



Who's Benefitting from Project Haiti?

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Written by **Marisa Long**

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USGBC's Marisa Long in Haiti

As part of the USGBC community, you've been introduced to [Project Haiti](#) over the past year. You've heard us talk about rebuilding this orphanage and children's center in Port-au-Prince that was destroyed in the earthquake that devastated the region just over two years ago.

You know that Project Haiti is set to achieve [LEED Platinum](#) and the impact that will have - from creating jobs and teaching local Haitians how to "build back better" to providing a resilient model for rebuilding that all countries can learn from and replicate. As Roger Limoges, Project Haiti lead and vice president of organizational development at USGBC says, "If we can build LEED Platinum in Haiti, we can do it anywhere." Project Haiti is a powerful symbol of what's possible in the green building movement and its impact will be vast.



But it's of course more than that. What you haven't heard us talk much about is [Fondation Enfant Jesus](#) (FEJ), the beneficiaries of Project Haiti. It wasn't until last week, when I traveled to Haiti myself, met the amazing people from FEJ and spent time with the children and staff at their facilities, that I fully understood the impact this project will have on FEJ and the communities it unselfishly serves.

Traveling with Roger and HOK's lead architect on the project, Thomas Knittel, I spent time with our wonderful hosts Gina and Lucien Duncan, founders of FEJ, a couple who has dedicated their lives to humanitarian work and creating a future for Haitian families. Gina describes FEJ's work best when she says, "we are creating a model to educate entire communities, especially women and children, to create a change in the culture and to break the cycle of poverty."

This is a model that began more than 25 years ago when Lucien's mother - Lucienne Duncan, best known as "Manmie" - opened a non-denominational church in Lamardelle, a small village community on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. A school opened a few years later, followed by a clean water drinking program, electricity generation, agriculture programs, a healthcare clinic and education on health, hygiene, nutrition and finance for the community population of 20,000.

After several years, Gina and Lucien Duncan founded Fondation Enfant Jesus as a

way to build upon and expand the services at Lamardelle, create additional humanitarian programs in other locations and to begin operating orphanages, also known in Haiti as “crèches,” in Lamardelle and Kenscoff as well as a crèche in Port-au-Prince, the one that was completely destroyed by the earthquake. FEJ is one of Haiti’s most respected foundations, and the Duncan’s are proud of its impeccable reputation for how they handle adoptions. Gina is quick to note that “FEJ finds parents for children, not children for parents.” In a country plagued with children in need of loving homes, putting the young ones’ well being and emotional needs first has been her mission.

I had the opportunity to stay at the Kenscoff crèche, which is located high up in the mountains of Haiti, accessible only by a long, winding road that’s paved intermittently near the top and takes nearly two hours to get to from Port-au-Prince. There are about 35 children at this location, ranging from two-months to around 10 years old. The caregivers are wonderful, and the kids are amazing, but it was an emotional experience as several of the younger children raised their arms in competition to be embraced from the moment we arrived. I was reassured to learn that most of the Kenscoff children have been adopted and are going through a transition process. The children at the Lamardelle location have a future more uncertain, but after being orphaned and abandoned, and far too often handicapped, sick or malnourished, they are finally in a caring and safe environment thanks to FEJ.

By rebuilding the Port-au-Prince location into a brand new LEED facility, Project Haiti doesn’t just become a victory for the green building movement. This building is providing new hope and resources to FEJ and the Haitian community, ensuring many more families can be helped through FEJ’s services. Perhaps the most important element of Project Haiti is that through your support, the rebuilt Orphanage & Children’s Center in Port-au-Prince will take the burden of rebuilding off of FEJ, allowing them to focus on what they do best – improving communities, educating women and finding homes for the children who need them most.

We need your continued support, as we are about \$250,000 shy of our \$1 million goal to complete this project. Please visit the [Project Haiti page](#) and make your contribution today.

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Marisa Long
Public Relations & Communications Director
U.S. Green Building Council



USGBC staff

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