

# FERHA: WATER PROJECT



PROVIDING A LIFE-SAVING, CLEAN AND VALUABLE  
RESOURCE TO REMOTE HAITIAN COMMUNITIES



*"Together let's work for the  
Prosperity and the Success of Haïtí"*

FERHA  
8725 Roswell Road, Suite O-112  
Atlanta, Ga 30350

## Facts about Haiti

Situated on the western part of the island of Hispaniola, Haiti is divided into 10 departments. First to attain its independence from slavery back in 1804, Haiti has remained the least-developed country in the Americas, and is inhabited by approximately 9 million, the majority of which live in extreme poverty. The literacy rate of 52.9% is the lowest in the region. Prior to the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010 Haiti counted 15,200 primary schools: 90% non-public, managed by the communities, religious organizations or NGOs. The enrollment rate for primary school is 67%, of which less than 30% reach 6th grade. Secondary schools enroll 20% of eligible-age children. Because of its location in the Gulf of Mexico, Haiti is frequently hit by natural disasters



which further worsen the already dire circumstances of this small nation. Two-thirds of all Haitians depend on the agricultural sector, mainly small-scale subsistence farming, and remain vulnerable to damage from these disasters, exacerbated by the country's widespread deforestation.

Haiti's medical system is struggling to cope with the nation's serious health hazards. There is only one physician for every 6000 inhabitants and medical facilities are poor. Malaria, dengue, intestinal

parasites, AIDS, and other infectious diseases are common. Many foreign governments and several international organizations, including the UN, provide food and medicine to Haiti, but the extent of the country's troubles overwhelms these efforts.

In addition to the many socioeconomic and environmental issues plaguing this small country, one major problem is the lack of resources and the absolute lack of safe drinking water for its inhabitants. Everyday the people of Haiti, including small children risk their lives and health by drinking from contaminated sources. In Haiti, contaminated water is the leading cause of infant

mortality and illness such as hepatitis, cholera and chronic diarrhea. Water supply in Haiti has



always been a critical issue, post January 12, public systems have been severely damaged, and thus the problems are expected to be far worse.

The Haitian government, with its limited resources, along with many international organizations has been working diligently to shed an eye on this ever-present problem and provide solutions. In a united effort, churches, NGOs, and other entities have embarked on campaigns to bring different water

projects to Haiti. Some have been effective in providing this much valued resource to different sectors of the country. Unfortunately, many others have abandoned their projects due to lack of funding.



Communities in remote and nearly inaccessible areas of the country practically get no assistance at all. No one visits, and no one sees their plight. Most often, young children have to walk hours to the nearest river, stream or water hole and carry back heavy buckets of water for their families. These same sources of water unfortunately are the very same places where villagers bathe and wash clothes... nearby, latrines and wastes are dumped, contributing further to the contamination and pollution of the water.

## FERHA VISITS SMALL TOWN OF PESTEL

The small fishing village of Pestel located in the department of Grand'Anse was visited by a team of FERHA representatives in the month of May. This area is heavily forested and very green. Pestel has a population of over seventy thousand and the topography is quite challenging as the village sits on a slope between two green mountains. There is only one main street leading to the

port. The village is accessible by both land and sea. However the road conditions make it more



attractive to visit by boat. The port of Pestel plays an important role for the inhabitants in the area, as it is a major stop on the seaway between Jeremie and Port-au-Prince, allowing peasants to ship and receive goods such as: bananas, beans, corn, papaya, coffee beans, apricots, passion fruits, mangoes, charcoal, etc. Pestel is a far more developed town in comparison to the smaller villages in the area. There is electricity powered by generators, a justice of the peace, a police station, a catholic church (Saint Joseph's), a small

restaurant on the second floor of a local boutique, a school (grades 1-6) and a small medical clinic/health center. It is a very unique, old, well-preserved and somewhat isolated town.

The town of Pestel does have water; however the major problem they encounter is that the water is salty due to the proximity of the sea and the surrounding mountains. The mayor and other key members mentioned that they are forced to buy bottled water; however most do not have the money to live on bottled water.

They also mentioned that a French excavation team visited the area and conducted some studies to determine where they could get water to supply the town. They promised to further their investigations but to date, no word or contact has been made with reference to this project.

The town of Pestel is a prime example where a water system would be ideal to help save the lives of the villagers. The local authorities and the community would very much welcome such a program to their town and seem very eager to assist in its implementation.



## **FERHA VISITS SMALL VILLAGE OF BASSIN ZIM**

Located in the Central Plateau, about 8 miles from the main city of Hinche, Bassin Zim is a small community with a mega touristic potential, for it houses one of the most beautiful, breath taking water falls in the country. In the month of

May FERHA also had the opportunity to visit this oasis town. However, the community faces some ironic challenges for despite the fact that a river runs through it, water remains scarce and drought is a major setback which affects the entire region.



During the FERHA visit to the area, the team met Father Meres Esterlin, Priest of the Parish of Our Lady of Fatima, and a relevant figure in this small community. He pointed out that food supply and water usage has posed major challenges for the population of about ten thousand whose agriculture and livestock are deteriorating. As a result it is affecting the environment as well since the inhabitants cut down the few remaining trees to make charcoal to be nearby cities, thus allowing them to generate an income. Consequently, they go through very

long periods with little to no rain. This chain reaction, causes a weakening to the flow rate of the springs, forcing people to relocate to overcrowded cities.

The locals and this community's leaders all acknowledge that the situation is dire and immediate action is needed. They are all ready and very eager to assist with a solution to their problem.

Indeed the population of Bassin Zim has started using Klorfasil as a solution to potable drinking water, and hopefully this project will expand to reach all villagers. In terms of water for usage, agriculture and livestock, there are two possible solutions: digging of wells for water supply and the installation of water pumps for filling of cisterns. Since the population depends solely on agriculture and livestock for their livelihood, it is a matter of utmost urgency to raise funds to assist and protect the desperate community of Bassin Zim.

## The issues

- remote towns and villages have no access to drinkable water
- travel long distances every day to find water
- must carry heavy buckets to bring water back home
- most often water is contaminated, leading to illness (dysentery, malaria, typhoid, skin ailments, etc.)

- public campaigns provide no economic solutions (most people cannot afford chlorination tablets or bleach)
- many wells are damaged or dry
- most villagers drink dirty water instead of going with no water at all
- 10% of infant deaths is attributed to dehydration
- many water projects are abandoned due to lack of funding

### The objectives

- Improve hygiene, quench thirst, save lives!
- provide villagers with the necessary resources that will help solve drinking water problems
- organize fundraising campaigns to collect funds for purchase of:
  - o Biosand filters
  - o Klorfasil systems
  - o purification tablets
- Determine which system would best fit in which areas (depending on location, population and level of education)
- Identify 10 remote villages with limited or no resources, in most immediate need of access to drinkable water
- Install water systems or filters in schools, hospitals and designated locations accessible to all villagers
- identify areas where it would be most cost effective and practical to dig wells
- Work and collaborate with local leaders to assure success of the project
- organize and train local teams for proper handling and maintenance of systems
- expand the FERHA Water Project to small towns and villages all across Haiti

**The Biosand Filter** provides safe drinking water, right where it's needed most: at household level, because it effectively purifies contaminated water. It is cheap and simple yet effective. Further information can be found on their website listed below.

**The Klorfasil Safe Water program** is a terrific program and can be credited with providing clean drinking water for Haitian families which in turn results in the prevention of many water borne diseases, and inevitably prevents many deaths, especially in the youngest and most



# WATER PROJECT

vulnerable children. It is a very effective and simple enough system to use. A key in the success of this program is proper education and training.

**Water purification tablets – Aquatabs®** are an internationally recognized water purification tablet that have been tried and tested in a wide range of water sources around the globe. They have been successfully used for water disinfection, often in the most adverse and difficult conditions, by major international aid agencies, militaries and NGO's including the WHO, UNICEF, MSF, Red Cross, NATO, and French Foreign Legion. Further information can be found on their website listed below.

**Please contact us for further information on this project.**