



## SUCCESS STORY

# Creating a Brighter Future for Cité Soleil

**By opening local branch, microfinance firm brings hope to a neighborhood**



Through a microfinance loan, Numa Adner, here staffing his boutique in the heart of Cité Soleil, was able to reopen two businesses that he was forced to abandon due to instability in the neighborhood.

***After USAID-supported microfinance firm Sogesol opened a branch in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Cité Soleil, client Numa Adner said he “hopes that Sogesol’s presence in Cité Soleil will contribute to the return of true peace in the cité, its businesses and its families.”***

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Sogesol (Société Générale de Solidarité, French for “General Society of Solidarity”) inaugurated a full-service microfinance branch in the heart of Cité Soleil, one of Port-au-Prince’s most volatile neighborhoods that has served as the base for much of Haiti’s destabilizing gang activity. Years of violence and crime have driven many businesses out of the neighborhood. With support from USAID, Sogesol is reigniting economic activity in this highly vulnerable zone.

Sogesol began serving this zone with one loan officer, Siméon Melky, who lives in Cité Soleil. The high demand and early positive results convinced Sogesol to open a full branch. With support from USAID, Sogesol became the first financial institution to return to this once economically active area. With increasing stability in Cité Soleil, Sogesol and USAID hope that increased financial services will encourage businesses to reemerge, bringing with them jobs and an expanded range of goods and services to residents.

Numa Adner, one of Sogesol’s clients in Cité Soleil, personifies the potential for economic regeneration in the zone. In 1980, he owned a boutique, restaurant, and wholesale outlet where he sold carbonated beverages. Due to the instability in more recent years, Numa abandoned these businesses. Upon learning of Sogesol’s presence in Cité Soleil, he applied for a loan to restart these activities. Numa said that he was unsure at first, “but the fact that Mr. Melky is a son of the *cité*” put him at ease.

Upon receiving the loan, he reopened the boutique and beverage outlet. Numa plans to apply for a second, larger loan to expand these businesses and possibly to reopen his restaurant.

Numa hopes to see other microfinance institutions enter Cité Soleil. He believes that, with sufficient economic activity in Cité Soleil, its port could reopen - a port that once received cargo from other Haitian cities and abroad. He said that he “hopes that Sogesol’s presence in Cité Soleil will contribute to the return of true peace in the *cité*, its businesses and its families.”