

LAMIKA Program



Among the many factors contributing to the devastation wrought by the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti were poverty, environmental degradation and low construction quality of homes built in dense, urban areas. Nowhere in Port-au-Prince were these challenging conditions more pervasive than in the neighborhood of Carrefour-Feuilles, which suffered enormous losses from the disaster. Making progress in addressing these deeply rooted problems requires comprehensive efforts that touch on several issues simultaneously.

The LAMIKA Program (an acronym for “A Better Life in My Neighborhood” in Creole), uses this dynamic approach to provide the residents of Carrefour-Feuilles with healthy and secure living spaces, while also enhancing community and household resiliency. Community members have been the primary drivers of LAMIKA, by identifying their most pressing needs and participating in the program design process. This community input has helped focus LAMIKA around three central pillars: social engagement, physical renewal, and economic strengthening.

Social Engagement

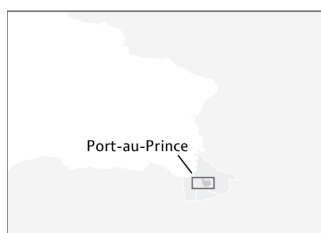
The social engagement feature of LAMIKA has been developed to ensure community members lead their own recovery and to give residents a broad set of skills to make the community safer and healthier. The American Red Cross has helped all 40 schools in Carrefour-Feuilles to develop customized disaster response plans, as well as institute health and hygiene efforts to prevent

the spread of diseases like cholera. The LAMIKA program has distributed more than 17,000 mosquito nets to help combat malaria, and it has distributed nearly 500,000 condoms to help residents fight the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Issues related to gender and youth are also a major focus of work in Carrefour-Feuilles, including a project to reduce the incidence and mitigate the consequences of gender-based violence.

In order to help the residents of Carrefour-Feuilles prepare for future disasters and take a more proactive role in their own safety, the Red Cross has created Community Intervention Teams. The Red Cross trains these teams—made up of local volunteers—in first aid and light search and rescue, and equips them with supplies such as bullhorns, shovels, first aid kits and other tools that allow them to respond to disasters. Disaster risk reduction trainings are held through direct engagement at various levels, and early warning systems alert the whole community of impending natural disasters.

Infrastructure

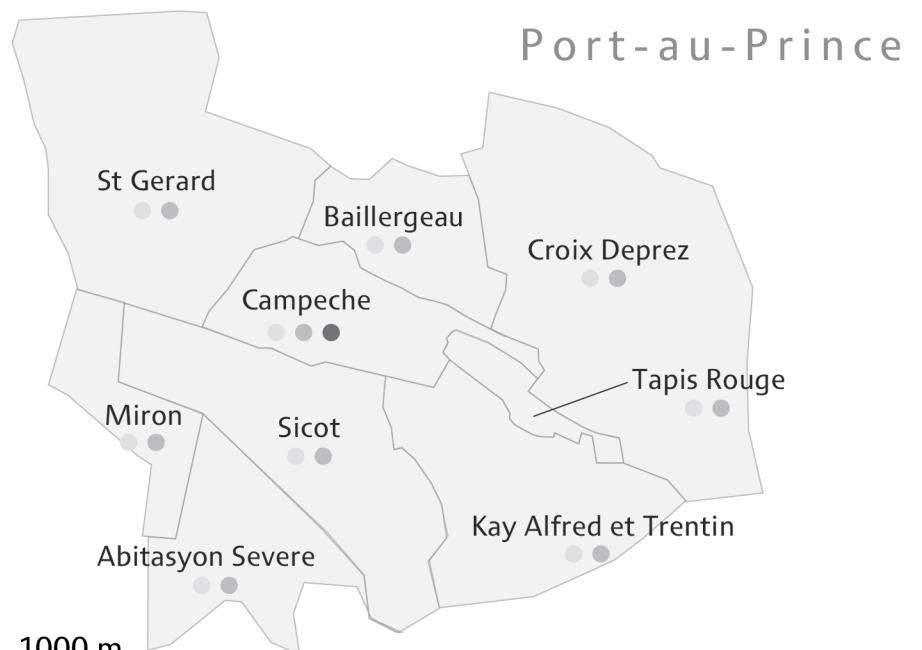
Decades of unplanned growth in the Carrefour-Feuilles neighborhood have led to insecure infrastructure, cramped spaces and hazardous pedestrian and vehicle access. This disorganization has isolated the community from the surrounding areas, and complicated the process of transporting construction materials and other supplies. At the request of community members, the



- Pillar I: Social Engagement
- Pillar II: Economic Strengthening
- Pillar III: Physical Renewal



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American Red Cross is upgrading infrastructure in parts of Carrefour-Feuilles and initiating larger scale construction efforts to improve housing and other living spaces. These include activities such as ravine clearing to mitigate flooding, construction of large public spaces that facilitate and promote social cohesion, and pedestrian walkway improvements to create safer transit.

Rebuilding safe living conditions and infrastructure is the heart of the reconstruction effort, and as a result, retrofitting homes and repairing schools are a cornerstone of the program's infrastructure strategy.

A central tenet of the LAMIKA program has been the use of innovative solutions to common problems. One example of this approach has been the design and installation of solar-powered streetlights. By circumventing obstacles posed by the nation's unreliable power grid, these streetlights can prevent crime and extend the hours during which residents can travel and conduct business in the neighborhood. And in order to ensure that these lights can continue functioning beyond the LAMIKA program, the American Red Cross has trained Solar Light Committees on technical skills required for long-term maintenance.

Livelihoods

A sustainable transformation of the Carrefour-Feuilles area depends on residents' access to stable income-generating opportunities, and the LAMIKA program offers training and resources to help the community's existing and aspiring entrepreneurs start or improve their businesses. The American Red Cross livelihoods strategy helps people develop essential skills and offers access to capital to start or expand businesses. Hands-on entrepreneurship training offers guidance on negotiation, marketing, accounting and more, while savings and loans programs teach community members how to save money and offer micro-financing to others.

With nearly 70 percent of Haiti's population under the age of 30, the importance of a youth-focused strategy for economic development is clear. Several projects have been implemented that improve vocational opportunities while emphasizing engagement with youth. The demand for such programming has been overwhelming, as more than 1,714 youth have registered for training and internships to help them develop relevant skills to find jobs and start small businesses that benefit their communities. To date, young adults in the LAMIKA programs have participated in more than 300 internships in Carrefour-Feuilles.

(From left to right) Dieulène, 14, Glafailena, 6, and Delina, 3, rest under mosquito nets on their bunk beds at the CAPED orphanage in the Croix-Desprez area of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The orphanage, home to boys and girls aged 3-8, received mosquito nets from the American Red Cross in August 2013.



Photo by Rodrigo Ordóñez / American Red Cross