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Canaan: city-scaled self-recovery

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Abstract

Five years after the Haitian earthquake, the new city of Canaan is emerging north of Port au Prince with an estimated 160,000 residents. Canaan's growth began a few months after the earthquake after the establishment of the relocation settlement Camp Corail, and the declaration of public utility of the surrounding land by the Haitian government (GoH). While Canaan has since received little external support from international agencies or local government to date, residents themselves have invested an estimated \$100 million in construction. Canaan residents have constructed homes, installed informal infrastructures, established basic social services like schools, and have begun grassroots urban planning processes to define desired land use planning. The impressive scale of self-recovery in Canaan has required a new approach to urban post-disaster recovery and reconstruction: working in an integrated approach at a city scale.

The integrated approach refers both to the programmatic targeting of multiple sectors to rebuild lives and communities, as well as the close coordination and collaboration amongst a diverse group of stakeholders. To support the self-recovery of a diverse population, recovery programs must support the diverse areas that influence disaster affected families: livelihoods, basic infrastructure and services, housing, etc. This complex endeavour requires strong collaboration between stakeholders: Canaan residents, private sector, civil society, local government and international agencies. Such collaboration has required new modalities of operation that include shared financial resources, shared human resources, and shared office spaces.

Working at a city scale has required recognizing that cities and its residents are in constant flux; communities' goals for 'recovery' evolve and may differ from the pre-earthquake status quo. Therefore, working at a city scale requires fostering and structuring community efforts and self-recovery to be more resilient through government policy and healthy private markets.

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To present this case study of Canaan, representatives from three different stakeholders supporting resilient urban recovery in Canaan are proposed to speak. Representing the GoH, Clement Belizaire will speak regarding the challenges faced by local government in ensuring long-term sustainability of interventions. He will present the GoH's strategic plan for Canaan that outlines land regularization needs and the linked financial sustainability models. Representing the international donor community, Christopher Ward of USAID will present the planned integrated approach co-financed by USAID and ARC in Canaan that seeks to build livelihoods and support infrastructure provision and coherent urban growth. Representing civil society organizations, Anna Konotchick of the American Red Cross will speak regarding the self-recovery efforts of the communities of Canaan. As part of this, she will present the social mobilization efforts of this partnership.

Keywords: self-recovery, Haiti, integrated approach

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Author's Biography

Anna Konotchick works with the American Red Cross in Haiti as their Canaan Urban Development Program Manager. She works with Haitian Red Cross to manage social mobilization efforts in Canaan, which includes enumeration, community mapping, disaster risk reduction, urban gardening, and community health. She also manages the American Red Cross – USAID partnership with the livelihoods and infrastructure development components. Prior to joining American Red Cross, Anna completed two masters degrees from the University of California, Berkeley in Architecture and City and Regional Planning. Her joint thesis focused on housing and neighborhood self-recovery mechanisms after the Haitian earthquake; her field research was funded by USAID OFDA and InterAction. Previously in Haiti, Anna worked with the World Bank and Habitat for Humanity on neighbourhood and housing reconstruction efforts.

Anna received her BS from MIT and worked in architectural design firms in New York and post-Katrina New Orleans. She started her international career working and researching with local NGOs and universities on housing and WASH issues in informal settlements in Buenos Aires and Mumbai.

Supporting participants:

Clement Belizaire works with the Haitian government housing unit, the Unite de Construction de Logement et de Batiments Publics. He is responsible for promoting durable solutions for earthquake affected internally displaced people (IDPs) and rehabilitation of informal

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neighbourhoods. As part of this work, he has managed neighbourhood upgrading efforts, rental subsidies for displaced families, Canaan urban development and camp integration into surrounding neighbourhoods.

Christopher Ward is the principal advisor on housing and urban development for USAID in Haiti, where he has worked since the immediate aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. He is responsible for USAID's housing and urban reconstruction programs and oversees the US government's investment in Canaan.