Every morning in Trou du Nord, Haiti, two houses filled with nearly 30 previously orphaned, abandoned or trafficked children and young adults, ages 2 to 20 years old, wake up to a loving and nurturing home. They’ve been taken in by PROJECT 7, a charitable creation of New Reality International (NRI), and are rebuilding their futures in the safety and support of this quickly developing community.

Before an earthquake rocked Haiti in 2010, NRI had already been directly serving Haitians in extreme poverty for three years, providing health care, food and shelter through short-term medical trips. However, the growing number of homeless children orphaned by the earthquake brought on the realization that they needed to plant their feet on the ground if they wanted to make a lasting, sustainable change in the children’s lives.

VT iDirect Helps Connect Orphans with Resources for the Future of Haiti

IP Access Donates Internet Access Powered by iDirect Technology to Empower Children with Educational and Vocational Opportunities
So, in 2012, NRI joined with a local organization called Centre Orphelinat Bon Samaritin de Trou du Nord (COBSAMAT), and began developing a seven-acre Children’s Village in Northern Haiti that not only provides shelter for orphaned, abandoned and trafficked children, but also serves as a safe haven where they can grow and thrive.

As they fought to provide necessities in the wake of the catastrophe, amenities like electricity were scarce, and news and communications from the outside world could only come through unreliable Wi-Fi connections that broke down without explanation. For the children of Haiti, education and information about the world around them was a luxury that none could afford.

“Access to internet ends isolation, which is the very reason why IP Access donated our satellite internet services to the Children’s Village,” Michael Weaver, Senior Director of Strategic Accounts at IP Access International, a global business satellite internet provider, said.

The network, which is based on the iDirect Evolution® platform, is opening new doors for the children who now have access to more education and training to build for themselves a viable and stable future. Day in and day out, the staff of teachers and nurses provides school lessons, health care, recreational classes, and career services to the children.

“Satellite is playing a pivotal role for the growth of the village. It’s been truly remarkable to see the difference in communication down there. We are so grateful.”

— Alicia Grant
Building for the Future

Before the village had satellite connectivity, the organization had to rely on local resources for training. Now, the children have access to educational resources that can teach them valuable skills that will prepare them for viable, life-long careers, including masonry, tailoring, baking, window-making, door-making, and electrical engineering. With a reliable internet connection, the children can maintain accessibility and connect with professors, professionals, teachers and electricians located all over the world to learn these highly desired skills.

The administrators of PROJECT 7 are also now able to keep constant contact with their team from the United States, monitoring the children’s physical and mental health and well-being via Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and videoconferencing from afar.

“Often in these situations you face a lot of hopelessness. But here, our kids have hope,” said Alicia Grant, Vice President of NRI. “They know they’ll have access to food and clothes, and be able to provide for their families, because they have access to information that will help them learn and sustain themselves. The satellite connectivity IP Access and iDirect provides us is extremely powerful.”
The connectivity is having ripple effects on the extended village, as well. Just as hands-on trade is a vital component of the job market in Haiti, technical positions are also growing rapidly as the environment continues to improve. The next stage of PROJECT 7 is to build a vocational training building that would teach carpentry, masonry, farming and language, alongside other technical and vital skills. The goal is to empower the village to have an income to support themselves. Already two families were able to afford to bring five children home because of PROJECT 7’s assistance to help them develop their own businesses.

“Satellite connectivity has brought exponential growth into their lives.”
— Alicia Grant