Disaster Services
Rapid Response Team

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AMURT - Haiti
Gonaives Disaster Relief Operation

September 2008 summary

GONAIVES RAPID RESPONSE TEAM AT A GLANCE

AMURT in Gonaives: approximately 40 of AMURT Haiti's 80 staff members have been mobilized to address the situation in Gonaives, about 35 of those staff members working in Gonaives are Haitian nationals. The AMURT staff in Gonaives is currently managing more than 60 Haitian volunteers, 40 partnerships with grassroots organizations, as well as many cooperative partnerships with international organizations such as CARE, WFP/PAM, CRS, UNICEF, and MINUSTAH.



AMURT & AMURTEL staff and volunteers in Gonaives, Haiti prepare to distribute 50 tons of food

Because of AMURT's extensive involvement in long-term and ongoing community based projects, AMURT was able to provide an immediate response to the crisis by utilizing its extensive grassroots network to enable AMURT to construct a community-based emergency food distribution operation. The relationships and partnerships that AMURT worked diligently to build over the last four years in the rural communities proved to be a great advantage for AMURT in temporarily shifting its activities from long-term projects to filling the immediate need for food distribution. AMURT's Haitian staff was already actively involved with grassroots groups in the Gonaives community and was thus able to quickly connect AMURT to the local communities and community leaders in the areas affected by the storms.

ACTIVITIES IN GONAIVES

Emergency Food Distribution

Purpose: Provide citizens of Gonaives with immediate access to essential food items.

Short term goals: Ensure equal and fair access to food for citizens of Gonaives; enable grassroots networks to assess and meet the needs of local communities; identify fragile populations within AMURT's distribution zone; identify community leaders and community associations with which short and long term partnerships can be formed.

Long-term goals: Structure food distribution networks to target fragile populations to ensure both short and long term access to food.

Current status: AMURT currently has contracts with World Food Program (WFP/PAM, hereinafter PAM) to distribute food to one-third of the city of Gonaives. Within AMURT's distribution area are some of the districts most harshly affected by the recent storms and flooding. AMURT's districts include Bigo, Tou Sab, Sepren, Assifa, and Park Versant. At this time, AMURT facilitates the distribution of food to 1,300 families per day. AMURT's contract with PAM is for one month but the length of time of the contract and the number of families for which AMURT is responsible for facilitating food distribution are likely to increase after the one month contract expires.
In order to ensure transparency and effectiveness in all of AMURT's food distribution activities, AMURT team members have set up oversight posts at all of the sites where issues involving food distribution arise. Oversight posts have been initiated at card distribution sites, the wharf where the food is received and then transported to the distribution sites; and the distribution site where residents of Gonaives receive the food allotted to them through PAM.



Families from the hardest hit areas receive their food rations

AMURT Activities: Already AMURT is beginning to develop a strategy for food distribution that focuses greater efforts on targeted beneficiary contracts for fragile populations such as the handicap, pregnant women, single mothers, the elderly and others. After the first month of emergency food distribution has passed, targeted beneficiaries will be a primary focus of AMURT food distribution. AMURT anticipates that it will be able to facilitate a six-month program for distribution to targeted

beneficiaries.

AMURT will begin a school lunch program where the schools will provide cooked meals for children with a contract for at least one year. AMURT aspires to provide cooked lunches for all of the schools in its third of the city – about 100 schools.

School Food For Work (FFW) Program *(Manje Pou Travay)*

Purpose: The amount of food that PAM has allotted to AMURT through its emergency food distribution program is only enough to provide each family in AMURT's distribution zone with about 50 kg of food per month, dispersed twice per month in 25 kg increments. In Haiti, the average family includes six people. In addition to the emergency food distributed to families throughout Gonaives and surrounding regions, FFW programs provide community members with additional access to food in exchange for community service and essential infrastructure repair that will benefit the entire community. AMURT's FFW program links community members with clean up and rehabilitation of schools damaged or destroyed by the recent storms.



Food for work program cleans out mud-filled schools

Short-term goals: Clean and rehabilitate the most successful and/or most hard-hit schools in AMURT's region of the city so that these schools will open on October 10th, the start of the typical school year; increase community members access to food resources.

Long-term goals: Clean and prepare all schools in AMURT's food distribution zone to open on October 10th or soon thereafter; link schools and community networks with partners that are able to provide school materials for students; provide all schools with water filtration systems from AMURT's facility in the rural community of Sou Chod.

Current Activities: AMURT selected 50 schools to be part of the program at the outset. Although it was expected that the schools would be unable to open until January 2009, the schools that are being cleaned under AMURT's FFW program are now expected to be cleaned, repaired, and painted by the beginning of the delayed school year, October 10th. AMURT is hoping to be able to incorporate all of the schools in AMURT's distribution zone into its FFW program. AMURT is focusing on the schools while other

organizations are taking on other city repair issues such as street cleaning and the cleaning of private homes.

Child Friendly Community Spaces

Purpose: Provide child/family spaces in schools and other community gathering places where families and children can learn and practice yoga and meditation, cooperative games and engage in other stress relieving activities

Short-term goals: Create space and implement initial programs at schools where food distribution takes place.

Long-term goals: Implement long-term programs in schools where FFW programs take place as well as at health clinics and other community gathering spaces; develop and lead training programs for local communities in meditation and yoga to lead child/family sessions; potential partnership with UNICEF for kits to construct child friendly spaces; potential partnership with Kindernothilfe, AMURT partner that helped to create similar spaces in Indonesia.

Current status: AMURT is in the development stage of such programs and has enlisted the assistance of AMURT volunteer from Norway to begin implementing programs in October.

Mud and Earth Removal Assessments

Purpose: To determine potential uses and alternative methods of removal for the mud and earth that covers most of the city.

Short-term goals: Test earth to be removed from City of Gonaives using core samples from all eight UN sections of the city. Test samples for toxicity, nutrient availability and other qualities.

Long-term goals: Utilize earth that has available nutrients for compost and for creating gardens in some of the areas of the city where the buildings and houses have been destroyed.

Current status: AMURT is working with the Ministry of Agriculture to develop methods of utilizing the earth that has been deposited in Gonaives from the floods. AMURT has arranged for core samples of the mud to be taken from the eight UN designated areas of the city to test for toxicity and nutrient content in the national laboratory.

Bio-sand water filtration systems

Purpose: Provide clean water for children and teachers in schools in AMURT's food distribution zone.

Short term goals: Install water filtration systems from AMURT's community owned filter production facility in schools in AMURT's food distribution zone.

Long-term goals: AMURT has the capacity to expand its community owned, community run bio-filtration water purification production program to provide more filters and long term employment in filter production for community members in Souchod.

Current activities: AMURT has a long-term project of manufacturing bio-sand water filters. From the factory in Souchod, AMURT has been able to produce over 2,000 filter systems. About 1,000 filter systems have already been installed in rural communities in Anse Rouge, and an additional 500 have already been reserved for placement. AMURT will use the remaining 500 filtration systems for the schools within AMURT's distribution zone in Gonaives.

Medical Clinics and Central Medical Facility

Purpose: Provide immediate health care to those most affected and at high risk of being affected by the recent storms and the aftermath of the floods.

Short-term goals: Complete assessments of community health risks, community health workers/agents and local, national and international partners in AMURT's food distribution zone; develop strategy for addressing needs of affected community, secure medical supplies necessary to meet local needs, implement mobile clinic program within one week to continue for at least one month to continue to address/assess community needs.

Medium to Long-term goals: Establish medical clinics in each of the communities in AMURT's distribution zone; train local health workers/agents and implement a FFW program for medical workers; create long term medical supply structure for clinics; create child friendly spaces in the decentralized clinics; create centralized medical facility for which the clinics can serve as satellite facilities, continue use of mobile clinic.

Current Activities: AMURT led medical teams recently finished a one week community health assessment of the 5 districts in the city in which AMURT is operating. The AMURT medical team is developing a strategy for conducting training programs for local health agents, implementing a FFW program for local health agents, linking with medical supplies, and setting up the decentralized clinics. AMURT has determined from its assessments that AMURT medical team members and local health agents are available in sufficient numbers to staff the decentralized and mobile clinics as well as a centralized health center but that the need for medical supplies, financial assistance, shelter space, and non-food items is great in both the immediate and long-term if such programs are to be successful. AMURT has identified potential partners for medical projects in MSF, IOM, and WHO.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES FOR ANSE ROUGE

AMURT is likely to be awarded contracts for food distribution in the Anse Rouge province for thousands of people. Currently, AMURT facilitated emergency food distribution is already focused on and getting to targeted populations such as very isolated communities in Anse Rouge. AMURT has submitted to PAM a proposal for a school lunch program in the region. AMURT anticipates that it will be able to expand its existing FFW in some rural areas of Anse Rouge. The Rapid Response FFW Programs in Anse Rouge are volunteer campaigns that focus on immediate infrastructure needs such as building roads and canals, and stabilizing ravines. In the long-term, AMURT hopes to use the FFW program for mid-term projects such as building reservoirs, developing and implementing large scale ravine stabilization, community reforestation and road maintenance, expanding the community based salt project, and partnering with CRS on reforestation around the lake using moringa trees.

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