

DevInfo in Action

Dominican Republic: Using DevInfo to Assist Displaced Children

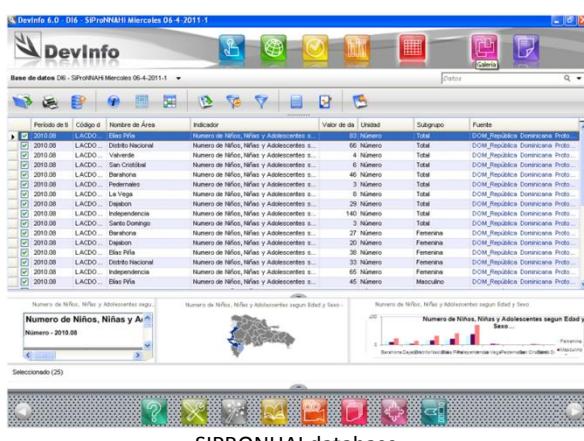
When the massive 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010, it instantly affected the lives of an estimated three million people, a large percentage of whom were children.¹ In addition to the immediate destruction measured in terms of lives lost, people injured, and homes destroyed was the plight of thousands of displaced children, separated from their families by the earthquake that struck while most were still in school.²

Alongside the praiseworthy efforts of many international aid groups and private individuals who rushed forward to assist with the needs of children displaced by the earthquake stands the lesser-known work of the National Council of Children (CONANI). Based in the neighboring country of Dominican Republic, where many displaced children ended up after traveling across the border in the post-earthquake chaos, CONANI is a Dominican government institution responsible for formulating public policy related to children.

With UNICEF support, CONANI spearheaded the development of a DevInfo database to monitor the situation of Haitian children displaced by the earthquake in Dominican territory. Dubbed “Sistema de Información de Protección de la Niñez Haitiana” or SIPRONHAI, the database provides a method of systematizing data on displaced Haitian children, thereby allowing the government to monitor and follow up with their needs.



Photo courtesy: UNICEF



Created under the leadership of Héctor Rodríguez, Manager of Information Systems, CONANI, SIPRONHAI contains quantitative and qualitative data on indicators categorized under four broad sectors:

¹ “Red Cross: 3M Haitians Affected by Quake,” CBS News website, 9 March 2010, accessed on 15 Sep 2011 at <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/01/13/world/main6090601.shtml?tag=cbsnewsSectionContent.4>.

² “Agencies Fear Traffickers Will Target Haiti’s Displaced Children,” FOX News website, 23 January 2010, accessed on 15 Sep 2011 at <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/01/23/agencies-fear-traffickers-target-haitis-displaced-children/>.

- Legislation and public policy – for example, the existence of institutional guidelines for the care of children displaced by the earthquake
- Local institutional capacity to attend to displaced children – for example, the number of shelters to house young Haitians
- Population attended to and type of attention given – for example, the number of children and adolescents returned to Haiti
- Socialization and sensitization – for example, the number of campaigns aimed at raising awareness among the local Dominican population of the need to protect children displaced by the earthquake

With all relevant data entered into the SIPRONHAI database, officials responsible for decision-making can easily compare information on displaced children across regions, provinces and municipalities, in the form of user-friendly tables, graphs and maps.

According to Nelson Medina, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF Dominican Republic, "SIPRONHAI has been designed as an information system to allow monitoring and follow up on identified cases of children and adolescents displaced by the earthquake in Haiti. It is intended to support efforts at reuniting them with families and ensuring their eventual return."

The database represents a commendable effort by the Dominican government to gather systematic information on the situation of displaced Haitian children, to help formulate policies to safeguard their well-being. It also has the added benefit of promoting cooperation between Dominican and Haitian authorities responsible for child welfare, thereby strengthening relations between the two neighbors.

With DevInfo in place, the Dominican government has a key tool to support its efforts to assist the most vulnerable victims of Haiti's earthquake.



Location of social work assistants

Data making a difference.

For more information, please contact Nelson Medina, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF Dominican Republic, at nmedina@unicef.org.