



Press Release

HAITI: COOPI AND GOAL KICK OFF THE FIRST EVACUATION EXERCISE IN 2016

On Thursday February 25, at 5.30 pm, the first evacuation exercise of 2016 organized by the INGOs COOPI and GOAL, will take place in Haiti, at the Village Gari of Saint Philomène (Tabarre municipality, Port au Prince). This activity is under the project “Strengthening the capacity of preparation, mitigation and response to disasters of the most vulnerable urban communities” financed by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO).

With the communities, the exercise will be an occasion to practice an evacuation due to landslides, and will be organized together with the Civil Protection (at regional, municipal and local level) and emergency intervention units (EIC) of the area.

This drill is the first of a 2016 series of emergency evacuation exercises that COOPI and GOAL will perform in several urban areas of the municipalities of Gressier, Port au Prince and Tabarre that are exposed to several risks such as earthquakes, landslides, floods, cyclones and tsunamis.

The aim is to strengthen communities' response capacity, trying to create automatic reflexes to better manage an emergency situation and avoid the greatest number of victims possible.

Several gimmicks are used to make the exercises realistic. One very appreciated by the beneficiaries is the ‘theatricalisation’ of the victims. They are from the community itself, made up with fake injuries and the Haitian Red Cross will take them in charge during the exercise. With these operations - and with the awareness that accompanies them – COOPI and GOAL aim to explain the importance of being well prepared in case of emergency in a practical and appealing way, in order to positively last in the population's memories.

“Haiti is a country very vulnerable to disasters. With this project we work to develop and support a methodological approach to respond and manage crisis situations in the urban areas of Port-au-Prince. We support local institutions (Civil Protection, EIC) in tools implementation for a more effective response and risk management system,” says Morena Zucchelli, representative of COOPI in Haiti and expert DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction).

"If we had been informed earlier about how to behave during an earthquake, perhaps there would be fewer victims that terrible January 12, 2010," says Hillien Woisky Saint Charles, 35 year old, beneficiary of one of last year evacuation exercise for earthquake. “Now I know, for example, that if a shock comes and I am outdoors, I have to turn away from buildings, trees, street lights, power lines and cover my head



because I could be hit by falling materials. In 2010, many people panicked and entered in buildings to find a shelter, instead of going away from them."

Communities' vulnerability in responding to the risks of disasters is one of the limits to sustainable and inclusive development in Haiti. The evacuation exercises are a very important practice to strengthen local capacity to respond to emergencies. In this regard, COOPI and GOAL realize the activities together, with an emphasis on strengthening local capacity on disaster preparedness.

For more info:

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