35 members of the platform received training in conflict management, mediation, negotiation and survey techniques.

A cash for work program employed 4516 men and women from the poorest families to provide labor for the construction and infrastructure activities. It was intended that this would provide a route for them to enter the job market. Laborers were rotated regularly to reach as many families as possible. By the end of the project it was found that majority of the people who had participated in the training program had found new employment opportunities following their engagement with the cash for work project.

Beneficiary and Participant Selection

The Grand Ravine neighborhood development plan provided a vision for 30 years. As part of the 30 years plan, it detailed out 19 community identified priority projects. The top priority project was chosen to be implemented due to its overall impact on all residents. As one of the most densely populated areas of the community, it was also a grand canal that was key to the natural watershed of the city. Thus, this project provided key synergies to address disaster risk reduction, environmental protection and safe housing. As also the zone of the main entrance to the neighborhood, other softer components were able to be addressed such as markets, social cohesion and neighborhood identity. Direct beneficiaries were those families in the project zone. However, the impact of the project identified all 20,000 inhabitants as indirect beneficiaries.

With the contribution of the of the Community Platform, Concern launched a survey in the community to collect the data of qualified and non-qualified workers in Grand-Ravine. An Excel list was submitted to CRS. As the total of workers increased bi-weekly, CRS proceeded



Permanent housing and community infrastructure along main road.
Photo: Gesner DeVilmar / CRS

to a Cross section selection where the columns were filtered by Name, Sex, Locality (34 in total), Sectors of representative (11 in total), number of years of experience for the qualified workers and their skills. A new list was submitted 3 days prior to the workers being enrolled, and the list was publicly posted in the Community Hall, on community message boards and in schools throughout the community. Each Friday before the new workers started, CRS organized a community meeting to train the workers on the methodology of new construction, the criteria of selection, the rate of payment, the payment process, the computation process and the mechanism for being paid.



Permanent housing and community infrastructure along main road.
Photo: Gesner DeVilmar / CRS

Taking an area-based approach it was intended that all the estimated 20,000 residents of Grand Ravine would benefit from the project through one or more of the physical outputs or training or employment opportunities, and the impact of the improved connectedness and services in the area.

Learnings & Recommendations

- Working in partnership will bring diverse talents and opportunity to grow.
- Positive effects of the gang violence and how to continue through it and work towards community.
- Working with Contractor led approach for the heavy infrastructure works is not always the best option.
- Addressing poverty and conflict through development projects are not easy requiring longer time than expected.
- Proper construction planning and contingency plan due to insecurity condition should be factored in the overall construction timeline.

- Through construction and improvement of physical community infrastructure, CRS and partners created a resilient community. It should be factored in the overall construction timeline.
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Success Story

Macuze Simon, 36, was born in Grand Ravine.

She says, "I have stayed in Grand Ravine despite the continuous conflict in the area, but more than 100 families have left. With the arrival of CRS/CW, everyone was talking about reconstruction, development but I was skeptical because it was not the first time that NGOs gave false hope to the community. After several months of setting up, CRS started the ravine stabilizing project to protect some houses and drain the ravines. Immediately afterwards, work began on the Mini Parc, the Community office, Raoul Bridge and the junction of Raoul to Jasmin."

"Today, I feel proud to live in a brand-new home with modern comfort and to be able to enjoy other important CRS achievements. My aunt, my three sisters and I are so happy that we can live together alongside neighbors we have known for more than 30 years."

"Since the beginning of the reconstruction of the houses, we had agreed - my neighbors and me - to choose apartments in the same building to live with people we know. Of the 12 buildings built by CRS in this project, I think mine is the best because, it was rebuilt exactly in the place as our old home built by my father more than 45 years ago."

"Today it is a new stage in my life as a mother and manager of a small shop. As I go along my pathway, I no longer see a dirty and unhygienic ditch but rather a road, a well-drained canal, lighting and beautiful houses. We are now living decently thanks to the project."

"Thanks to you for this beautiful project, thank you for your many efforts, thanks mainly because CRS did not let us down during the 4 years despite the conflicts and troubles that you have been confronted with!"



Macuze Simon.
Photo: CRS

Where can I find out more?

[Rebuilding Community in Grand Ravine \(Video\)](#)

[EU Delegation in Haiti Report \(french\)](#)

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