

The Largest School in Haiti Will be Built with the Support of The Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation.

The largest grade school in Haiti, called *École du Bel-Air*, is currently under construction in the country's capital, Port-au-Prince, thanks to The Edeyo Foundation and the support of The Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation.

Education in Haiti is desperately needed. According to the Haitian National Ministry of Education and the World Bank, 50% of Haitian children do not attend school and 80% of those that do, go to private schools that ultimately end up being unaffordable. 72% of students are over-aged and only 20% of teachers have high school equivalent degrees. A recent United Nations report reviewing progress on the Millennium Development Goals cited Haiti and Somalia as the two worst nations for a school-aged child.

Since the Earthquake of January 12th, 2012, much of Haiti is still in ruins. In Port-au-Prince, more than a million people remain homeless midst a population of \$3.5 million, the vast majority still live in decrepit shelters, urban sanitation, sewage structures and drinking water are still largely unavailable and unemployment remains at 80%. The media coverage of Haiti has started to dwindle but several NGO's and foundations are committed to keep rebuilding.

Among them is an organization called Edeyo, which means 'help them' in Haitian Creole. Founded in 2007 by Unik Ernest, a native of Port-au-Prince and a successful corporate event planner, Edeyo, is made up entirely of volunteers and is dedicated to improving the standards of living in Haiti. Over the last five years, Edeyo has garnered the support of many organizations, including The Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation which pledged a significant contribution to rebuild the *École du Bel-Air*. Founded in 2000 by science philanthropist, Jeffrey Epstein, The Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation actively supports educational based programs throughout the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean.

École du Bel-Air is located in the ravaged city neighborhood of Bel-Air, a former center for artists and writers. The original school site, which housed 88 students, was demolished by the earthquake. After the quake, Bel-Air was labeled a 'red zone' by the United Nations due to the levels of violence in the area. Despite this, Edeyo immediately set up a makeshift school in an adjacent building to the original school so that students could continue their classes.

Designed by Architects for Humanity, the new school is planned to be self-sustaining and independent from the city's services. The structure will have 20 classrooms, a performance space, computer lab, administrative offices, medical clinic, vegetable and fruit gardens, as well as chicken coops for poultry and eggs. The building will also have solar power, a biofuel generator, a water catchment and filtrations system and composting toilets. Architects for Humanity has also kept costs down while maximizing functionality

with a budget of \$1,000 per child. The school is planning to have more than 300 students. As the opening of the new school comes closer, students in navy blue and bright yellow uniforms look onto the construction site with curiosity and excitement, representing everything that is good and promising about Haiti and humanity.