



PHOTO & CAPTION

Women Stir Up Soccer Field Rehab



Photo: Bakary Sidibe, IOM

The women of Ti-Guinen voiced their displeasure at the lack of employment opportunities available for women.

Although it is unusual in Haitian culture for women to confront authority, unemployment and underemployment have spurred some to resort to extraordinary measures.

In a country where more than two-thirds of the labor force is not formally employed, the response to job opportunities is overwhelming and many workers are turned away. USAID sponsored a project to rehabilitate a soccer field in Petit Goâve to provide a community space and temporary employment for the neighborhood of Ti-Guinen. The field had been a prime gathering place for

young people, but it had fallen into disrepair. Local youths had attempted to repair the fencing with palm fronds, but that wasn't enough. A drainage ditch needed to be rehabilitated and the playing surface leveled and covered. Around 50 jobs were available, and rotation would allow 105 people overall to work at the site.

After the work began, 15 women complained to project coordinators that jobs were only being given to men. At a subsequent oversight committee meeting, 70 women made their case and successfully secured six positions to be rotated among eight women. They would be responsible for supplying water to the project site, specifically for the masons to mix concrete for the drainage ditch. This was no small task since the water needed to be carried in buckets to the site from a central water kiosk. The committee agreed with the women that the jobs should go to Ti-Guinen's most impoverished. Of the eight women employed, six were single mothers and the sole wage-earners of their families, and all were in dire need. This USAID project has allowed women a singular opportunity to make their voices heard and increase economic opportunities in their community.