SUCCESSSES IN HAITI

FROM POST-EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY TO SUSTAINABLY IMPROVING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO NATURAL DISASTERS

Achievements from 2010 to 2018 (and beyond)
Since 2010, Build Change has been supporting post-disaster reconstruction in Haiti following the devastating earthquake that took place at the start of that year.

Build Change believes that the post-disaster housing reconstruction environment is an opportunity to build disaster-resistant housing and change construction practice permanently so that people continue to build safe houses in the future.

Build Change designs earthquake-resistant houses and trains homeowners, engineers and government officials to build them. In Haiti, Build Change has provided technical assistance for the completion of more than 1,600 houses, has trained thousands masons, enabling more than 7,200 people to live in permanent, earthquake-resistant homes and has influenced more than 7,000 safer houses.
Acknowledgements

This report is the result of contributions of many individuals, including Build Change’s Haitian team of engineers, builders and managers, and Build Change’s senior management team all over the world.

Other primary sources of inspiration include program reports written in the past 8 years, and continued communication with our partners. Insights and hard work from all parties are greatly appreciated.

Graphic Design - Don Harris

Awards and Recognitions

Build Change’s Seismic Evaluation and Retrofit Guidelines for Haitian Masonry Housing, created with Degenkolb Engineers, received an Award for Excellence from the Structural Engineer’s Association of Northern California and the Structural Engineer’s Association of California in 2013.

Build Change is a founding member of the Confined Masonry Network.

Build Change is part of 2015’s Sustainia100 with its project “Learning to Build Towards Disaster Resilience”.

Build Change is a proud member of Clinton Global Initiative since 2010, in Colombia, Haiti and Indonesia.

Build Change received the 2017 Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship.

(Global list available here)
Executive Summary

Ninety-six percent of Haiti’s population is vulnerable to multiple hazards, ranking it as one of the most vulnerable countries in the world. High levels of poverty and weak public infrastructure further contribute to the country’s vulnerability to earthquakes and windstorms.

Eighty percent of the inhabitants of the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area reside in informal neighborhoods, in poorly-built, concrete buildings. These neighborhoods have grown rapidly in the past 30 years, however due to their lack of planning, are particularly prone to risk in landslides and floods. Houses, schools, clinics, and community spaces have been built incrementally and many do not meet safety regulations or building standards.

The Haiti earthquake in 2010 caused economic losses of more than $7 billion of which much could have been prevented by people having access to quality housing. Over 293,000 houses were damaged or destroyed.

Build Change has been working in Haiti since the earthquake in 2010 and has successfully supported more than 1,400 homeowners, enabling them to put their families back into safe housing.

By upgrading current technologies and common construction practices and implementing low-cost improvement solutions, Build Change has worked with homeowners, government officials and construction professionals since day one. As a result, we have become the leading implementer of homeowner-driven retrofitting and reconstruction in Haiti, having built and retrofitted more homeowner-driven houses than any other agency. One of our major milestones is the creation of the National Retrofit Guidelines for Haiti, developed by the Ministère de Travaux Publics, Transports et Communications (the Ministry of Public Works, Transportation and Communication: MTPTC) in collaboration with Build Change. These guidelines are now used throughout the country and promoted by the government as the new standard in constructing safer buildings.

The homeowner-driven construction method and retrofit techniques have been successfully adapted for school buildings and community infrastructure projects, allowing children to learn in safe schools and enabling the protection of communities as a whole.

To enable sustainable change and increase the resilience of communities to natural disasters, Build Change believes that all stakeholders in the construction chain must be involved:

**Homeowners/Communities**

More than 1,600 homeowners are now aware of the importance of protecting their families in safer homes and have a better knowledge of good construction practices, thanks to Build Change training and support for construction, as well as many awareness campaigns conducted throughout the country.

**Engineers**

More than 200 Haitian engineers from the public and private sectors and construction professionals, all of whom were trained by Build Change in the past eight years, are now able to conduct evaluations and retrofits in case of a future disaster.

**Masons and builders**

Thousands builders and masons have been trained in good construction practices after the earthquake. Build Change alone has already trained more than 3,700 of them, based on our “work station” method, for which Build Change was the first to implement this system: construction training centers with comprehensive practical training infrastructure.

**Local enterprises producing construction materials**

Build Change has trained and supported more than 200 small and medium-sized block manufacturers all over the country to improve the quality of their concrete blocks in order to meet minimum standards for construction projects in seismic zones. In fact, every single trained block-making SME now produces better blocks, and many of them have mechanized and expanded their businesses.

**Haitian government institutions**

Build Change has partnered with major Haitian government entities – the MTPTC, the Unité de Construction de Logements et de Bâtiments Publics (the Housing and Public Buildings Construction Unit – UCLBP) and the Ministère de l’Education Nationale, et de la Formation Professionnelle (Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training – MENFP) – since the beginning of our operations, and has influenced them through our advocacy to adopt retrofit techniques and homeowner-driven approaches to the reconstruction efforts of small housing units and schools.

**International organizations**

Many neighborhood rehabilitation programs have adopted the homeowner-driven reconstruction and retrofit method. We have partnered extensively and advocated with the international community to implement homeowner-driven housing reconstruction and retrofitting at scale. Homeowner-driven retrofitting had never previously been undertaken at the level implemented by Build Change.

Build Change’s impact has gone beyond building safer houses and has improved the livelihood of hundreds of construction professionals, site supervisors, block makers and other workers. Our training has also provided new marketable skills to hundreds of young adults in Haiti’s northern, western and southern regions, which will scale up the spread of safe construction practices. Across the board, Build Change has invested in women, who have created better homes and livelihoods for their families, and led change in the country.

Build Change has capitalized our experience in various countries and settings to streamline and standardize the evaluation, design and supervision processes for building and retrofitting houses and schools. Our objective is to reach the millions of people living in unsafe houses and children learning in dangerous schools in the next few years to protect them from future disasters.
What is a Retrofit?
A method of strengthening and renovating damaged buildings using a number of construction techniques:
- concreting walls
- adding columns
- adding plinth beams
- adding new walls & footing to the foundations
- reinforcing windows & doors

Build Change has been working in Haiti since the earthquake in 2010, and has become the leading implementer of homeowner-driven retrofitting and reconstruction in the country, having built and retrofitted more homeowner-driven houses than any other agency.

In urban slums, retrofitting is a cost-effective way of rebuilding after an earthquake, as well as a preventive measure in anticipation of future natural disasters. The retrofit procedure not only addresses earthquake damage, but corrects structural inadequacies that may have existed beforehand. Undamaged structures may have been lucky in the most recent earthquake, but they still need to be retrofitted if they are to be safe from future earthquakes.

Retrofitting is a method that is applicable to the major part of houses made of masonry. Overall, an average of 76% of the 2,680 houses Build Change assessed in seven neighborhoods were evaluated as technically retrofittable.

Red-tagged houses are retrofittable. Build Change is the first organization to successfully and safely retrofit red-tagged buildings, where the building is otherwise so severely damaged it would be unsafe to inhabit. In 2011, Build Change, in partnership with Degenkolb Engineers, tested a retrofit solution. They applied several retrofit features that were undertaken at a much lower cost and within a shorter timeframe than it would take to build a new house. This work paved the way for Build Change and project partner Cordaid to consider expanding retrofitting to red-tagged houses, helping families get back into safe, permanent housing much more quickly.

As of June 2013, 426 – or 45% – of the buildings retrofitted by Build Change were red-tagged.

Retrofitting is an alternative and more sustainable method of repairing yellow-tagged houses. The successful development, piloting and scaling of the retrofit evaluation procedure by Build Change provided a de-facto earthquake-resilient alternative to repairing yellow-tagged houses (one that has been moderately damaged to the degree that its habitability is limited).

Retrofitting is a method recognized and approved by MTPTC for small confined masonry buildings. The retrofitting resources created by Build Change and Degenkolb were approved by the MTPTC, and are included as a technical appendix to the MTPTC’s Retrofit Guide, which was published in January 2013.

Retrofitting is a method applicable to larger confined masonry buildings, such as schools. The retrofit technique has been used for the rehabilitation of school buildings, and already successfully implemented for the retrofit of 2 schools in Port-au-Prince, in partnership with Global Communities and the American Red Cross. It showed that structural improvement of a school building to withstand earthquakes and improve architecture and comfort in learning to meet the Ministry of Education recommendations can be combined.

“Within a matter of seconds, I lost everything – the house and my studio. It is thanks to Build Change that I have a solid and safe house now.”
- Benisette Pierre Louis Homeowner in Villa Rosa
Empowering Homeowners to Rebuild Safely

The homeowner-driven approach is designed to ensure the coordination with the government authorities, and to meet their standards.

The homeowner-driven approach enables homeowners to make decisions about materials and architecture, hiring builders and procuring building materials with funding provided in installments, along with technical assistance.

Homeowners empowerment: one of the cornerstones of the homeowner-driven approach’s success. Through this process, homeowners are empowered to make informed decisions to meet the needs of their families. This empowerment leads to a much greater level of “buy-in”, which engages homeowners at the level required for them to supervise the retrofit of their homes. More than 85% of construction works that have started were completed, which proves that most homeowners complied with the process and were committed to making their home safe.

The combination between technical assistance to construction and subsidies administration can be implemented with efficient systems. Prior to Haiti, Build Change had not undertaken the management of cash transfers. In Haiti, however, not only did we implement it ourselves, especially in Carrefour-Feuilles and Martissant, but we also developed systems and processes, now used in a number of other countries, to maximize quality control and minimize the risk of loss or mismanagement of funds.

Partnering with a national commercial bank for the subsidy disbursement administration. Build Change partnered with Sogebank, one of Haiti’s major commercial banks, which opened accounts with preferential terms for homeowners, builders and beneficiaries of housing subsidies.

In Haiti, Build Change has provided technical assistance in many vulnerable neighborhoods in the municipality of Port-au-Prince, Delmas, and Carrefour, implementing homeowner-driven construction projects since 2011.

As of the end of 2017, Build Change’s technical assistance has enabled more than 3,600 households to rebuild or retrofit their homes, corresponding to $6.7 million in subsidies paid from 2011 to 2017.

Lavi Miyò Nan KATye Pam
(or “a better life in my neighborhood” in Haitian Creole).

In partnership with the American Red Cross and Global Communities, the LAMIKA program focused on reconstruction and recovery efforts in Port-au-Prince through social engagement, infrastructure development and livelihood advancement. Between 2014 and 2016, this program enabled more than 500 families to live in safer homes through retrofitting and expansion projects, allowed more than 450 kids to attend safe schools, and increased the disaster-resistant construction and retrofitting skills of more than 500 builders and engineers. [Video]

“LAMIKA is a real accomplishment, which will have lasting impact on the quality of life and economy of this area, which was so devastated by the 2010 earthquake.”
- LeGrand L. Malany
Disaster Response and Mass Care Consultant at Illinois Emergency Management Agency/Former Senior Shelter Delegate at American Red Cross

Helping Haiti Home

J/P HRO implemented a neighborhood improvement program in Delmas 32 to facilitate the return of displaced camp dwellers to their old neighborhoods. Many houses in the neighborhood were intact but required structural upgrades in order to become earthquake-resistant. Build Change partnered with J/P HRO to provide technical assistance for owner-driven retrofitting to more than 300 families, as well as overall capacity-building related to the construction efforts.

“The participants and J/P HRO were very pleased with the outcome of the homeowner-driven retrofits and project’s impact on the community’s knowledge about safe construction.”
- Benjamin Krause
Former Country Director for J/P HRO

Projet d’Aménagement et de Reconstruction de Martissant

Starting in 2015, Build Change created our first technical assistance program to be fully funded by, and under direct supervision of, the Haitian government: the “Projet d’Aménagement et de Reconstruction de Martissant” (The Martissant Development and Reconstruction Project – AREMA). This project aims to support families affected by the earthquake in their efforts to rebuild or retrofit their homes according to safe construction standards.

We have worked closely with key public institutions through the process of assisting owners: Port-au-Prince’s municipal offices, the MTPTC and the Laboratoire National du Bâtiment et des Travaux Publics (the National Laboratory of Building and Public Works – LNBTP) to provide permits, technical studies and monitor building works.

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In Haiti, Build Change has implemented homeowner-driven construction projects since 2011.

Port-au-Prince
(Villa Rosa, Carrefour-Feuilles, Christ-Roi, Martissant)
3,400 safer people

Delmas (Delmas 9, 11, 22)
900 safer people

Carrefour
(Tisque, Nan Coceau)
3195 safer people

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Community-Driven Infrastructure Construction is a viable method for improving schools and public spaces in Haiti

**School committee-driven school retrofit**

Build Change has supported two committee-driven school retrofits, including the upgrading of evacuation routes and classroom lighting and ventilation, with the aim of meeting, when possible, the recommendations of the MENFP.

The retrofits were safely implemented in multiple phases to accommodate school schedules, and the work was efficiently split between several builders in order to reduce disruption to students. School committees were required to hire builders affiliated to REZO, our network of certified construction professionals whose expertise means the amount of supervision needed is significantly lowered.

**Community-based organizations/neighbors-driven retaining walls**

In neighborhoods built on hillsides, site hazard mitigation – the installation of retaining walls in multiple structures – must be addressed. In order to build new houses, new retaining walls are often required. In retrofitting existing structures, the evaluation and retrofit of existing retaining walls (often including foundation or basement walls) is vital. Community members have been enlisted to create infrastructure projects with methods similar to the homeowner-driven program. This has allowed for the integration of both public and private spheres in neighborhood rehabilitation programs, furthering the safe-construction message throughout the community.

Build Change has implemented retaining wall evaluation, construction, and retrofit components as a part of our reconstruction programs. Engineers have been able to evaluate hazards relating to retaining walls during the evaluation of buildings, and thus include the retrofit of retaining walls as part of the overall retrofit scheme.

**Villa Rosa**

The homeowner-driven reconstruction program and slum-upgrading project set the standard for the integrated neighborhood approach that has characterized the Haitian reconstruction effort.

This project was the first of its kind, and set best practices for many projects to follow:

- Technically, with homeowner-driven retrofitting, demonstrating that red-tagged houses could be retrofitted.
- Programmatically, with the regulation of reconstruction subsidies and their disbursement in tranches.

The Villa Rosa neighborhood improvement project (funded by Cordaid) successfully showed that retaining walls (sometimes large enough to support several houses), pathways, drainage channels and other public infrastructure elements, such as benches and public squares, can all be funded and upgraded in an owner-driven manner. This was undertaken by asking communities to select one representative from their group to be the recipient of all tranches of funding related to non-housing projects.
REZO has helped affiliates reduce production costs, increase sales and vastly increase concrete block quality. In fact, every single block-making affiliate now produces better blocks, and many affiliates have mechanized and expanded their business.

REZO’s purpose is to help develop Haiti’s informal construction sector, enabling it to provide safer, better-quality homes for Haitian families.

REZO provides small-scale Haitian builders and block-making business owners with the technical and administrative support they need to help change the construction industry. Through incentives – from our partnerships with the Haitian private sector and access to training – REZO is becoming a robust model of how public-private partnerships can make sustainable strides toward a safer future.

From significant improvements in product and service quality to growth well beyond the industry average, REZO affiliates are leading the development of better building practices in Haiti:

Program Highlights 2014 - 2017

- **SUSTAINED QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FOR EVERY REZO BLOCKMAKER**
- **25% GROWTH AND 200 NEW JOBS**
- **1,000,000 PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH NATIONWIDE MARKETING & DISASTER-RISK CAMPAIGNS**
- **60% INCREASE IN AFFILIATES’ SALES: OVER 12 MILLION GOOD-QUALITY BLOCKS SOLD, ENOUGH TO BUILD OVER 22,000 SAFER HOMES**
- **HUNDREDS OF GOOD-QUALITY BLOCK PRODUCERS & BUILDERS WITHIN 2.5KM (1.5 MI) FROM PORT-AU-PRINCE**
- **1,500 WORKERS TRAINED**

Examples of REZO Impacts

- **Reginald Vierge Blocs Vibrés** used its status as a REZO affiliate to secure a loan from Entrepreneurs du Monde that it used to buy a truck. Entrepreneurs du Monde is not a REZO partner, but REZO backing was key in the decision-making process.

- **Universal Blocs** secured two equipment loans totaling $20,000 from REZO partner Fonkoze. It was also given a 500-cement-bag line of credit from REZO partner IBO Kinkay. Between 2016 and 2018, Universal Blocs doubled its monthly production from 10,000 to 20,000 blocks, doubled its number of employees from 10 to 20, and increased its working days from four to six days per week. It has also become a REZO partner for the manufacture and construction of block-making machines, allowing it to diversify its economic activity.

- **Bijou Fab Blocs** was listed as a recommended supplier for a government housing project funded by the French Development Agency and technically supported by Build Change. It became the project’s largest block supplier and increased its sales by an estimated 150%. Immediate profits were used to buy a new block machine.

- **Dumest Fabrique Blocs** diversified its economic activity by becoming a REZO partner for the manufacture of block machines, crushers, mixers and generators. The following year its turnover increased by 60%.

- **Fredy’s Blocs** secured a $12,120 grant from PADF, which it used to buy a new machine and a second crusher to meet increasing demands. Its sales have increased by nearly 40% since joining REZO in January 2015.

- **Super Blocs Vibrés** used REZO support to legally register as a business, which in turn allowed it to apply for, and receive, a $2,500 equipment loan from REZO partner Fonkoze, which it used to buy a generator.

- **Prudence Blocs** secured an $8,850 grant from PADF, which it used to build a warehouse for curing and storage.

- **Valable Production Blocs** received a $7,500 working capital loan from REZO partner Fonkoze.

See more information about the media tools developed and their links in the Technical Resources section.
How Haitian Engineers & Construction Workers Drive Change

Widline comes from Carrefour-Feuilles, one of the areas of Port-au-Prince that was severely damaged by the earthquake in 2010. She started her masonry career as an apprentice, in a program run by Build Change. She then became intern on construction work sites and enrolled in Build Change builder training program to become certified in safer building techniques.

Very quickly, she managed her own team of construction workers. It wasn’t long before Build Change called her and asked her to lead the training program in which she had once been a student.

“I’m looking ahead, beyond masonry,” she says. “I’m going to school on weekends to learn civil engineering and I would like to own my own construction company.”

“Build Change trained me for the job market with its masonry construction system, wood construction methods. At Build Change, I had a solid background, and of all the NGOs I have worked for after Build Change, I can say that Build Change is the only one to provide its employees with training that could help them to be hired for others positions in other NGOs.”

- Former Build Change Construction Trainer (2012)

“Build Change is among the best organizations that we have worked with, especially when it comes to education.”
- Charles Hygin Raymond, Director at Haiti’s Ministry of Public Works, Transportation and Communication

Promoting technical excellence among the reconstruction efforts

More than 200 Haitian engineers from the public and private sectors and construction professionals, all of whom were trained by Build Change in the past eight years, are now able to conduct evaluations and retrofits in case of a future disaster, or if the government decides to set up a subsidy program to retrofit the houses of vulnerable families.

A technical excellence shared and transferred to national stakeholders and international relief agencies. Build Change trained 140 engineers and architects employed by Build Change and relief and development agencies, such as CARE and others, as well as 60 MTPTC engineers in safe housing design and construction methods and retrofitting.

Support to the Haitian government for public school building assessment. 30 MENFP engineers at central and departmental level were trained in the diagnosis of the structural and architectural needs of public schools. Build Change has developed a system allowing the MENFP to produce an inventory of the state of existing buildings and school equipment, as well as a preliminary rehabilitation plan to meet the structural and architectural standards. This directory of schools will allow better planning and decision-making for the rehabilitation or reconstruction of schools in the future.

Technical skills that stay sustainably in Haiti. After being trained and mentored by Build Change, many engineers were able to continue to work in their chosen field despite high unemployment rates in the country, and a significant number went on to work with other NGOs in housing construction. All of the engineers surveyed said Build Change had been a major factor in their ability to continue working as engineers for other development agencies or in the private sector.

Overall improvement of the population resilience to natural disasters. These extensive efforts to build the capacity and capabilities of construction and engineering professionals have created a higher resilience to disasters; such training has not only helped informal workers reduce their own vulnerability, but has also ensured a level of security for Haiti’s urban population through better construction quality in the informal and formal sectors. And so, in the case of an earthquake, cyclone or subsidence, hundreds of builders and engineers will have the ability to participate in post-disaster rehabilitation efforts.

Build Change has retrofitted the largest number of houses in the informal sector since the earthquake. With this knowledge and its team of professional engineers with international experience/ backgrounds, Build Change has been proud to guarantee the quality of training, and the concrete results this brings. Build Change can also utilize our excellent knowledge of construction standards and regulations in Haiti.

Eng. Minouche Barony has worked at Build Change since 2011, as a team leader for construction.

She thinks that “Build Change’s work is great work that makes a big difference.”

See her full interview here.

At Build Change, I learned to work independently, to elaborate technical training tools, to formulate quick messages to be remembered by the general public and all that allowed me to succeed at my current position.”

- Former Build Change Engineer/Team Leader (2010-2012)

Eng. Minouche Barony has worked at Build Change since 2011, as a team leader for construction.

She thinks that “Build Change’s work is great work that makes a big difference.”

See her full interview here.

Born from the association of 8 civil engineers, an architect engineer and a project manager, all having worked with Build Change, the Société de Construction Moderne d’Haiti (SOCOMHA) has been present on the civil construction market in Haiti since January 2014. SOCOMHA signed a partnership with REZO in 2016 to assist the REZO foremen under any execution contract to ensure the application of good construction practices.

SOCIÉTÉ DE CONSTRUCTION MODERNE D’HAÏTI (SOCOMHA)
Technical Resources

**Technical & Construction Resources**

- **Guide de Renforcement Parasismique & Paracyclonique de Bâtiments**
- **Retrofit Picture Guide: A Visual Aid for the Execution of Seismic Retrofit**
- **A Practical Handbook for Safe Housing Expansion**
- **Sékere pou Bati Kay Masonri Chene** (The Secrets of Earthquake-Resistant Construction)
- **Hurricane Matthew Post-Disaster Reconnaissance Report**

**Awareness Resources**

- **The House of Knowledge**: A community building centered around disaster-resistant construction
- **Build Back Better Posters** (endorsed by Ministry of Public Works)
- **REZO: Disaster-Resistant Construction Professionals in Haiti** (Video)
- **Radio Spot** (2013)
- **Key Messages on Safer House Practices**

**Management & Implementation Guidelines**

- **Seismic Retrofit of Housing in Post-Disaster Situations**: Basic Engineering Principles for Development Professionals: A Primer
- **Site & Retaining Wall Hazard Mitigation in Post-Disaster Situations**: A Primer
- **Building Back Housing in Post-Disaster Situations**: Basic Engineering Principles for Development Professionals: A Primer
- **Implementing a Homeowner-Driven Construction Program**: Guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures, and Recommendations
- **Homeowner-Driven Housing Reconstruction and Retrofitting in Haiti**: Lessons Learned, 4 year After the Earthquake
- **Les Producteurs de blocs de la zone métropolitaine de Port-au-Prince**

These resources and more can also be found at [buildchange.org/resources](http://buildchange.org/resources)
Build Change partnerships with the Government, the private sector and the international community

By building the capacity of local public and private stakeholders, Build Change aims to change construction practices permanently, and for retrofitting to become the new norm for homeowners in informal neighborhoods.

International Non-Governmental Organizations

Build Change demonstrated the homeowner-driven method could be applied to retrofitting and could be successfully scaled up to 1,000 houses at a time, after the implementation of projects in Villa Rosa and Delmas 32.

Reconstructions programs at large scale. In 2011 and 2012, with the Villa Rosa project, in partnership with Cordaid, and the Delmas 32 project, in partnership with J/P HRO, Build Change demonstrated, through technical assistance to homeowners, that the homeowner-driven method could be applied to retrofitting and could be successfully scaled up to large communities.

Homeowner subsidy disbursement framework adapted to key construction steps. Build Change tested different tranche disbursement methods and successfully shared with donors, partners and the Haitian government a proof of concept that centered around a three-tranche disbursement scheme of (originally) a $1,500 subsidy per house. The system was then refined to retrofit larger houses by applying the $1,500 subsidy on a per-family basis, due for part to Build Change advocacy.

International community engagement through advocacy. Build Change provided our training-of-trainer schemes to partner organizations and shared the lessons we learned at the International Conference on Earthquake Resistant Conception of Structures (CISP) in January 2014. Additionally, strong technical advocacy by Build Change for retrofitting, as well as its adoption by institutional donors such as the World Bank and the European Union, made the technology freely available to numerous neighborhood improvement projects from 2011 to the present day.

International Non-Governmental Organizations

American Red Cross
CARE
Cordaid
Entrepreneurs du Monde
French Red Cross
Global Communities
J/P HRO
Solidarités International

Partner Organizations
Build Change believes that permanent change is possible only if key institutions and stakeholders involved in construction are part of the process. This is why, since the beginning, we have partnered with key Haitian government departments responsible for the formulation and enforcement of construction codes and standards as well as the capacity building of professionals in the sector –the MTPTC, UCLBP and MENFP – to leave a legacy of sustainable reforms to construction practices.

Due to Build Change advocacy and work to capitalize experience, the Haitian government body created to oversee housing construction - the Unité de Construction de Logements et Bâtiments Publics (the Housing and Public Buildings Construction Unit – UCLBP) - now emphasizes homeowner-driven housing reconstruction. As a result, key institutions, including the EU/EuropeAID, Agence Française de Développement and the American Red Cross now require partners to adopt homeowner-driven reconstruction for small housing units.

Build Change provided training-of-trainer schemes to partner organizations and shared our lessons learned at the International Conference on Earthquake Resistant Engineering Structures (CISP) in January 2014. These strongly inspired and influenced the work of many Haitian organizations including the UCLBP.

Build Change was a leading participant in the housing sector working group led by the UCLBP, and developed technical resources on homeowner-driven construction for use by all partners.

Furthermore, following the damage caused by Hurricane Matthew, which hit the southern region of Haiti in October 2016, the UCLBP strongly recommended that NGOs adopt the homeowner-driven construction method, demonstrating its sustainable and effective legacy.

Our partnership with the UCLBP, which began in 2015, saw the creation of our first technical assistance program to be fully funded by, and under the direct supervision of, the Haitian government. The "Projet d'Aménagement et de Reconstruction de Martissant" (AREMA) aims to rebuild or retrofit the homes of families affected by the earthquake in accordance with government construction standards.

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Unité de Construction de Logements et Bâtiments Publics (UCLBP)

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Build Change has been an active partner of the MTPTC since 2011, and has a Memorandum of Agreement to provide them with technical assistance, input on building standards and communication materials on safe construction.

In 2011, Build Change worked closely with the MTPTC to revise the official guide for the retrofitting of small houses, which was then finalized and distributed in early 2013. Since its release, any organization performing retrofit work in Haiti has to conform to these guidelines to ensure reconstruction efforts incorporate safe building standards.

MTPTC technical staff were closely linked to the development of retrofit resources, through:

1. A working group hosted and directed by the MTPTC
2. The training by Build Change of 60 MTPTC engineers on retrofit evaluation procedures
3. The embedding of MTPTC engineers in Build Change and our partners’ programs to sign off on retrofit designs and conduct field inspections of retrofit houses.

Build Change worked with the government to develop simple guidelines and design practices for earthquake-resistant houses, in addition to creating a system for monitoring and simple inspection and organizing the implementation of these standards. Our technical resources will serve the nation long after the completion of the program.

Build Change designed a set of simple and technical messages on safe construction techniques to promote the building of earthquake-resistant homes. Three simple messages were created and printed onto 28,000 posters and flyers then disseminated through a variety of channels and 60-plus organizations active in housing.

Build Change has been working with the MTPTC since 2017 on a protocol detailing the approach, method and standards for certifying the quality of builders and concrete block makers to become REZO affiliates. The protocol is currently under approval. This approval will not only contribute to REZO’s sustainability, but more importantly will improve the quality of products and services provided by construction professionals on the market, and contribute to significantly increasing the stock of disaster-resistant buildings.

This high-level relationship impacts tens of thousands of lives and buildings.
Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle (MENFP)

Instituting a nationally recognized qualification in disaster-resistant construction is a vital part of creating an infrastructure to promote safe building standards in Haiti. Build Change’s work with the INFP to introduce safe construction training modules to the national curriculum will only strengthen these efforts.

In 2016, Build Change partnered with the education ministry’s Institut National de Formation Professionnelle (National Institute of Vocational Training – INFP) and Centre de Compétence en Reconstruction (Center of Competence in Reconstruction – CCR) to develop Haiti’s first national qualification in disaster-resistant construction.

As an active member of the Plateforme de Coordination Opérationnelle – Filière Construction (Construction Sector Operational Coordination Platform), Build Change worked alongside the INFP, the MTPTC, the CCR and other partners to integrate disaster-resistant construction training modules into the national curriculum since the end of 2015.

Build Change has taken the first steps in opening this curriculum to the general public in Port-au-Prince by partnering with, and providing training on behalf of, CFPH Canado Technique, a well-known vocational training school accredited by the INFP.

With support from USAID, we then helped build the training and supervisory capacity of INFP trainers in northern Haiti, who have since used this curriculum to help certify 25 builders and 176 apprentices in the region.

After Hurricane Matthew in October 2016, Build Change extended our use of this curriculum to the south, where we partnered with a private vocational training center to train and certify 22 builders participating in the reconstruction process.

Assessing schools and creating an inventory is the first step toward retrofitting them and ensuring a safe, positive learning environment for the next disaster.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education in 2017 to build the capacity of their engineers to conduct structural assessments of all of Haiti’s public schools. This project will allow the MENFP to assess the retrofit or reconstruction needs of all schools across Haiti, prioritizing those most in need and then incorporating that information into their next budget and planning cycle.

30 engineers from the Ministry were trained to perform architectural and structural evaluations, and ultimately assessed 71 public schools around the country.

This project will enable the MENFP to assess the need for retrofitting or rebuilding all schools across Haiti, prioritizing those who need it most and incorporating this information into their next budget and planning cycle.

“We have partnered with the international enterprise Build Change, which enabled us to provide our Kredi Bèl Kay clients with loans, but also with engineers and quality materials to build their chosen homes.”

- Pierre Marie Boisson, Sogesol (2010-2012)

Haiti Private Sector/Finance Partnerships

Access to finance for homeowners and construction professionals is essential to sustainably increase the resilience of communities to natural disasters. Build Change has worked with the Haitian financial sector to facilitate access to financing, for homeowners retrofitting their house, and for block makers and builders to enable them to grow their business while keeping the high quality of the products and services they offer.

Progressive inclusion of disadvantaged segments of the population in the banking system

Homeowner-driven projects have enabled the introduction of banking to sections of the population that were previously unfamiliar with, or did not trust, such methods of managing their money.

Build Change partnered with Sogebank, one of Haiti’s major commercial banks, which opened accounts with preferential terms for homeowners benefitting construction subsidies, and builders to provide an easier access to the formal banking sector.

Surveys show that homeowners and builders have continued to use banks, with 66% still using the account initially opened to receive their subsidies in LAMIKA project, for example. Build Change provided homeowners with guidance and tools on how to adequately manage a budget, in the context of the construction subsidies, which allowed them to save money, and to use their bank accounts.

Sogesol Kredi Bel Kay, housing microfinance access for homeowners

With the support of the international finance corporation Sogesol, a major Haitian microfinance institution (MFI) refined its Kredi Bel Kay (KBK) home-improvement micro-credit product to include construction assistance.

Sogesol and Build Change formed a partnership to implement a two-year pilot project (from 2013 to 2015) in Port-au-Prince whereby Build Change provided site evaluations, design services and site inspections for KBK clients.

The project resulted in a number of loans being issued to help families retrofit their homes. More importantly, the project allowed Build Change and Sogesol to understand more about the challenges low-income families face in taking on new debt for home improvements such as retrofitting, allowing them and other lending partners to design programs to potentially reach more customers.

Fonkoze: Access to Microfinance for Construction Sector SME’s

In 2015, with the support of the Clinton Global Initiative, Build Change and Fonkoze committed to addressing the lack of access to financing currently available for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the construction sector in Haiti, a factor which prohibits their ability to grow their businesses and produce higher quality products.

Build Change and Fonkoze developed and piloted a loan product tailored for certified block manufacturing SMEs in Port-au-Prince, which combines the loan offer and technical support.

Based on feedback from REZO affiliates, Fonkoze adapted further its offer to the needs of entrepreneurs and expanded its product line to cashflow financing.
Impacts On Homeowners, Construction Professionals & Government

Skills Development

In Haiti, Build Change has pioneered the development of construction training centers with a comprehensive practical training infrastructure. Our “work station” method enables groups of builders and apprentices to simultaneously work on all the key elements of a disaster-resistant house, from the foundations to the roof.

Module-based training provides the necessary flexibility for the inclusion of informal workers in vocational training and the improvement of practical skills. Build Change has trained and certified over 1,500 builders and apprentices in Haiti using a variety of training formats. Training sessions are short and modular, meaning builders can skip or retake sessions according to their needs. Whenever possible, training isn’t limited in time, and builders have the chance to progressively demonstrate new skills as and when they acquire them, taking as long or as little as they need to become certified.

The competency-based approach is essential to include informal experienced workers. In 2013, Build Change restructured our training methodology to incorporate the principles of competency-based learning. This system is gradually being adopted in vocational training schools worldwide and has, in our experience, proved to be especially relevant and effective for building capacity in post-disaster construction projects. The scheme trains supervisors in each element of the construction process so they can successfully lead their team and ensure disaster-resistant construction standards.

Training is an integral part of post-disaster relief, as well as for prevention of future disasters. With funding from USAID, Build Change set up a training program in Les Cayes in 2017 to train local builders in better construction practices, building the capacity of the construction sector to support homeowners in retrofitting or rebuilding their homes after Hurricane Matthew.

Build Change, in partnership with Save the Children, the Hilti Foundation, the Medicor Foundation, Global Communities, the American Red Cross, and USAID, has been working with 250 building material suppliers to improve the quality of concrete blocks produced by small and medium-sized block manufacturers to meet minimum standards for construction in seismic zones.

One of the reasons why so many houses collapsed in Haiti was the poor quality of construction materials. To overcome this problem, Build Change has begun working with small and medium-sized block makers to teach them how to produce higher-quality blocks, and help create demand for those blocks. This process not only supports local businesses and strengthens the supply chain, it also affects long-term change in construction practice.

Build Change believes that using local materials and creating local jobs is essential to sustainable, long-term recovery after a disaster.

Build Change uses a competency-based model to build the engineering and risk-reduction capacity of engineers, government officials, NGO staff, homeowners, builders and material suppliers. In Haiti, we have trained over 1,500 builders. We also run REZO, a rewards and accreditation program for informal builders and material suppliers.

Population/Institutions’ increase of awareness for safe construction practices

Without a demand for safe construction practices, our technology and methods would not serve any purpose nor make an impact. It is critical to stimulate demand for them by educating the public, so that demand will drive the market, creating a positive cycle.

Build Change has been involved in several ways to increase awareness of the importance of safe construction practices across many levels of Haitian society. This is where permanent change starts.

“It is time for us to change the way we build”

At the governmental and international community level, Build Change held “mixers,” or gatherings, on a regular basis throughout our eight years in Haiti. The objective of these events was to undertake technical advocacy and to showcase the lessons learned from projects we implemented. We invited representatives from partner organizations, UN agencies, institutional donors, multilateral banks, private-sector partners and the Haitian government. Mixer topics included: Safe new construction designs; “Build Back Better” awareness and promotion materials; Homeowner-driven reconstruction; among other topics.

Build Change also participated regularly in government events and in the Haiti Action Network, organized by the Clinton Global Initiative, where we advocated safe construction practices, including:

- January 12, 2012: Launch of the MTPTC communications campaign.
- July 12, 2015: Haiti Construction Expo & Trade Fair (MATCON).
- September 16, 2017: Caribbean Forum on Seismic Risk. Regional event organized by the Haitian government.

Le a rive pou nou chance jan n’ap konstwi (“The time has come for us to change the way we build”): In 2011, Build Change distributed thousands of flyers and posters about safe building practices to homeowners, government officials, NGOs, technical schools and building material suppliers.

Keep your family safer from earthquakes and typhoons by making sure your house follows six basic principles:

After the devastating Hurricane Matthew in October 2016, Build Change developed key messages on simple techniques to rebuild safely, from the foundations to the roof. We adapted our existing material to include techniques for wooden structures, commonly used in the southern region of the country.

Awareness-raising activities to inform the public of the importance of good construction practices.

Build Change also organized awareness activities in the neighborhoods and areas where we have worked and trained people, during which we organized quizzes on construction techniques, broadcast key messages from a mobile PA system, and distributed flyers and T-shirts:

- October 2014: Disaster Risk Reduction International Day, in Carrefour Feuilles in partnership with the American Red Cross.
- January 2015: Commemoration of the 2010 earthquake in Onaville and Canaan.
- June 2016/January 2017: Awareness Day in Martissant in partnership with UCLBP and MTPTC.
- August 2016: Awareness Caravan, in Cap Haitian, Caracol, Fort Liberté and Ouanaminthe.
- October 2017: Awareness Day in Les Cayes.

Surveys taken before and after the events showed that the public’s knowledge of safe construction practices generally improved, and people were now more conscious about using good construction materials and skilled builders.
“REZO gives communities the opportunity to access high quality materials and services in order to build safer buildings”

Notable Haitian public figures Kako and Ricky Juste officially joined REZO in July 2016 as brand ambassadors, to promote REZO and safer construction practices on radio and television, as well as in person at numerous public events and community activities.

Kako and Ricky Juste have been critical in channeling REZO and Build Change’s messages about safe construction practices as they embody positivity in the community’s eyes, and have been able to gather large audiences.

Their involvement in Build Change and the REZO mission has included:

- Presenting the video promoting REZO and its network of certified construction professionals
- Participating in community awareness schemes across the country since 2016
- Advocating for safe construction practices and the use of good-quality blocks on major radio and television shows
- Creating comedy sketches about the need for good-quality building materials
Putting resources back into the local economy and improving communities’ livelihood

Construction practices. Many REZO block-manufacturing SME affiliates have mechanized and expanded their businesses. They have 80% of REZO supervisor affiliates have reported higher incomes. In 2017 alone, REZO has facilitated over 30 building contracts, with more expected in 2018. The Government plays a major role in stimulating the supply and offer of safe construction practices. REZO is being officially recognized by MTPTC as a certification body for builders’ skills and block makers’ products, which will critically increase the quality level of construction practices on the market, as well as the demand for safe construction practices.

Retooling is undertaken with local materials and labor, putting resources back into the local economy. Our technical assistance in retrofitting homeowners’ houses has already generated 6,570 temporary jobs within communities. Moreover, workers acquire marketable skills through our training, and many are reported to have been employed on work sites beyond the program due to their skill levels, providing them with earnings and resulting in skilled professionals remaining in the industry.

Many REZO block-manufacturing SME affiliates have mechanized and expanded their businesses. They have experienced a 25% growth on average over four years. As a result, they have created 200 jobs – and counting – as they continue to grow. 80% of REZO supervisor affiliates have reported higher incomes. In 2017 alone, REZO has facilitated over 30 building contracts, with more expected in 2018. The Government plays a major role in stimulating the supply and offer of safe construction practices. REZO is being officially recognized by MTPTC as a certification body for builders’ skills and block makers’ products, which will critically increase the quality level of construction practices on the market, as well as the demand for safe construction practices.

"Since becoming a REZO affiliate I’ve doubled my sales and the size of my team" - Claude Debrosse, Universal Blocs

Women in the construction sector bring a significant added value throughout the value chain

Build Change looked for ways to increase the number of women involved in the program. This included builders and community members, as well as within Build Change’s own staffing profile. Women have shown to be the most involved in improving the housing conditions of their families. An estimated 47% of homeowners who Build Change supported with construction supervision were women. These 750 women led the construction supervision process to ensure that their home was safe for their families, and were among the most involved in these developments.

Some 184 women were trained in safe construction practices, of which 92 (50%) were experienced builders. We partnered with J/P HRO, as part of the World Bank-funded Adolescent Girls Initiative, to provide 34 female Haiti Tec students with a three-week internship and on-the-job training. We also partnered with the American Red Cross to provide 27 women with a five-week training program at the Canado Technique/Build Change training center. A number went on to be offered work after their internship period ended.

Women drive the change at all levels. Build Change’s Haiti team has included 56 women employees, or 28% of the complete team, 26 of whom were in technical positions and 22 were at management level.

After the earthquake, Guerda had to leave her damaged house to live in a tent camp, with her husband and son, when he became sick because of the sanitary conditions of the camp, and they decided to go back to their damaged house.

She heard about Build Change in the neighborhood. Her house was assessed and could be retrofitted.

Guerda led the construction process, from participating to the architectural design of the retrofit, to purchasing the building materials, hiring the builder, managing the subsidy budget and overseeing the building site.

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Women drive the change at all levels. Build Change’s Haiti team has included 56 women employees, or 28% of the complete team, 26 of whom were in technical positions and 22 were at management level.
Build Change has capitalized our experience in various countries and settings to streamline and standardize the evaluation, design and supervision processes for building and retrofitting houses and schools. Our objective is to reach the millions of people living in unsafe houses and children learning in dangerous schools in the next few years to protect them from future disasters.

New technologies play a critical role in standardizing processes and scaling up programs, and Build Change will continue to innovate and incorporate new technologies in our work.

Build Change believes that the three key components – money, technology, people – must be combined to ensure disaster-resistant practices are sustainably applied and accessible to all. Access to financing is a challenging but critical component if retrofitting and safe construction are to be available for everyone. We are capitalizing on our experiences with our partners to develop financing mechanisms for retrofitting and reconstruction schemes.

We are also extending our activities in the south of Haiti to support the reconstruction efforts following Hurricane Matthew. We are building on the technical resources we have developed since October 2016, as well as holding training sessions with builders, workers and block manufacturers to assist the rebuilding process.

We are still committed to the northern population, too, where we have supported the creation of a pool of skilled construction professionals, as well as the expansion of REZO. We know that in the north there is a very high risk of natural disasters, and we should support the population now in order to save lives during the next catastrophe.

Build Change wants everybody – adults and children alike – to be safe at home and in school, and we are committed to supporting further efforts in disaster-risk reduction throughout the country.

Build Change cannot reach the scale we believe is needed on our own; that’s why we look forward to working with more key institutions and partners like those we have collaborated with throughout these eight years, so we can achieve greater results.
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Build Change saves lives in earthquakes and windstorms by working with people in emerging nations to build homes and schools that will protect their families and children.