



Wash, waste and fun

- a creative approach to waste management, public health & children

Photostory by Jane Beesley/Oxfam



An enormous amount of rubbish is created in camps and dealing with it can be a big problem. In Petion-Ville Golf Camp Oxfam's Public Health team have been working with three local artists, and children to come up with an innovative and creative solution.

The Oxfam children's tent at Petion-Ville Golf Course camp
(Photo 931)

Initially the three professional artists, two of whom live in the camp, were given the challenge of coming up with ideas for recycling some of the most common items of rubbish found in the camp, like plastic bottles and food trays.

Artists Gabriel Casimir, Johnny Mervilier & Sanchez Martinez Evains, (photo 1035)



One of the ideas they came up with was converting the food trays into toy houses. The boxes are collected from designated rubbish bins. The children first wash and cut them up, before reassembling the pieces into houses and painting them in bright colours.

All the components (Photo 929)

Contact: Jane Beesley
HSP Programme Communications
jabeesley@oxfam.org.uk
Mobile +44 7768 176244



Cut down plastic bottles are used as paint pots. The children could be given their own set of pots and paints but one of the objectives of the programme was to encourage sharing and working

together. The artists work closing with the children - showing them how to mix colours and make up the toys.



Chewthson Jean Baptiste & Ange Laure Bertrand sharing paint pots (photo 989)
Thony Alexis & Saintelus Herby (photo 987)



The final touch is added with a public health message like 'Wash your hands after visiting the toilet', and 'Wash your hands before eating.' But the activity isn't just about learning about good public health practices, or encouraging them to think about recycling and waste management.

The finished product (photo 979)

'The stress from the earthquake is long lasting. The trauma is in their, and our, heads and hearts. This activity offers a distraction. This kind of programme keeps us all going. It stops us from thinking about what happened...it's an escape and it's helping them, and us, to recover, to restart our lives, to enjoy ourselves and have some fun.'

Sanchez Martinez Evains, artist



Dahana Phanord (photo 1017)

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‘There are no or few psychologists in Haiti. Adults are more resilient, it’s the children that need to find a way to express themselves...a place to escape to and they can come here and be children again.’

Tamara Bruna, Public Health Community Mobiliser

Photo 1021

‘We have learnt about washing hands, painting, drawing and making houses. When we go home we encourage others



to wash their hands. It’s a lot of fun here. There are others wanting to come and join us.’ Melissa Mervilus (11)



Melissa washing her hands (Photo 1023)

...adding, ‘Are you going to wash your hands now?’ (photo 965)

‘One of the things the children all have in common is that they all lost their homes in the earthquake. So it’s significant that they are making these houses...they are rebuilding houses, rebuilding their lives and in this way they have some control over their lives.’

Jane Maonga, Oxfam Public Health Promoter

Saintelus Herby & Carnielle Saintgermain (photos 950/954)



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The group, mostly aged 8 to 12, meet for 2 hours every Saturday so as not to interfere with school. Oxfam runs a number of different programmes with children in several camps...and now plans to include this, successful pilot activity elsewhere.

(Photo 1029)

May 2010

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