



## **Nouvelle Vie \*Haiti\***

*A Mission to Haiti for Trauma Relief, Food  
Security, and Rebuilding*

**A Project of the International Association for Human Values**



## **1. IAHV's Mission in Haiti**

The International Association for Human Values (IAHV) has planned a mission to Haiti to address the challenges of the post-acute phase of the Haitian earthquake disaster. This mission builds upon two years of existing work in Haiti, in which IAHV has provided youth leadership, sustainable agriculture, and entrepreneurship training to 350 young adults in 5 regions of Haiti: Cap Haitien, Mirebalais, Hinche, Carrefour and Les Cayes.

The IAHV Nouvelle Vie mission will mobilize, expand, and train its network of Haitian youth leaders to deliver country-wide programs for trauma relief, food and water security, and community redevelopment.

## **2. Mission Objective**

Create Nouvelle Vie Youth Corps, a body of 100 Haitian young adults committed to serving their country for 2 years, following a 6-month training period.

1. During the 6-month training period, IAHV will deliver trauma relief services to affected populations and aid workers in Haiti, both on refugee camps and in towns and cities.
2. The Youth Corps will be trained and will teach IAHV's Trauma Relief Program, in partnership with local and international aid organizations,
3. The Youth Corps will also be trained to both teach and implement projects that support local food and water security and infrastructure reconstruction.
4. During their training and subsequent 2-year service commitment, the Youth Corps will receive housing, food, and stipends.

## **3. Background**

Already crippled from the long term effects of persistent poverty, environmental degradation and climatic disasters, Haiti has suffered a devastating blow in the earthquake of January 12, 2010. As the immediate emergency passes, the challenge of saving lives will give way to the longer-term process of stabilizing the population and rebuilding lives and infrastructure. During this period, Haitian citizens and aid workers will begin suffering the emotional, physiological and psychological effects of overwhelming stress as the trauma of what has happened settles in. Many months of food and water insecurity, poor sanitation, and extended displacement from homes and communities will exacerbate and prolong this stress.

It is imperative that relief and development efforts address directly the intense mental health crisis associated with the earthquake and the breakdown of Haiti's already weak political, economic, and social support systems. Health experts at Yale and Columbia Universities indicate that Haiti has the potential for high rates of mental illness - up to 50% of the population - and a slower recovery after this

episode. The earthquake, combined with the long-term effects of trauma and stress, will severely impede the ability of Haiti's people to rebuild themselves and their country unless effective, mass-scale mental health interventions are conducted.

Persistent deployment of aid to Haiti has inadvertently created a psychological dependence on foreign intervention. Long-term reliance on foreign aid to restore mental health and to rebuild food and infrastructure systems, presents a risk of reinforcing a sense of victimization and disempowerment. It is critical that we introduce a new disaster relief model that equips the Haitian people both to address their own psychological challenges, and to regain as much self-sufficiency and material security as possible. The IAHV mission aims to do just this.

#### **4. Program Descriptions**

##### **4.1. Trauma Relief Program**

IAHV will conduct Trauma Relief Programs once immediate physical needs (food, shelter, water, and safety) are secured. As the Trauma Relief Program is being conducted in affected areas by IAHV staff, Nouvelle Vie Youth Corps members will concurrently undergo 6 months of extensive training.

IAHV's Trauma Relief Program is a multi-component mind-body program that addresses the scope of mental health challenges faced by individuals post-trauma. The program is designed to decrease over-reactivity, re-experiencing and other symptoms of PTSD; decrease sadness and other symptoms of depression; and decrease worry, ameliorate insomnia and increase overall quality of life. The Trauma Relief Program includes a combination of yoga breath intervention with interactive discussions and education about trauma and stress reduction (see addendum). An independent study (Descilo et al, 2009) of IAHV's Trauma Relief Program in post-Tsunami South India suggests that the program provides "rapid and significant reduction in symptoms of PTSD and depression, improvements in quality of life and sustainability of these benefits." Refugees reported relief from anxiety, depression, insomnia, and recurrent images of the disaster, as well as a cessation of re-triggering of PTSD symptoms upon their return home.

The Trauma Relief Program has a proven history of effective mass-scale mental health intervention in fragile and post-conflict areas, including Iraq and Afghanistan. IAHV's approach addresses a recognized need within the aid community for mass-scale mental health intervention after significant disasters. In 2004, following the South Asian tsunami IAHV conducted Trauma Relief Program for over 3500 people to help them overcome post-traumatic stress disorders. In cooperation with the Ministry of Health since the 2002 Kosovo conflict, IAHV conducted the trauma relief program for 700 people including UN peacekeepers, torture victims, massacre witnesses and disabled veterans. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, IAHV taught its Trauma Relief Program to 2600 people. Similar initiatives have been taken following the Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, the New York and Washington D.C. attacks on 9/11, and Gujarat Earthquake.

Youth Corps Training includes:

- 1) **Field Training:** organizing and assisting experienced French-speaking international teachers on Trauma Relief Programs
- 2) **Classroom Training:** discussions and advanced techniques to develop deeper understanding of human mind, emotions, and behavior
- 3) **Individual Assessment and Mentoring:** expands emotional and psychological capacity to manage the stress associated with relief work through one-on-one dialogue and mentoring.

Following the six-month period of training, Youth Corps members will be travel to camps and communities in all affected areas.

#### **4.2. Food Security and Infrastructure Reconstruction**

Nouvelle Vie Youth Corps members will be trained to become community educators, project organizers, and workers with the skills to implement small-scale home and community gardens, and create appropriate infrastructure for clean water, sanitation (i.e. composting toilets), and building construction. They will work in partnership with local and international agencies, primarily using Permaculture Design methods.

Neither the country's degraded ecosystem nor food aid will be sufficient to provide enough nutritious, quality food to the affected population. Water resources were already strained and their poor quality reduced further by the extreme sanitation problems that are expected. The unsafe, unsanitary living infrastructure destroyed by the earthquake must be replaced by appropriate infrastructure. Trauma relief and overall health will be enhanced significantly if the local population actively engages in activities to produce its own food, clean water, and sustainably designed infrastructure.

During their six-month training, Youth Corps members will receive field and classroom on-ground training from educators experienced in developing world urban and peri-urban sustainable design and permaculture. Their training will include:

- 1) **Field Training:** projects to install garden, sanitation, water, and building systems to support IDP settlements, households, communities, and organizations.
- 2) **Classroom Training:** best practices and theory shared by international sustainable development experts, Haitian-based NGO partners, and local agronomists.

#### **IAHV's History in Haiti**

From October 2007 through August 2010, IAHV trained 350 Haitian young adults and 20 US young adults in the Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP). The YLTP trains leaders with a clarity and commitment, who provide free community workshops and service projects to the community. In Summer 2009, IAHV introduced two new programs: the Permaculture

Design Course (PDC), and Social Entrepreneurship Program (SEP). 75 Haitian and 10 US students received the PDC, and 20 Haitian and 10 US students the SEP. Graduates of these programs have worked to establish their own green businesses and small scale agricultural projects, and conduct workshops and community service projects. The workshops teach: basic stress-management techniques and community responsibility; sexuality education. Service projects include: Street Children Programs and Street Cleaning. The PDC trains students to design and construct community and home gardens and teach Environmental Education.

Since October 2007, our Youth Leaders have taught 2,500 community members programs for stress management and community responsibility; conducted programs for 500 young adults in Sexuality Education; created a mentoring program for 150 street children; and led teams of volunteers to clean 10 kms of market streets on a weekly basis.

IAHV will select 15-20 of its strongest leaders to join the Nouvelle Vie Youth Corps as founding members. Before their training begins, they will assist in recruiting and interviewing potential Youth Corps members. The youth leaders who have not been selected to join the Youth Corps will continue leading community activities in their respective cities.

## **5. Mission Implementation Plan**

***Phase 1: Advance mission: 2 weeks long, to start as soon as it is safety and security conditions on the ground can be reasonably assured.***

- Objectives
  - o Reach and establish our base of operations. Establish working relationships with relief organizations on the ground.
  - o Assemble and organize 15-20 existing Nouvelle Vie youth leaders as founding Youth Corps members
  - o Organize and deliver Trauma Relief Program to partners, relief workers, and affected population.
  - o Identify IDP settlements and other venues for conducting Phase 2 programs.

***Phase 2: Initiate trauma relief programs, recruit youth corps members: 1 month long***

- Objectives
  - o IAHV teachers and Nouvelle Vie Youth Corps organize and deliver Trauma Relief Program
  - o Recruit 80-85 new Youth Corps members from Trauma Relief Programs
  - o Initiate pilot food security/composting projects at IDP settlements, continue gathering on-ground information.

#### Expected Impacts

- o 4 50-person Adult Trauma Relief courses delivered - impacting 200 adults
- o 4 50-person Teen Trauma Relief courses delivered - impacting 200 teens
- o 4 50-person Child Trauma Relief courses delivered - impacting 200 children
- o 10-30 food gardens established - 2-6 acres total, capable of meeting food needs of 20-60 people
- o 10 composting / biogas producing toilets installed, capable of serving ~250 people and producing approximately 225 m<sup>3</sup>/month of biogas (~1,500kWh of energy equivalent) and 14 m<sup>3</sup>/month of compost

#### ***Phase 3: Youth Corps Training thru Trauma Relief and Permaculture Development: 5 Months***

#### Objectives

- o Train and certify Youth Corps to deliver Trauma Relief Programs
- o Train and certify Youth Corps to teach and create food security and infrastructure reconstruction projects

#### Expected Impacts

- o Trauma Relief courses and training
- o 6 100-person Adult courses per week, 2 100-teen courses per week, 2 100-child courses per week -- 12,000 Adults, 4,000 Teens, 4,000 Children served in 5 months
- o 100 Haitian Youth Corps members certified to deliver IAHV Trauma Relief programs
- o Youth Corps teams develop 1-year program plans for outreach and delivery of Trauma Relief programs and training to affected populations
- o Food security and infrastructure projects and training
- o 200-300 gardens established - 50-70 acres total, capable of meeting food needs of 450-700 people
- o 200 composting / biogas producing toilets installed, capable of serving ~5,000 people and producing approximately 4,500 m<sup>3</sup>/month of biogas (~30,000 kWh of energy equivalent) and ~300 m<sup>3</sup>/month of compost

- o 1 complete, permanent living structure designed and built, capable of housing 100 people
- o Youth Corps teams develop 1-year program plans for outreach and delivery of food security and infrastructure projects

**Phase 4: Youth Corps Deployment, Mentoring, and Support: September 2010 - 2012**

Objectives

- o Youth Corps teams deliver Trauma Relief Programs throughout Haiti
- o Youth Corps teams implement food security and infrastructure projects in IDP camps, villages and towns, and organizations
- o Provide ongoing mentoring and support:
  - French-speaking IAHV trainers support Trauma Relief Program delivery
  - Field Support Staff supports Food and Infrastructure Reconstruction projects
  - In-country Youth Corps Program Director oversees program and supports Youth Corps.

Expected Impacts

- o Delivery of Trauma Relief and Food Security/ Infrastructure projects with similar levels of impact as Phase 3 activities. Youth Corps will be expected to follow self-generated work plans developed during Phase 3.
- o Development of vocational and professional skills, resulting in a cadre of experienced, highly-employable young adults.

**Post-Service Youth Corps**

After completing two years of dedicated service, the Youth Corps will continue to represent and expand IAHV's work in Haiti. We will select a handful of Youth Corps alumni to become teacher trainers. All alumni will serve as mentors for emerging leaders their communities and will continue to teach and manage IAHV programs in a volunteer capacity.

Youth Corps members will have developed skills, experience, work ethic, and contacts that will position them for productive employment in rebuilding the Haitian economy and environment. Youth Corps graduates will be highly competitive job candidates in a wide number of fields and industries.

**Practical vocational skills:** Project Design, Implementation and Teaching/Training

- Trauma relief
- Gardening and farming
- Design and construction of water and housing systems
- Waste management: sanitation systems and creation of renewable energy and soil from waste
- Teaching and training skills

**Professional and communication skills**

- Project planning, management and execution
- Realistic goal-setting
- Analytic and Assessment skills
- Reporting skills
- Human resources management
- Team leadership and participation
- Conflict resolution
- Professional and personal accountability and ethics
- Public communication and outreach
- Budgeting, accounting
- Partnerships - establishment and maintenance of relationships

**6. Monitoring and Evaluation**

We will internally monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our program and our Youth Corps throughout the 6-month training and 2 years of service.

Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted by: the in-country Program Director, Field Support Staff, Partner Representatives, and Program Officers.

- 1) Weekly written activity reports: progress according to milestones developed from 3-month, 1-year project plans, created during Youth Corps training
- 2) Monthly Site Visits from in-country director: evaluation of team activity and feedback for improved support, need for additional funding/partnerships etc.
- 3) Monthly Informal Permaculture Evaluation and Support: Permaculture Support Staff visits each site once a month for informal evaluation and support.
- 4) Quarterly Presentation: Program Officer(s) and Partner(s) meet with Youth Corps Team Representatives in PaP every 3 months for formal evaluation. Teams make formal presentation of quarterly report, including photo and video documentation.

In addition to monitoring and evaluation, we will support an independent psychological researcher to conduct studies on the effectiveness of our Trauma Relief Program.

## **Addendum: More on Trauma Relief Program**

Clinical studies of yoga suggest that yoga breath interventions can target the symptoms of PTSD, depression and anxiety. (Brown RP & Gerbarg, PL, 2005, 2009). The breath has a direct physiological relationship with emotion (Phillippot, Chappelle, Blairy, 2002), suggesting controlled breath interventions can be used to mitigate the impact of emotions associated with PTSD (i.e. anxiety, depression). Controlled breathing techniques are often used in relaxation therapies. By reducing perceived stress and anxiety, yoga and yoga breathing appears to modulate stress response systems. Studies suggest these techniques lower blood pressure (Grossman et al., 2001; Sakakibara et al., 1996; Telles et al., 1992) and increase well-being (Kjellgren et al., 2007), mental focus (Bhatia et al., 2003; Jella et al., 1993, Naveen et al., 1997), and immune function (Sharma et al., 2003).

In addition to yoga breath interventions, the Trauma Relief Program educates participants about trauma management, including techniques to shift their focus away from past regrets and future worries while increasing attention to current realities. Sharing experiences and giving one another support enables participants, who have lost significant personal and community relationships, to develop new bonds, a sense of belonging and feelings of resilience.

## **About IAHV**

Nouvelle Vie is a project of the International Association for Human Values (IAHV). IAHV is an international humanitarian and educational NGO founded in 1997. Its mission is to promote human values of love, commitment and service through leadership workshops and service projects on Sustainable Development, Disaster and Trauma Relief, Women's Empowerment, and Youth Leadership Development Programs.  
www.iahv.org

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