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### **Safe Housing Can Solve Hunger In Haiti**

The Caribbean island known as Haiti shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, having control over a third of the western half. While yes the Dominican Republic and Haiti share an island that's basically their only similarity, the differences between these two countries is one of the most remarkable in the world. As of right now the Dominican Republic is eight times as rich as Haiti

Haiti sits on the edge of a huge tectonic plate, this causes Haiti to have many huge earthquakes. One of Haiti's worst earthquakes was on January 12, 2010. With a magnitude of 7.0 which led to over 100,000 deaths and displacing a million people, an earthquake that most citizens of Haiti are still recovering from. Which has led to Haiti being one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere

“President Jovenel Moise was assassinated and another deadly earthquake hit, throwing the country into chaos, and the crisis has only deepened in recent months. Gangs have overrun parts of the country kidnapping citizens and foreigners and putting up blockades to stop the flow of critical supplies like fresh water and food. A new cholera outbreak has killed hundreds as hospitals have struggled to provide basic services. And the UN estimates that nearly half of the population is going hungry. The crisis has many calling for international intervention, even as the United States continues to deport Haitian migrants back to the island nation -Geoff Bennett.”(PBS News)

Most family sizes really rely on certain things such as income and the parents' education, but the most common family size is about two kids per family. When talking about roles in the family, it's pretty similar to other places around the world, the men of the family's main job is to make money for the family while the women cook and clean. One of the main differences though is that “In the family structure, it is the women who are the decision-makers in a Haitian household.”(lovetoknow)

“The average Haitian diet is largely based on starch staples such as rice, corn, millet, yams and beans. All types of meat and seafood are eaten as well, but often only the wealthier residents can afford them.”(Together Women Rise). Most of the time even if you're wealthy enough to afford a meal, food preparation is difficult for everyone involved. Most kitchens are located outside and most food is made over charcoal stoves.(DUNE) Haiti's education is also not doing so well. Overall many children do not attend school either to support their family or they cannot afford it, two out of ten kids do not attend school in Haiti.(Globalgiving) For the children who do and are able to attend school there isn't even a building for them to learn.(University of the People)

Haiti is hugely affected by the global health worker shortage, only having 2.5 doctors and 1.1 nurses per 10 000 inhabitants.(AIDS) “The great majority of those doctors and nurses practice in the capital city or in other urban areas resulting in an uneven distribution within the country that has a negative impact particularly in rural areas. Traditional healers, vodou priests and traditional birth attendants are often the

only 'healthcare providers' to whom the population has access."(AIDS) Similar to how Haiti struggles with its lack of schools, it also has few to no hospitals.(AIDS & University of the People) The economy heavily relies on subsistence farming and the government regulation is highly constrained.

Now let's state the obvious, one of Haiti's largest issues is their infrastructure. Their homes and other buildings are being constantly destroyed by earthquakes and hurricanes. Once they rebuild, they get destroyed once again. With more than 80,000 houses being damaged during the 2010 earthquake. It destroyed bridges, roads, hospitals, homes, schools, churches, and public buildings. Then, just when things couldn't get any worse, after the earthquake, Haiti was assaulted by tropical storms.(The Lutheran World Federation) Also, it is important to know that housing in Haiti is very different from housing in the United States.

In many older, established neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince it will be normal to see brightly painted wood and brick houses with some cinder block homes found in newer parts of Port-au-Prince. Most of these homes have one nine-square-foot room with packed-earth flooring and a corrugated tin roof.(Brice Foundation)

In most rural housing areas you will see two-roomed homes that have mud walls, floors and roofs that are "thatched with local grasses or palm leaves; they may also be constructed with plastic and other materials and roofed with rigid metal. The windows are paneless and covered with wooden shutters. There is little furniture. In most of these homes the kitchen is located outside the living quarters, and there is no electricity or piped water; sanitation facilities often consist of a simple latrine dug at a distance from the house."(Britannica) Though for the most part their homes are good, at least compared to other places in the world, due to recent earthquakes and Hurricanes-the majority of peoples homes are now very similar to rural areas.

How does all of this relate to hunger? Poor infrastructure leads to transporting food to areas of the country where there are shortages almost impossible, also with poor infrastructure there aren't many good and safe places to store the food. Since the conditions of their roads are terrible, many people have died of hunger. Many families who are currently dealing with poverty experience malnutrition and many deadly illnesses, since the majority of them do not have the money to purchase food or medicine to help their illness they end up dying.

Most people's first thought for a solution is just to rebuild more homes, but it's not that simple. In order to really make a change they need homes that can withstand earthquakes and storms. Over the past couple of years about 37,000 houses have been repaired, rebuilt or built.(Amnesty International) The main problem with many of these newly built homes was that they weren't built to withstand the weather and challenges Haiti faces, "in fact less than 20% of the houses that were built, rebuilt or repaired actually provided a safe solution to Haiti's problems and were seen as long-term solutions."(Amnesty International)

Out of the 20% of organizations that are actually making homes that could be long-term is what the FFA team in Audubon, Iowa did, with the help of GoServ Global. They had built a Sukup Safe T Home for a family in need. Sukup Safe T Home was created specifically for Haiti after the 2010 earthquake hit.(FFA)

A Sukup Safe T Home looks like and is a modified grain bin, serving as a home and shelter in many developing countries including Haiti, Peru, Kenya, and Uganda. The walls are made of galvanized steel walls, which is iron or steel that is coated with a protective layer of zinc. It has a total of 254 square feet of interior space with an interior loft for more storage or sleeping., with a heat-shielded and ventilated roof that keeps the inside nice and cool. The roof also has great water collection potential, the louvers in the heat shield are able to collect water when it rains, the water can then be used for crops, cooking, bathing and plain drinking water. Lastly they include a lockable door and windows for safety.(GoServeGlobal & Sukup)

Sukup Safe T Homes are meant to withstand strong winds and huge earthquakes. In fact the Sukup Safe T Home was invented because of the terrible 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Six years later Hurricane Matther hit Haiti, with winds of 145-200 mph, almost everything in sight was destroyed, except for the Sukup Safe T Home. Just one Sukup Safe T Home can hold 60 people while standing, which would be perfect if a storm or earthquake were about to hit. Not only can the Sukup Safe T Home be used as a house, but it could also be used as a hospital, school, office, store, orphanage and many more.(GoServeGlobal & Sukup)

It all sounds too good to be true, and it kind of is. The homes are very quick and easy to build, they are also quick and easy to transport by boat, truck or by hand. The homes can be transported very quickly using shipping containers and the homes can even connect to other homes to create a larger space. Lastly they are very surprisingly affordable.(GoServeGlobal)

“ A Safe T Home costs \$5,700 for nonprofits intending to use the grain bin house for humanitarian efforts. Approximately 10 homes fit on one shipping container. \$5,700 for one Sukup Safe T Home®, \$1,500 to ship one home, \$300 to build a cement foundation, \$7,500 Total.”(GoServeGlobal)

How would they be funded? Perhaps they would be once again funded by GoServeGlobal or the Sukup company themselves-if the issue is brought up to them. Then again there's the simple method of fundraisers, the group of FFA kids mentioned before “held a donkey basketball game fundraiser (a basketball game played while riding donkeys) and a silent auction with each student receiving sponsorships.”(FFA)

How much of an impact would this make on the country? Well it would be huge. The people of Haiti will have a safe place to stay during their terrible earthquakes and hurricanes. While chances are not every single family in Haiti will be receiving a Sukup Safe T Home since that could be near impossible, the goal is for every single town to have a few and like mentioned before instead of just being used as earthquake and hurricane proof shelters/homes they could also be used as churches, hospitals, mobile clinics, stores, etc.

What are some barriers that might make it difficult to implement this solution? By far one of the biggest barriers is who is going to assemble all of these homes. Two solutions come to mind, some people in Haiti can be taught how to build the homes since they are actually quite simple to assemble, and if anything they are the number one people who need and want these homes so they will be the most willing to build them. Lastly, other people around the world could volunteer to help out-some people could also be paid a small amount of money per house they helped build too.

Now this is just the beginning, if this project were to work and maybe even expand to other countries around the world that would be fantastic! But for now it is best to take things one step at a time. With a population of 11,447,569 (as of 2021)(Global Edge) , Haiti is the “poorest country in the western hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world. 59% of its population lives under the poverty line and more than 24% lives in a situation of extreme poverty.” (ReliefWeb)

Also it won't be like we are taking a huge risk in this project since the Sukup Safe T Homes have already been used in Haiti and have been proven to be the better alternative.(GoServeGlobal, Sukup & Amnesty International) In fact the Sukup Safe T Home was invented because of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, during the recovery period of the earthquake the Sukup team came up with the Sukup Safe T Home design. “Since then, Sukup Safe T Homes® have provided nearly 300 silo homes in Haiti, as well as homes in Uganda for refugee children fleeing from South Sudan, Peru and Kenya.”(GoServeGlobal)

So it is safe to say that progress will take time, but with the addition of these new and safer homes, the people of Haiti will be able to withstand many natural disasters. This, in turn, will help them to save money so they can focus on some of their other serious issues such as the recent outbreaks of diseases like cholera or attempting to stop the many gangs that have been plaguing the country. So with this idea almost everybody in Haiti will have a basic human need and right...shelter, so then in the long run Haiti will actually be able to afford nutritious food.

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