

## PART

## Local Construction Techniques

Local construction overwhelmingly uses reinforced CMU for home construction with either metal or concrete roofs. Most of these homes are left unfinished with rebar sticking out of the tops for tax evasion purposes. (If a home is 'unfinished' taxes are not required or greatly reduced.)



In less formal dwellings, wooden framework is built by weaving wood from mango trees or bamboo between vertical wood supports. This is covered with tè mouye (wet earth) and finally a coat of concrete. Wooden frames can also be filled with rocks held together by a mixture of clay, sand, gravel and cement. This can either be covered with wet earth and a concrete mixture or left in plain air. These methods give the appearance of a CMU home but are not as durable. Walls decay or begin to slant within a few years after building. There are also shacks with walls composed of sparse wooden framework and metal sheets attached to the walls and roof.



Foundations are primarily constructed with local rock which is cheaper than concrete foundations. Gravel is placed on top of the foundation and under the concrete slab.



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For windows, glass windows with rotating panels are preferable and widely used. Sliding windows are not common. It is also preferable to have windows screened in and covered with fer forge or protected by hurricane shutters. Many dwellings simply use openings framed by wood with protective shutters or “clostra”, hollow bricks, in place of windows. Clostra allow ventilation and sunlight in but also rain during storms. Shading devices consist of overhangs of aluminum or extensions of the roof to provide a porch area. Doors are usually in wood.



Flooring usually is left as concrete, or the concrete can be finished with a ceramic paint. Tiles are used as well. Wooden floors are generally not seen.

Porches are generally concrete with either fer forge hand railings or concrete balustrade, which are small concrete pillars. Wood is also used for the porch structure. Oftentimes porches are used for cooking and are partially closed off by thatch called fey kokoye, which is made by weaving coconut leaves together. This material tends to mold rather quickly.



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Wall finishes are either crepie, which is a type of “stucco” made of cement or renduit, which is a smooth plaster finish. Exterior walls are ornamented by vividly colored paints, flat stones, tiles, or brick details.



At Estime Rose’s house, a FEBS’ client, there are no windows, which inhibits ventilation and contributes to the extreme heat inside. The tin roof does little to prevent rain from entering the home. This excess moisture has spurred mold growth on the walls. In addition, the walls were constructed using a shoddy method which consisted of covering wooden framework with a concrete mixture. They are now beginning to deteriorate and crumble. This type of construction would likely not survive an earthquake. A hole between a few rocks outside the home is used for a toilet and cooking is done in front of the house as there is no formal kitchen.

