

March 2018 Vol. 4 Issue 12

# civil + structural ENGINEER

CELEBRATING THE DESIGNERS OF THE WORLD AROUND US

## MASS TIMBER MILESTONE

Handling engineering firms' data flood

Incorporating open space into residential developments

Ohio's Smart Mobility Corridor

Best practices during pipeline shutdowns





Kit Miyamoto at the inauguration of the repaired and strengthened Cité Soleil school in Haiti.  
*Photo: Marie Elizabeth Arago*

## EIGHT YEARS AFTER

RETURN TO HAITI REVEALS LASTING IMPACTS FROM  
EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY EFFORTS.

ON JAN. 12, 2018, landing at the Port-au-Prince airport in Haiti, I smell a mixture of gas exhaust and tropical heated air. A Haitian Kompa band plays music with a fast beat at immigration. I feel I am back home. This is the place I lived for several years after the 2010 earthquake that killed more than 300,000 people and damaged or destroyed more than 200,000 buildings. At one point, we had more than 1,000 masons, engineers, and contractors under our management. Our Haitian team assessed 430,000 structures and repaired or reconstructed more than 12,000 buildings. I must say, it was an unbelievably challenging but spectacular experience.

I met numerous wonderful people in the process: Guilaine, our country manager, a trained Haitian lawyer who was assigned to me as a volunteer translator initially by PADF, the nonprofit we were working with. She soon emerged as a leader capable of handling hardened contractors in a disaster zone.

Robi, a young, U.S.-college educated Haitian who dedicated his life to the Port-au-Prince area, Cité Soleil, which is considered to be one of the most impoverished and dangerous communities in the Western Hemisphere. In this devastated community, we established our nonprofit arm, Miyamoto Relief. With Robi, we raised money and repaired and strengthened a 1,500-student high school there. Incredibly, the project won an ENR Global Project of the Year award. I had always wondered what happened to the school after we left.

I walk into the campus under a blazing hot sun. It is amazing. The community has kept everything nice and maintained. The computer lab we built is fully operational with flower pots found here and there. The students are as eager and cheerful as ever. I really miss them.

Our office in Haiti is smaller, but still fully operational. We work for the Haitian government, the private sector, and international agencies. I notice that many international NGOs and companies have left the island. You no longer see many foreign faces in restaurants. The earthquake was eight years ago, so international aid funds have run out. But as a private company, we don't solely rely on aid money. We work for many private and local public projects. It is kind of cool. Our trained Haitian engineers provide work completed to international standards even now, way after everyone else left the country.

Today, it is hard to find scars from the M7 earthquake eight years ago. I see that the country is stronger. Buildings are taller and bigger. Even in poor communities, you can find ACI 318-qualified 135-degree hooks in rebar! People capacity lives on.

While I am here, this place became known as a “s\*\*\*hole.” My daughter, Mimi, who studies film at Occidental College, is with me. I asked her to roll some film and share this “hole” with the world. So here you go: <http://miyamotointernational.com/eight-years-later-haiti>. Let me know what you think!

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