

May 2011

We joined water.org on a project implementation review visit to of Pignon in the Central Plateau area of Haiti. We visited communities around Pignon where water.org's chosen Haitian partner NGO, Haiti Outreach, has installed wells and is working on water distribution systems, too. Apart from the technical integrity of the work being done, we were most interested to see how the communities have been motivated and been given the tools to take charge of their own "water and sanitation destiny".

We learned a new job title – "Animator" – a roving individual who visits communities to help them with the formation of their own committee to set standards for the use of any Water (or Sanitation) resources provided to them by an NGO – and then helps them to chart their own progress. After the initial "animation" of the community, the same individual works as a liaison between the NGO and the committee, helping them to enforce their own standards.

The committee collects funds from all members of the community who signed up to use the installation, to cover future maintenance. This puts the community in the position of being an ongoing "customer" of the NGO with the expectation that services will be provided promptly. The sense of ownership and pride that this engenders in the community is uplifting to see and, as a practical matter, results in a resource that is truly a sustainable solution.

The EKTA Foundation is honored to be part of this deep and meaningful change in Haiti through its funding of water.org's initiative in that country.

March 2011

The Jan-2010 earthquake had a devastating impact on the operations and facilities of our partners, [Haitian Education & Leadership Program](#) (HELP) in Port-au-Prince. With relief funding from our Foundation and other well-wishers, HELP was able to find all but two of its students and regroup in rented premises not far from its original destroyed site.

We went to Haiti to participate in CGI's Action Network meeting and took the opportunity to visit HELP's new Student Center re-established after the earthquake. HELP's founder, Conor Bohan and his Country Director, Gary Delice have worked hard to build back better in their new location. The Center has a small campus feel to it and an aura of purposeful learning.

The Computer Lab, run entirely by Students at different stages in their path to graduation from university, is impressive and well utilized. Proficiency in English, taught by volunteer teachers from the US, gives the students a bilingual advantage and the confidence to engage with visitors independently.

Unexpectedly, we discovered that the students had made HELP's new campus in the heart of Port-au-Prince a model of "green" living as well. One of their volunteer English teachers had a background in organic gardening. They have set up compost pits in the garden and reduced waste generation at HELP dramatically. It's the cumulative effect of steps like these that will eventually lead to a manageable landfill in Port-au-Prince.

February 2011

In the immediate aftermath of the Jan-2010 earthquake in Haiti, we funded a Wi-Fi Broadband Network in Port-au-Prince that got NGOs communicating in real-time to get aid where it was needed most, saving innumerable lives.

With our partners, [Inveneo](#), we now have a shared commitment – with Microsoft, Craigslist Foundation, Aruba Networks and others – to expand this low-cost broadband access network country-wide. We have identified 39 Schools across Haiti that will need Internet access for their Computer Labs to bi-directionally open Haiti to their students and the world.

We visited the Anacaona Secondary School in Leogane Haiti with Mark Summer of Inveneo. The school has 1,100 Students in morning classes and 1,300 in afternoon classes – with 105 teachers. After the destruction caused by the earthquake, they rebuilt their classrooms in large, airy structures with partial walls to get back in operation quickly. It was gratifying to see all the students milling around their school, impeccably turned out in clean uniforms.

The other high point for us was meeting a special young man – Jerry Joseph – one of the entrepreneurial professionals Inveneo is training to support our Network across the country. Jerry exemplifies and personifies the potential of Haiti's young educated people with his clarity of communication, irrepressible attitude and willingness to learn more every day. He supports various sites on Inveneo's Network in the Leogane area.

While we were there, David Lazarus from Microsoft came on site to commence installation of the first 10 computers and their student/teacher training software, The Lab is powered by Solar Cells on the roof. The impact of a well equipped computer Lab, with reliable Internet Access, on the education of the young minds at Lycée Anacaona de Leogane will be multiplied many times over in 2011 by this commitment, originated by Inveneo and EKTA.