

FROM RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT: MOVING FORWARD IN HAITI



Marie Dophine Derosier, 65, is a participant in CARE's Village Savings & Loan Association (VSLA) program in Léogâne, which is helping her to support her 14 grandchildren and eight children. She says the VSLA program has allowed her sheet metal business to thrive. Her home was also destroyed in the 2010 earthquake.

Findings from the CARE Learning Tour to Haiti

August 20-22, 2012



The delegation (from left to right) at the CARE Women's Solidarity Group in Léogâne: Alice James, LaVerne Saulny, Jean-Michel Vigreux (Country Director, CARE Haiti), Viviana Bovo, Cesar Gonzalez, David Ray, Tolly Love, Andrew Newton, Terriah Proechel, Stephen Blount, Meghan Taira and Anastasia Moloney.

Introduction

In August, a group of U.S. Congressional staff members and a media representative traveled on a CARE Learning Tour to Haiti to focus on progress – as well as the economic and social challenges that remain – more than two and a half years after a 7.0 earthquake devastated the country. The delegation explored firsthand how CARE, the Haitian and U.S. governments and partners are leading innovative and sustainable approaches toward reducing poverty, including programs that focus on empowering women and girls. Haiti has long been a target for development efforts because of chronic and systemic obstacles in the areas of health care, education, economic development and governance.

Over two days, the diverse delegation from Florida, South Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana and New York, examined how U.S. foreign assistance programs and recovery efforts centered on economic security, health, agriculture and gender have helped Haitian families rebuild and strengthen their communities. Some memorable site visits included a creative neighborhood improvement program in the slums of Carrefour; a farming and agriculture site in the rolling hills of rural Kenscoff; and a micro-savings project in Léogâne, the epicenter of the 2010 earthquake. The delegation also consulted with high-level government officials and Haiti's First Lady Sophia Martelly.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world. Almost 80 percent of the Haitian population lives on less than \$2 a day. In January 2010, much of the country was leveled by a massive earthquake, which only exacerbated the country's previous political and socioeconomic challenges. Along with the horrific loss of life, the tremor destroyed countless homes, leaving more than 1.5 million Haitians homeless. Since the earthquake, the U.S. government has pledged more than \$3 billion in humanitarian and recovery assistance. Today, Haiti continues to transition from the relief phase to longer-term development.

Participants:

- **Dr. Stephen Blount**
Associate Director for Global Health Development, The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
- **Viviana Bovo**
Director of Special Projects, Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL)
- **Cesar Gonzalez**
Chief of Staff, Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL-21)
- **Alice James**
Scheduler & Press Secretary, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC)
- **Tolly Love**
Vice President of Individual Fundraising & Marketing, CARE
- **Anastasia Moloney**
Latin America Correspondent, Reuters
- **Andrew Newton**
Legislative Assistant, Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL)
- **Terriah Proechel**
Field Coordinator, CARE
- **David Ray**
Head of Policy & Advocacy, CARE
- **LaVerne Saulny**
Policy Advisor, Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA)
- **Meghan Taira**
Legislative Assistant, Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY)

Haiti Overview

Haiti is a country of 9.8 million people in the western portion of the island of Hispanola in the Caribbean. It covers 17,000 square miles, about the size of Maryland. The country declared independence from France in 1804 after a successful slave rebellion. Since then, Haiti has been plagued with corrupt governance and social instability. Politics in modern Haiti have traditionally been controlled by the military or by strongmen in league with the country's socioeconomic elite. Yet there is cause for hope. In May 2011, President Michael Martelly was elected into office, an event that represented the first peaceful handover of power to a president from the opposition.

Haiti now lies near the bottom of the Human Development Index – ranking 145 out of 169 countries. Up to 40 percent of Haitians lack access to basic health care due to physician and sanitation shortages. Life expectancy is currently about 62 years, and nearly one in five children are underweight. Infectious diseases remain a serious problem in a population; the HIV rate is at about 1.9 percent. Maternal and reproductive health care in Haiti also remains a challenge. However, some progress has been made with maternal mortality. The rate has declined steadily since 1990, from 670 deaths per 100,000 live births to 300 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2008.

While Haiti has made notable strides, it still faces challenges in improving the lives of 80 percent of the population living in extreme poverty. Haiti is a free market economy that is able to take advantage of low labor costs and tariff free access to the U.S. for many of its exports, but poverty, corruption and lack of access to education for much of the population remain barriers to economic development and growth. The government relies on formal international economic assistance for fiscal sustainability, with over half of its annual budget coming from outside

sources. Remittances from abroad constitute an estimated 20 percent of its overall gross domestic product (GDP). Haiti's economy suffered a massive disruption after the 2010 earthquake inflicted billions of dollars in damage and economic loss. As of 2011, over 40 percent of the population is unemployed. Major industries include agriculture, textiles, sugar refining and flour milling.

In January 2010, a 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti with the epicenter just outside of the capital, Port-au-Prince. It is estimated that the earthquake was the worst in the region over the last 200 years, causing over 300,000 deaths and uprooting more than 1.5 million people from their homes. While some improvements following the earthquake have been slow, the country is making steady progress at resettling people displaced by the earthquake. Haiti has also successfully conducted major health campaigns to combat cholera outbreaks in partnership with NGOs and technical experts from foreign governments. Haiti is poised to move forward from disaster relief efforts to longer-term programs aimed at combating chronic development problems, including food security, inequities in service delivery, education and health.



► Day One: Setting the Stage in Haiti

The Learning Tour delegation began its visit to Haiti with an informative briefing, from various stakeholders representing the Haitian government and the international community. This group included Jean-Michel Vigueux, CARE's Country Director in Haiti; Dr. Jean Patrick Alfred, Director of Haiti's Ministry of Health; François Desruisseaux, Camp Management Operations and Returns Project Manager at The International Organization for Migration (IOM); St. Jean Marc Lubin, Executive Director at Mission of Hope; and Sophie Orthela, Director of Programs at Heartland Alliance. Each of the speakers shared recent achievements and obstacles in Haiti's recovery since the earthquake.



This delegation heard from government officials and NGO leaders during the scene setter briefing to learn more about the challenges and progress Haiti has encountered since the earthquake.

Dr. Jean Patrick Alfred from Haiti's Ministry of Health focused on the need for different sectors — both private and NGO — to better coordinate efforts during the current transition into the development phase. He explained that working in coordination would enable the country to have stronger and more focused goals and objectives. The country is in the process of assessing and contracting services to assist with the coordination effort. Alfred also brought up the challenge of getting health care, including maternal health, into rural areas. He said many of the health providers in rural areas lack sufficient training and education.



Participants asked questions about the current housing situation and the political climate in Haiti.

To give perspective on the housing situation following the earthquake, Desruisseaux from IOM said there were over 1.5 million people displaced after the 2010 earthquake. Today, that number has been reduced significantly, with about 400,000 left in the camps. Most of the camps are located in Port-au-Prince. The camps differ from small camps housing around 160 households to large camps with more than 1,000 households. Desruisseaux explained that the IOM is trying to transition families from the small camps first in order to focus and provide better services to the larger camps.

Faith-based organizations such as Mission of Hope play an important role in Haiti's development efforts and humanitarian relief. Jean Marc Lubin at Mission of Hope, shared how his organization has focused on an education program that also feeds students and gives them health care through mobile clinics. He argued it was important for NGOs to work together, but unfortunately many NGO's are motivated by funding and tend to work only on their own interests.

Lastly, Sophie Orthela, at Heartland Alliance provided a glimpse into the role of women in Haiti. Orthela explained that women in Haiti are constrained economically because of cultural attitudes.

She pointed out some progress in the criminalization of rape in 2005 and stronger paternity laws to hold fathers accountable in 2012. Learning Tour delegate, Meghan Taira, who works on health policy for Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY), asked whether there are female legislators to represent women. In response, Orthela pointed out a recent national law that requires that 30 percent of government workers be women.

CARE's Neighborhood Improvement Program

The delegation's first site visit was to CARE's Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) in Carrefour. The goal of this visit was to gain a deeper understanding of the neighborhood approach to urban development. CARE's NIP is one example of an innovative solution that addresses the lack of safe housing for Haitians looking to leave the tent camps. The NIP creates a foundation for reconstruction and recovery based on local capacity

Half of the delegation met with a 32-year-old mother named Mouira Guillaume and her one-year-old daughter. The group sat outside her concrete one-story home, and Mouira shared how she had been studying to be an accountant before the earthquake. The earthquake damaged her home, and she spent a year living in the camps before she was able to move back into a rental home. She enrolled in CARE's NIP program since her home had enough space to house another family. Mouira and her family of five live on one side of the home, while another man from the camp and his family live on the other side. Sharing such small quarters is a personal sacrifice, but "the camps are bad for anyone to be there," Mouira said.

Tolli Love, CARE's Vice President of Individual Fundraising & Marketing for CARE, was inspired by how Haitians are taking charge of their destiny. "Despite the tight living space, Mouira's family have taken in another family from the camp," Tolli said.

"People like Mouira are helping get their fellow Haitians out of camps faster, and also earning extra income from rent. Haitians are remarkable, resilient and strong."



Dr. Stephen Blount, Meghan Taira and LaVerne Saulny met with a Haitian mother named Mouira who participated in CARE's Neighborhood Improvement Program in Carrefour.

and enabling neighborhoods to organize themselves to revitalize their communities. In one year, 600 homeowners have received basic information on safe construction practices, construction materials and training on improving households with limited resources. In return, the homeowners had agreed to house someone from the camps.



The delegation met with Méliane Bernèche, 37, a single mother with six children, whose family is still recovering from the 2010 earthquake.

Meanwhile, the other half of the delegation met with Mélianie Bernèche, 37, a single mother with six children. The 2010 earthquake hit Mélianie's family hard. "I had a baby, and he was covered in dust," she said. "Everything was white. I saw the house was gone. I went to the camp, set up a tarp and lived under it." Luckily, she was able to move back into her home, but it needed some repairs. In exchange for materials and technical building support from CARE, Mélianie agreed to take in another single mother with two children for a year. Both women said their futures now "look brighter" with the program.

CARE's Women's Health Solidarity Program

Next, the delegation traveled to Léogâne, the epicenter of the earthquake to visit CARE's Women's Health Solidarity Program, which includes solidarity groups for women, men and youth. Each solidarity group has about 25 members who meet weekly to discuss topics such as gender-based violence and family planning. Sexual violence, sexual exploitation and child trafficking are disproportionately high in Haiti and there is often little or no safe avenues for dialogue, treatment or counseling.



The Learning Tour group meets with a group of Haitian men and women to talk about family planning at CARE's Women's Solidarity Group program.

In order to create a more robust interaction, the delegation split into two groups. One watched skits by the program participants that illustrated the stark violence

and abuse women in Haiti face. Another watched a group discuss family planning. In the family planning group, Liviane Jean Louis, 35, a married mother of five children explained "Before, I didn't have family planning. I had lots of kids and I couldn't send them to school." Solange Thelus, a 47-year-old widow and with five children, said if she had learned about the availability of condoms and birth control sooner, she would have planned more carefully to have her children so that she could adequately support them.

To strengthen access to reproductive health services and meet the demands of the community, CARE built two community centers and is in the process of constructing eight more in the Léogâne area. The centers also provide vaccinations to pregnant women and children, as well as address family planning needs. The centers are also used to organize health and sanitation activities within the communities. After listening to women speak in the group, LaVerne Saulny from Sen. Mary Landrieu's office in Louisiana said the experience really solidified her understanding of why programs are so crucial. "To see how excited these women are about understanding the preventative measures to do so that they can make their choices and to understand the preventive, to be able to be educated and to be enlightened about choices was very good," she said.

Next, the delegation arrived at the U.S. Embassy to meet with high-level government officials to discuss the U.S. government's five-year strategic plan in Haiti, where U.S. foreign assistance is primarily concentrated in the northeast, western and central regions. Through USAID and other U.S. government partners, the U.S. is supporting four crucial pillars of Haiti's development: infrastructure and energy; food and economic security; health and other basic needs; and democracy and rule of law. Major U.S. initiatives include the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Presidential Malaria Initiative (PMI) and Feed the Future (FtF). The discussion focused on how the U.S. government is working with local Haitian politicians as well as the community leaders to implement critical programs.



Meghan Taira, Alice James and Viviana Bovo met with Pamela White, U.S. Ambassador to Haiti, at a cocktail reception hosted by CARE.

Later that night, U.S. Ambassador Pamela White joined the delegation for a cocktail reception where she discussed the importance of building back Haiti. The Ambassador stressed the promise and potential she saw in the Haitian people and the rich culture. She urged the delegation not to give up on U.S. investment in Haiti.

► Day Two: Haiti's Transition to Development

The second day of the trip focused on programs geared toward long-term sustainability and development. In the morning, the delegation headed to Haitian Group for the Study of Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections (GHESKIO), an independent not-for-profit health care organization. The institution is most notable for its work in HIV/AIDS in Haiti, which receives funding from PEPFAR. In the early 1980s, a group of Haitian clinicians noticed a growing number of patients dying from Kaposi's sarcoma and unusual opportunistic infections. In 1983, GHESKIO published their findings in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, documenting the first cases of HIV/AIDS in a developing country.

Today, the clinic has evolved into a comprehensive and integrated health center, serving not only HIV patients,

but also children and victims of sexual attacks. Marie Deschamps, a research associate at GHESKIO, stressed the importance of providing holistic care. Treatment alone is not enough. Patients also need the "jobs and education which allow the population to assist and pay for their services," she said. Deschamps shared the reality that many HIV-positive women encounter. Often when HIV-positive mothers learn they need medication, they respond by saying "HIV is not my priority, sending my kids to school is my priority." In response, GHESKIO opened a school to serve school-aged children. During the visit, the delegation toured several wards of the hospital, including a nutrition center for infants and a HIV research center.



Andrew Newton, Cesar Gonzalez and Alice James take a tour of GHESKIO, a PEPFAR funded not-for-profit health care organization notable for its work in HIV and tuberculosis.

CARE Village Savings & Loan Association

The delegation headed back to Léogâne to see CARE's Village Savings & Loan Association (VSLA) program. After a warm song and greeting from the program participants, the delegates sat in a circle with the community members to learn about the social and economic issues facing vulnerable communities in urban areas. The group learned about the linkages between economic development, food security and health. CARE pioneered the micro-savings groups – known as VSLAs — about two decades ago to help the poorest of the



The delegation met with a micro-savings group under CARE's Village Savings & Loan Association (VSLA) Program. Jean Dumond (left) is a father, farmer and the president of savings group. He started saving in February, and he hopes to use his payout at the end of the year – about 10,000 gourds (or about \$250) – to rebuild his home that was destroyed in the earthquake.

poor access financial services. To date, there are 86 VSLA groups in Haiti formed by 2,143 women and 337 men. The total membership equity, including savings and earnings, is \$72,000 USD.

The group members at this Haitian VSLA called “Union” demonstrated how the savings process works. They



Viviana Bovo shops at a local market set up by the micro-savings group. Selling small products is one of the business models for the several of the Haitian men and women in the group.

assumed their positions as president, secretary and treasurer and performed a mock group meeting. The participants shared how the funds from their savings group have helped them to rebuild and repair their homes after the earthquake, as well as start small businesses selling food, water and other small products. A key aspect of the VSLA program is its focus on creating economic self reliance, safety and empowering women to become more involved in the decision-making processes at all levels.



The delegation met with Haiti's First Lady Sophia Martelly to learn about her program, Aba Grangou, that works to fight malnutrition in Haiti.

Knowing that food security is a major problem in Haiti, the delegation headed to the National Palace to meet the First Lady of Haiti, Sophia Martelly, to learn about her work in Haiti. She focused the conversation on her and President Martelly's latest initiative, Aba Grangou, which was launched in January 2012 and aims to reduce hunger and malnutrition. Mrs. Martelly discussed how the fight against hunger is key to ending the vicious circle of exclusion, disease, despair and the increase in violence and death of children in Haiti.

A combination of poor soil quality and erosion from hurricane activity, as well as years of deforestation, has threatened Haiti's ability to provide enough food for its people. The delegation headed uphill toward

Kenscoff, a rural farming community on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, to see some creative solutions. The group viewed USAID's Watershed Initiative for National Natural Environmental Resource (WINNER). WINNER is a five-year project aligned with the U.S. government's post-earthquake Haiti Strategy Toward Renewal and Economic Opportunity, and with the U.S. government's presidential Feed the Future Initiative. The delegation learned about the benefits of educating and sensitizing small farmers about agro-forestry and modern farming techniques. Standing on the side of a hill, farmers shared how the program has helped them yield better crops and flowers, which has enabled them to generate more money.

After visiting the program, Anastasia Moloney from Reuters said, "My main takeaway and important lesson learned is that any kind of foreign aid only works if local communities are really involved and consulted. That is far more difficult than it sounds and requires a long-term view, and more importantly, trust. The U.S. government has a huge stake, and influence, in the future of Haiti as the main aid donor. A rights-based approach is key for any donor aid to work."



The delegation traveled uphill to rural Kenscoff outside of Port-au-Prince. The area has suffered from deforestation, which has had an adverse impact on farming and food production.

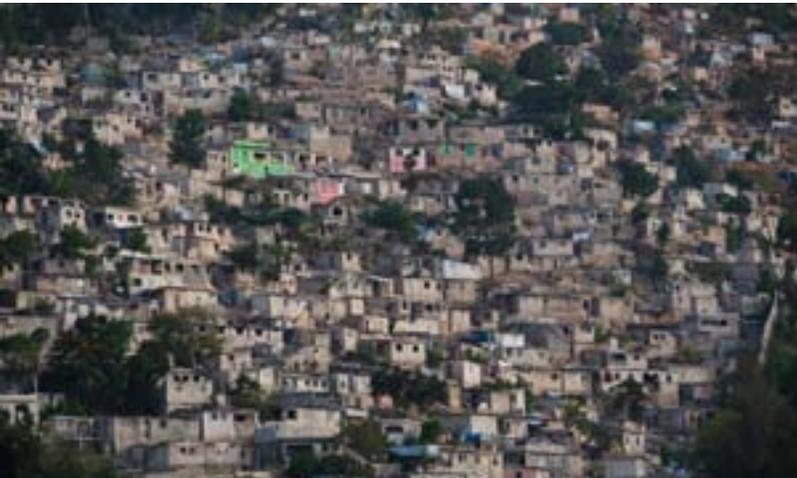


The delegation at USAID's Watershed Initiative for National Natural Environmental Resource (WINNER), which works to educate farmers about better farming practices. A combination of poor soil quality and erosion from hurricane activity, as well as years of deforestation, has threatened Haiti's ability to provide enough food for its people.

Conclusion

This Learning Tour provided a distinct opportunity to understand how a country devastated by a natural disaster has been able to not only rebuild their communities, but also tackle serious health, socioeconomic and political issues with innovative and sustainable approaches. While the delegation's trip was cut a day short by Hurricane Isaac, the storm was a reminder that the country needs to continue to make strides in governance, shelter, health and women's rights. Luckily, the damage from Isaac was not as severe as expected, but nearly 400,000 people still remain in tents, vulnerable to such future natural disasters.

Due to the resilience and determination of the Haitian government, donors and the Haitian people, the country is poised to address these challenges. Some of this progress was already happening when the delegation arrived: The displacement camp population has fallen from 1.5 million people immediately after the earthquake to around 400,000 today. This year, Haiti's GDP increased by 5.5 percent in 2011 and is projected to grow by 7.5 percent in 2012. Life expectancy has



A snapshot of the homes in Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince.

also risen from 59 years in 2002 to about 62 years in 2011. Women have made advancements too. In June, new constitutional amendments included provisions that require 30 percent of government jobs be held by women.

During the two day tour, the delegation saw promising health and economic advances in the Haitian community, despite the country's past challenges. They met a variety of Haitians, from women learning how to save and invest their money to farmers gaining more insight on the latest modern agriculture techniques. In Haiti, a commitment to helping the country rebuild coupled with stronger coordination efforts has enabled communities to bounce back from the devastating earthquake. Over the long-term, accountable leadership for health, housing, agriculture and social reform in Haiti should continue to be fully supported. Dr. Stephen Blount, Associate Director for Global Health Development at the CDC, said in conclusion,

“CARE Learning Tours are very important...It's only by coming that you can really see what you might of heard or read about, but the impact in your heart and your head can only happen by such a visit.”

Policy Recommendations

Support U.S. Investments: While recognizing that there are significant strains on the federal budget, strong, smart investments in international development and humanitarian programs remain cost-effective. The International Affairs budget – only one percent of the U.S. federal budget – is critical to addressing the underlying causes of poverty and meeting basic human needs in developing countries. It represents a practical and smart investment in building a prosperous, stable and secure world.

The International Affairs budget is critical to reducing extreme poverty and helping the more than one billion people around the world struggling to survive on less than \$1 a day. This budget is critical to issues Americans care about including tackling global hunger, helping women and men create income-generating jobs, and fostering global stability.

CARE has been witness to the profound difference these investments make, especially in the lives of girls and women. Because of U.S. assistance, over the last 60 years, maternal and child mortality have dropped sharply, literacy rates have increased and economic opportunities for women have expanded in the developing world. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) – the agency at the heart of U.S. foreign assistance efforts – has more than doubled spending on women and girls since 2008. These funds produce real change in the lives of women, children and their families living in extreme poverty, changing entire communities and nations for the better.

Thanks to U.S. Assistance:

- In the past 20 years, the number of chronically undernourished has been reduced by 50 percent.
- In the past 50 years, infant and child death rates in the developing world have been reduced by 50 percent.
- Investments in agriculture by the U.S. and other donors over the past two decades have helped feed an extra billion people.

The CARE Learning Tours program introduces policymakers and other influential individuals to the importance of U.S. investments, particularly as it relates to family health outcomes for women and girls. The goal is to utilize these individuals in ongoing advocacy efforts and help inform recommendations for a long-term U.S. strategic approach to these issues.

We are deeply grateful to the many individuals who generously gave of their time to make this visit to Haiti a success. CARE specifically thanks the Bill and Melinda Gate Foundation for its generous financial support to the Learning Tours.

If you are interested in CARE's Learning Tours program, please contact:

CARE USA
1825 I Street, NW, Suite 301
Washington, DC 20006

Tel: +1-202-595-2800
Web: www.care.org/learningtours
Email: CARELearningTours@care.org

