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CARIBBEAN

SUCCESS STORY

Building a Roof over Children's Heads

Two dozen orphans and homeless children find shelter after hurricane



Photo: PADCO/Craig Keller

USAID helps the Queen Elizabeth Home for Children in Grenada rebuild a home made uninhabitable by Hurricane Ivan.

“The children were very afraid as the weather got worse. They were all huddled together in a room where we put tables, with the big children on top of the tables and babies below,” said Shirley Eligon, manager of the Queen Elizabeth Home for Children.

Two years after Hurricane Ivan struck the Caribbean in 2004, the small island of Grenada is still struggling to recover from the devastation. The hurricane damaged 90 percent of the island's buildings, costing an estimated \$815 million and displacing

18,000 people. It also destroyed the roof of the Queen Elizabeth Home for Children in Tempe, St. Georges, leaving two dozen children with no place to go.

The Queen Elizabeth Home for abused, homeless, and abandoned children is staffed by six caregivers, who provide basic education and life skills training, counseling, and loving care to the children. The home's manager, Shirley Eligon, described coping with Hurricane Ivan as a nightmare.

“The children were very afraid as the weather got worse. They were all huddled together in a room where we put tables, with the big children

on top of the tables and babies below.” After the storm, the damage was so severe that Eligon had to find alternative shelter for those in her care. She looked to USAID for assistance. The children were moved to a three-bedroom rental house while USAID helped put a new and stronger roof on the Queen Elizabeth Home.

After the hurricane, USAID launched a \$42 million “build back better” recovery program for Grenada to construct buildings that would better withstand future disasters. With the funds, USAID has helped build hundreds of homes, schools, and clinics, using building methods that far exceed local “hurricane-proofing” standards. The refurbished buildings are safer — when the next hurricane inevitably hits, the children and staff at Queen Elizabeth's Home will be comforted in the knowledge that their building is made to withstand the storm.

Telling Our Story
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