

OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (USAID/OFDA)

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA



Participants of the USAID/OFDA-funded carpenter training program show off their graduation certificates. *Photo courtesy of IOM*

USAID/OFDA Continues to Support Haitian Communities to “Build Back Safer”

Fifteen months after Hurricane Matthew struck southwestern Haiti, affecting nearly 2.1 million people, USAID/OFDA continues to provide shelter assistance to Haitian families whose homes were damaged or destroyed during the storm. Immediately after the Category 4 hurricane made landfall, USAID/OFDA supported the provision of emergency shelter assistance to nearly 300,000 people, including the distribution of more than 9,000 rolls of reinforced plastic sheeting. In the months following the storm, USAID/OFDA began to implement the second phase of the shelter assistance, focused on helping acutely affected families to build back safer.

With nearly \$6.7 million in USAID/OFDA funding, four humanitarian organizations in Haiti—Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and J/P Haitian Relief Organization (J/P HRO)—continue to implement the Build Back Safer (BBS) shelter assistance program, which provides durable shelter solutions for vulnerable households in Haiti’s Grand’Anse and Sud departments.

Through the BBS program, USAID/OFDA partners have provided technical assistance and durable shelter materials to more than 10,000 households in hurricane-affected communities, benefiting an estimated 50,000 people. Additionally, USAID/

OFDA partners have trained local carpenters, builders, and community members to ensure the inclusion of technically sound seismic and cyclone-resistant techniques—such as wind bracing—adapted to houses’ structures. The program has also strengthened household disaster risk reduction capacity by providing training and instructional materials to build community awareness of disaster preparedness and mitigation practices.

Continued on page 2



Participants received hands-on training that taught techniques they could immediately implement in their communities. *Photo courtesy of IOM.*

Carpentry Training Supports Women's Empowerment in Haiti

After Hurricane Matthew struck Haiti in October 2016, more than 35,000 households in Grand'Anse and Sud departments were forced to reside in temporary shelters. USAID/OFDA and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) provided funding to the shelter and non-food items working group to train teams of local construction workers in safer construction techniques for rebuilding homes damaged and destroyed by the storm. The working group, led by the Government of Haiti's Department of Housing and Public Buildings (UCLBP) and IOM, has coordinated hurricane response and recovery efforts related to shelter assistance and the provision of non-food items, focusing on empowering Haitian women to participate in disaster response activities.

The training consisted of a 15-day theoretical and practical skills course aimed at reinforcing the technical skills of carpenters from various communes of Grand'Anse. IOM selected carpenters from lists proposed by participating town halls and partner organizations.

On December 11, 2017, IOM held a ceremony in Jérémie to award certificates to the latest group of 100 carpenters, including 71 women, who graduated from the program on safer construction techniques. As of late December 2017, the program had trained more than 400 construction professionals.

Joel Fontilus of UCLBP commented that "Public Companies for the Promotion of Social Housing (EPPLS) will hire 20 women carpenters among those certified today for its home reconstruction projects in the Department of Grand'Anse, concrete evidence of the commitment of local authorities to support the integration of women in the construction work sector."



In December 2017, IOM trainers graduated 100 carpenters in Jérémie. Photo courtesy of IOM

Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean



Tel: +(506) 2290-4133
Email: ofdalac@ofda.gov
Internet: www.usaid.gov



DECEMBER 2016

OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (USAID/OFDA)
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA



Ernessa Duarte and her husband, beneficiaries of the fixing garden project, show off their tomato harvest. Photo courtesy of ACIDI/VOCA

USAID/OFDA Regional Publications Now Online

USAID/OFDA publications for the LAC region are now available to the public on the USAID website. Visitors have access to brochures, monthly newsletters, and program summaries in both English and Spanish.

"We have been working for more than a year to get these publications online so that our partners in the region, and the general public, can access these important documents," commented USAID/OFDA Information Officer Auriana Koutnik.

[Visit the Webpage Here](#)



Haiti Build Back Safer continued from page 1

USAID/OFDA supports IOM—Haiti's shelter working group lead—to implement two BBS-related programs. One program features a sensitization campaign to promote construction best practices and the benefits of safe building techniques for Haitian populations. The second program comprises BBS training activities for Haitian construction workers to enhance home building and repair skills, using state-of-the-art building techniques.

The sensitization campaign has focused on using humor, music, and popular culture to disseminate critical messages to influence the public to use safe construction techniques when rebuilding or repairing houses. In addition to TV and radio advertisements touting the benefits of proper construction techniques, the campaign has used social media and text messages to disseminate the information, and printed educational posters and calendars for public distribution.

The BBS training workshops have provided several hundred Haitian builders, carpenters, and community members with knowledge about the latest building techniques, many of which were developed specifically for the Haitian context. The workshops included instruction on tying down roof structures for resilience to hurricane-force winds and how to properly brace walls to enhance seismic resistance during an earthquake. All of the trainings featured hands-on participation so that trainees received practical experience using the construction methods and are prepared to use the skills they learned in their communities.

USAID/OFDA remains committed to helping vulnerable Haitian families build back safer homes.