



Haiti Women's Development Center (HWDC)

«Before, life had no meaning for me, and at times I despaired »

Women were profoundly affected by the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Many were orphaned or widowed and displaced to a crowded and unsafe settlement where they may remain indefinitely due to lack of other shelter options. Most struggle to take care of the needs of their families, since employment is scarce and most lack any capital to help them start a business. The threat of sexual violence is high, and the rate of prostitution has risen, as women and girls face a lack of privacy, support and choice. Lacking access to school, work and other forms of stimulation or personal development, many women have fallen into depression. A high number of them, including many girls under the age of 15, are pregnant and will likely raise their children without the fathers.

Relief International's Haiti Women's Development Center (HWDC) has inspired women living on the edge of despair to develop new skills and renewed motivation. Thanks to private donations and two grants, one for \$150,000 from the Hasenfeld Family Foundation and one for \$70,000 from the Soroptimist Foundation, RI has been able to design a comprehensive assistance program for earthquake-affected women at the HWDC. Offering classes in vocational training (including cuisine, cosmetology, floral arts, sewing), business skills, financial literacy, introduction to microfinance and leadership development, the HWDC seeks to improve the welfare of earthquake-affected women and girls in Haiti while rebuilding the community's infrastructure. Striving to be a sustainable source for adult education

and livelihoods development, the HWDC also offers opportunities for women to improve their functional health literacy and to access resources in health and protection for themselves and their children. The HWDC seeks to be able to refer women



Founded in 1990, Relief International (RI) provides emergency, rehabilitation and development services that empower beneficiaries in the process. RI's programs include health, shelter construction, education, community development, agriculture, food, income-generation, and conflict resolution. RI employs an innovative approach to program design and a high quality of implementation performance in demonstrating deep and lasting impact in reducing human suffering worldwide.

Having responded to the devastating 2010 earthquake with a robust humanitarian program, RI has been active in the Protection, WASH, Shelter and Health sectors and is committed to assisting the process of Haiti's reconstruction and long-term development.



Contact the HWDC!

RI Haiti Office

Theodore Lubana
Country Director
No. 16 Impasse Beauvais
Catalpa Prolongee
Delmas, 33
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Theodore.lubana@ri.org
(509) 3701-4981

RI Headquarters Contact

Emily Romero
Program Manager
Emily.romero@ri.org

seeking employment to potential employers, credit-worthy women to local microfinance institutions, and women needing health or reproductive care or treatment for sexual violence to qualified, low-cost service providers. RI's First Time Mothers home visitation program, currently in development, will provide an opportunity for young, illiterate women early in their first pregnancy to improve the development outcomes of their children through education, accompaniment and behaviour change.

RI's program targets the female population of the camps, settlements and communities within the communes of Delmas and Carrefour in Haiti's West Department, although it is open to any women regardless of age, residency or other requirement. The HWDC aims to serve, over the course of ten years and through all of its program offerings, 100,000 adolescent girls and women of child-bearing age living within a ten-mile radius of its location.

RI is committed to long-term development in women's protection and empowerment in Haiti. Therefore, the programs at the HWDC are taught



by women from the same communities of the beneficiaries, providing positive role models to younger beneficiaries and offering the opportunity for skilled women to earn a small revenue through sharing their knowledge. Local grassroots organizations are encouraged to use the HWDC as a platform for community activism and civil society engagement. Women are involved at all levels of the project, including design, management, monitoring and evaluation, as well as in developing a sustainability plan for the HWDC. This approach fosters ownership among the target population and ensures that program components are carried out in a manner that is culturally relevant and matched to the needs of the beneficiaries.



The HWDC aims to become financially sustainable by developing its own sources of revenue, such as through the selling of the products of the women students of the HWDC, or the offering of fee-based courses to other members of the community.

The HWDC aims to become financially sustainable by developing its own sources of revenue, such as through the selling of the products of the women students of the HWDC, or the offering of fee-based courses to other members of the community.

