

HAITI

Cash-Based Interventions in Shelter: The Vendor Effect



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Country: Haiti
Project location: Coteaux, Sud Department
Disaster: Hurricane Matthew
Disaster date: 4th October 2016
Project timescale: December 5, 2016 – June 3, 2018
Target Population: 2290 families (approx. 11,450 people) whose homes were severely damaged
Project Budget (USD): \$3,100,000
Cost per household (USD): voucher value between \$150 and \$750, dependent on level of support
Donor(s): USAID/OFDA



 **2,290** families provided with cash and vouchers

What did CRS do?

- Trained 153 local technicians on improved construction practices (Build Back Safer).
- Executed \$340,000 worth of construction service contracts by local technicians.
- Provided cash and vouchers to help 2,002 families purchase complementary construction materials from local vendors, thereby supporting existing market mechanisms and boosting the ability of families to reconstruct.
- Helped 288 vulnerable families who were unable to return home, with cash for rent.

Background

On October 4th, 2016, Hurricane Matthew struck Haiti, destroying homes, infrastructure, farmland and businesses, and displacing families. An estimated 2.1 million people were affected, with 1.4 million in need of immediate humanitarian assistance. Though effects of the hurricane were felt throughout Haiti, the departments along the southern peninsula were hardest hit due to the combination of proximity to the center of the hurricane and pre-existing vulnerabilities. The Government of Haiti (GoH) estimated that 120,000 homes were either severely damaged or destroyed in the South and the Grand’Anse departments.



Philomena Pierre Louis, 61, shows a home destroyed by Hurricane Matthew strong winds and flooding in the area of Dame-Marie, Grand’Anse, Haiti. Photo: Oscar Leiva / CRS

Problem Statement, including core questions

CRS conducted an Emergency Market Mapping Analysis (EMMA) on the corrugated iron sheeting (CGI) typically used for roofing in the South and the Grand’Anse department. This analysis demonstrated that the local markets were functioning and most of the materials required to repair damaged homes were available from local vendors, though the locally available CGI did not meet technical specifications. However, most storm-affected families were already extremely poor and had lost their homes and livelihoods in the disaster; they could not afford materials. When they started to rebuild, many families were using unsafe building practices that failed to take Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) measures into account.

Project Process

The Salvage to Shelter Build Back Safer (BBS) program started with an assessment of all 4,265 households in the commune of Coteaux. This baseline survey provided the essential shelter and social vulnerability data as well as settlement information, such as access to basic services and the identification of high-risk zones. Initial assessments showed that more homes in Coteaux were severely damaged or completely destroyed than initially believed. To address this, CRS revised the monetary assistance for targeted households based on the severity of the damage and according to their category:

Category	A	B	C
% participants	83%	11%	6%
Damage level	Severe to total destruction	Significant, requires retrofitting	Only roof damage
Cash value given	USD \$550 in materials vouchers	USD \$300 in materials vouchers	USD \$150
Materials given	18 CGI sheets	18 CGI sheets	18 CGI sheets

CRS provided families with electronic vouchers to access materials from local vendors using the Cash and Asset Transform Platform, or CAT. CAT is a beneficiary data management and programming software customized for CRS. To receive the electronic vouchers, families attended a full-day orientation on the use of the vouchers and on DRR. CRS facilitated these orientations with the Comité Communal de Protection Civil (CCPC), a local structure dedicated emergency preparedness and response, as well as community leaders who were critical to maintaining transparent, equitable beneficiary selection and assistance.

The CRS market-based shelter response relied on local material vendors to be “points of sale” for construction materials. They procured, stocked and secured materials, and both sold and distributed materials to the families. This strategy proved cost-effective as CRS did not need to provide logistics support for materials. Having materials stocked by local businesses and distributed over a longer period reduced the security risk that large, concentrated distributions of stocks of materials can present. Additionally, vendors indicated they had increased confidence in investing in stock and were able to restart their businesses more quickly, even expanding over the life of the project. However, the local market did not have CGI sheets of the quality necessary, so CRS procured and distributed quality CGI sheets in-kind. Participating vendors agreed to store and distribute the CGI sheets to the families. These transactions were tracked via the electronic voucher provided to each beneficiary.

CRS contracted and trained 153 local technicians to help families rebuild, executing 3,000 construction service contracts worth a total of \$340,000 USD. CRS supported families and local technicians to BBS through advice and technical support in safe construction by qualified BBS engineers.

CRS undertook several supporting activities alongside the cash program:

- **Demonstration Training & Coaching:** For families receiving support, CRS organized demonstrations on how to make repairs and build back better by utilizing practices that maximized impact and supported disaster risk reduction. The trainings were co-facilitated by community members and laborers who had participated in preliminary trainings and feedback groups, which helped to foster peer-to-peer learning.
- **Dissemination of information flyers:** CRS prepared five different flyers with information on the roles of families, vendors, technicians, comite de suivi and CRS. CRS also created a BBS flyer on best building practices. These were distributed during orientations as well as shared throughout the targeted communities.

- **Monitoring of construction practices:** CRS engineers monitored the work and supported families with technical assistance on their repairs and rebuilding, ensuring that their homes were built according to practices taught at the training.
- **Mentoring and Technical Advice:** CRS engineers provided mentoring and advice to the local technicians and, for this purpose, organized themselves into two teams: training engineers and technical engineers. Each local technician was assigned to a CRS training engineer who followed the progress of the technician and provided ongoing coaching. The training engineers monitored and tracked their service contracts.

Each household was assigned to a CRS technical engineer who was responsible for coordinating and monitoring construction. Technicians were responsible for endorsing voucher payments based on progress and, in turn, were paid upon successful completion of a project. Of the 2,002 families engaged in the program, 1,909 completed the BBS repairs and/or rebuilding to the technical satisfaction of the supervising engineer.

Upon the completion of the initial shelter assistance, CRS identified several families who were not able to find the means to enclose their transitional shelter. Thus, OFDA engaged CRS to provide secondary assistance to 1,000 families to obtain enclosure walls at a minimum.

The Phase 2 BBS material voucher was valued at \$400 USD. This amount provided access to materials prioritized in the order of building:

1. Foundation walls
2. Enclosure walls
3. Floors for a 21m2 transitional shelter

Families succeeded in providing on average \$200 USD of in-kind contribution of materials, and coordinated site preparations themselves. Family material contributions were in the form of sand, rocks and gravel. Once material contributions were validated by project staff, electronic material vouchers were activated, and families received a paid local technician to facilitate the construction.

In response to identified gaps in assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in the South Department, CRS also implemented a small rental subsidy solution to 288 of these most vulnerable IDP families across four communes. The Cash for Rent program assisted the targeted families with a one-year rental subsidy, transportation monetary assistance and a cash bonus upon verification of the family relocation four weeks after receiving the rental subsidy.

Session	# of Families	CRS Voucher Assistance	CRS Material Investment Total	Community Investment per Family	Community Investment Total
Phase 1 - A	1,600	\$550	\$880,000	\$700	\$1,120,000
Phase 1 - B	200	\$300	\$60,000	\$300	\$60,000
Phase 1 - C	200	\$150	\$30,000	\$150	\$30,000
Phase 2	1,000	\$400	\$400,000	\$200	\$200,000
TOTAL			\$1,370,000		\$1,410,000

Different assistance packages per phase.
Credit: CRS



A Technician constructs a demonstration house frame.
Photo: CRS

Participant Selection

CRS based the beneficiary selection for the Salvage to Shelter project on the level of damage to homes as well as social vulnerability criteria. Selection was done on a rolling basis and led by a locally formed “Comité de Suivi” (monitoring committee). To ensure the appropriate application of the selection criteria, CRS verified the selection of each cohort.

CRS selected the vendors using the results from the vendor survey conducted during the EMMA. The contracted vendors received training on how to use the CAT system and were issued smart phones equipped with the platform in order to register transactions. They also had with printers to make receipts. In the first round, CRS made cash advances available to vendors that were subsequently subtracted from their first payment. This ensured that vendors were able to restock in advance of the distribution of vouchers.

Learnings & Recommendations

The project demonstrated the importance of a rigorous monitoring system that supports adaptive management. Because of this, the project was able to integrate flexibility in its design (and advocate for it with the donor) because of high quality and detailed information and action planning.

Additionally, a rigorous approach to technical support and evaluation supported the effective delivery of this flexible approach, and ensured the intended outcome for families with their facilitation in the reconstruction, and support for the local market recovery.

An objective of market-based programming is that interventions will not only ‘do no harm’ to the market but facilitate its recovery and strengthen it. The Salvage to Shelter project injected \$1.37 million dollars into the local economy in the form of vouchers. In addition to helping families access necessary materials and technical support to rebuild, there were measurable positive effects on the participating vendors. The construction material vendors reported :

- An improved ability to resume and recover their business activities after the storm
- Greater integration in their market chains, including adding new suppliers and increasing access to credit with existing suppliers
- An intention to invest in Information, Communications and Technology solutions for inventory management and accounting systems
- Investment of profits in risk mitigation, including “hurricane-proofing” storerooms and the exploring of insurance options

As all reconstruction was closely monitored and project staff had detailed information on the material purchases of participating households, CRS was also able to monetize participant contributions to reconstruction. The table below shows an estimate based on the average per assistance category.



A family stand by their newly completed home, constructed with the help of the CRS Salvage to Shelter project.
Photo: CRS



Local established vendors have pre-existing capacity to deal with bulk item storage.
Photo: CRS

Acknowledgements

Laura Phelan, Program Manager, Emergency MEAL & Markets, CRS

Beth Carroll, CRS

Ariel Sadural, CRS Technical Advisor

Cover photo: Oscar Leiva / CRS