

Quality Education and Safer Schools in Haiti

April 2011

Save the Children's Education and School Construction Update



“In this school we are protected from the rain and the sun. Even when it rains we can still have class. I feel good right now because I am in a safe place, if it rains, or if there is another earthquake, we won't be afraid.”

Max Eloi | age 10

Raising the quality of education and constructing safer schools for Haiti's children are at the center of Save the Children's plans for creating lasting change.

The Institut Abellard in Léogâne is a model of innovative construction techniques that make the school structure more hurricane and earthquake-resistant and therefore safer for the children who learn within its walls. This school is the first of its kind and serves as an example of best practices of design and construction. The techniques have been studied by both private builders and non-governmental organizations as a prototype for building other schools around the country.



Working with Parents

“I like coming to school. I get to see all my friends and I work very hard.”

Rose-Carme, age 10

Establishing strong links between parents and education is a critical component to helping children succeed in school.

Education teams have been going to schools to assess the current engagement of parents in the school community. They have encouraged schools to find ways to increase parental involvement. In the coming months the teams will provide greater support to build the voice of parents so that students have a strong community behind them.



Working with Administrators

“We can count on Save the Children to provide what we need.”

Eddy Pascal, School Director

Training was provided throughout the month of April to School Directors for all partner schools: 30 in Port-au-Prince, 38 in Léogâne and 32 in Jacmel.

School Directors are not just managers of the school administration, but they are leaders in their communities. This training helped them define the kind of leader that would best support their community beyond the four walls of the classroom. Workshops on the trends in the Ministry of Education, teaching practices, and technology for education were explored as well as effective communication practices for the whole community to improve students' educational experience.



Working with Teachers

“This program really helps the children learn to read faster.”

Immacula Desrosiers, First Grade Teacher

Having a strong foundation of literacy supports children to succeed throughout their education. *Lekti se Lavni* (“Reading is the Future” in Haitian Creole) is a literacy program for children in first grade. This fast-track reading program has been developed by Save the Children based on results from research on learning to read.

Working with the *Systematic Method for Reading Success* creator Dr. Sandra Hollingsworth, Save the Children in Haiti created a specialized reading program using Haitian Creole. The first year of curriculum consists of two parts: the first uses only single syllable words, the second uses multi-syllabic words and includes writing. The stories are about the children's own environments, which fosters motivation and pride.

Updates on School Construction

Spotlight: École Marie Reine des Apôtres and École Mount Carmel in Jacmel



With the ground having broken in mid-January, École Marie Reine des Apôtres and École Mount Carmel in Jacmel are well on their way to opening the doors of their new school buildings to the vulnerable children they serve in Jacmel.

These are two very unique schools. Not only do they work together, but they serve the most vulnerable out of school children and youth in the community. Among those children are “restaveks.” Restavek, literally translated means “to stay with.” Families send their children into domestic servitude when they cannot provide for them, hopefully giving the child a chance to attend school and to have other basic needs met. Sometimes children are sent to an extended family member or a community member. Sometimes they are sent to the homes of strangers in another city.

École Marie Reine des Apôtres and École Mount Carmel have made it their mandate to serve the unique needs of restavek and other out-of-school children and youth. The schools operate during hours that allow the children to work during the day, and they provide classes based on where they are in their learning, rather than age. The school building will be completed in April.

Save the Children’s Safer Building Techniques



Strong Internal Supports

The rebar, the metal inside the supports, must be able to stand up to fierce movements in several directions that an earthquake causes. To ensure this strength, the stirrups, which are the connecting metal keeping the bars together, must hold the four long bars in place by overlapping and curving into the middle of the column. This helps to firmly hold the structure in place when an earthquake hits, which applies forces from all directions.



Strength in the Horizontal

By ensuring that stones are laid on their side the structure is stronger and more able to withstand earthquakes or tremors.

Angular stones that have rough surfaces are used so that they bind with the concrete.



High Quality Materials

Quality control is thoroughly exercised in all Save the Children building projects. Poor quality materials were a contributing factor to the degree of devastation seen in Haiti as a result of the earthquake. Save the Children inspects the materials to ensure they meet the standards required to provide a safer environment for children.

- 4,992 schools were affected by the earthquake, 23% of all schools in Haiti.
- Prior to the earthquake only 50% of children were in school.
- Since the January 2010 earthquake, Save the Children has worked with 270 schools across the country, allowing 45,000 children to return to their studies.