Helping Haiti: Renment Orphanage

As a group, Renna, Babette, Denise and Dr. Fagan, we are currently requesting product and monetary donations to help the RENMEN Orphanage in Haiti.

Tag Words:  RENMEN Orphanage in Haiti

Authors:  Babette Hammerling, Renna Patel, and Denise Currier with Julie M. Fagan, Ph.D.

Summary

(Denise) Haiti is currently most well known for the massive 7.0 earthquake that occurred on January 12th, 2010. This quake was a devastating blow to the already shocking history of the Haitian people. From this earthquake, many Haitians were killed and most everything is left in shambles. Violence has increased due to the lack of necessities and people have resorted to stealing, even from orphanages.
The Issue: Orphans

History
(Denise) Haiti was acquired by France after being ruled by Spain for around 200 years. Haitian slaves started to rebel not long after the French begun its rule. By 1804 Haiti was the first independent black republic, but this came along with a hefty price. The French wanted to be repaid for the land they lost, one hundred fifty million Franks to be exact. One hundred fifty million Franks back then is equivalent to twenty-one billion dollars now (Cia.com). By 1806, the Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines was murdered. Starting off an independent nation with billions of dollars of debt, and a violent government was just a few of first obstacles the nation had to overcome in the beginning (TravelingHaiti.com).
(Denise) Since independence, it has been one unfortunate incident after another. In the early 1980’s, the disease AIDS blew through Haiti, killing many, and making Haiti the face of the new AIDS crisis. The Pope came to Haiti in 1983 and announces to the world “Things must change here.” (TravelingHaiti.com) By 1984, over two hundred people are murdered over land ownership agreements (Infoplease.com). Their ruthless dictator “Baby-doc” was exiled to France by the US in 1986. Over one thousand people were murdered in 1991 due to the coup d'état. Then in 2000, Hurricane Jeanne destroyed Haiti killing about two thousand four hundred people (CNN.com).
Haiti at a glance

**POVERTY and SOCIAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>Haiti</th>
<th>Latin America &amp; Carib.</th>
<th>Low-income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population, mid-year (millions)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI per capita (Atlas method, US$)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>6,781</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI (Atlas method, US$ billions)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>3,833</td>
<td>510</td>
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**Average annual growth, 2002-08**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Haiti</th>
<th>Latin America &amp; Carib.</th>
<th>Low-income</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (%)</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor force (%)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Most recent estimate (latest year available, 2002-08)**

- Poverty (% of population below national poverty line) .. .. ..
- Urban population (% of total population) .. 43 79 29
- Life expectancy at birth (years) .. 01 73 58
- Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) .. 54 22 78
- Child malnutrition (% of children under 5) .. 19 5 28
- Access to an improved water source (% of population) .. 58 91 57
- Literacy (% of population age 15+) .. 91 64
- Gross primary enrollment (% of school-age population) .. 117 99
  - Male .. 119 102
  - Female .. 115 95

**KEY ECONOMIC RATIOS and LONG-TERM TRENDS**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP (US$ billions)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross capital formation/GDP</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>25.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exports of goods and services/GDP</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross domestic savings/GDP</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross national savings/GDP</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current account balance/GDP</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>-5.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest payments/GDP</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total debt/GDP</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total debt service/exports</td>
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<td>5.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present value of debt/GDP</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present value of debt/exports</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>135.0</td>
<td>119.0</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- GDP -0.4 0.4 3.4 1.3 ..
- GDP per capita -2.4 -1.3 1.8 -0.3 ..
- Exports of goods and services 7.1 4.0 2.0 3.2 ..

(World Bank)
EARTHQUAKE DEVISTATION:
(Renna) On January 12th, 2010 Port-au-Prince, Haiti was hit by a 7.0 grade earthquake, which was later followed by 12 aftershocks, each of which was of magnitude greater than 5.0. Hospitals, national building, and shanty towns were all brought to ruins. People were forced to sleep in the streets and the injured patiently waited their turn to seek medical attention in the emergency clinic that. More than 3 million people were affected by the earthquake, more than 10 million people physically felt the quake as it happened, and over 110,000 people have been confirmed dead by the earthquake. The damage caused by the earthquake was so devastating that Haiti needed international assistance (Boston.com 2010).
(Renna) Due to the damage of the roads, airports, and docks getting essential supplies to Haiti was seemingly impossible. The proper equipment to dig through the debris was unavailable and dropping in food and supplies by air, into open land) was not practical because the people did not have the means of getting to it (CNN.com 2010).
(Renna) Areas of food distribution were difficult to designate due to the lack of accessibility of free, safe places. These areas were also riddled with gang violence and men were self-appointed to distribute the food, only leading to corruption and unfair allocating of supplies. This problem was solved by only giving food to women (from international organizations) for them to distribute. (CNN.com)

ORPHANAGES SUFFER:
(Babette) The limited supplies of food, water, and other rations in Haiti have caused several orphanages to be the target of theft by desperate people wanting to survive. The thefts have even gone as far as attacks by groups of armed men. This poses a high security risk for the orphanages, limits the resources of orphanages. In order to protect the children, some orphanages have issued a lock-down. Any donation of food and supplies that would last more than two days runs a high risk of being stolen (CNN.com).
(Babette) Haiti had 400,000 orphans before the disastrous earthquake of January 2010, which translates to about 1 in every 10 children (WSJ.com). After the earthquake, there are now many more who are orphaned although there are no exact numbers yet (CNN.com). Many children are now being turned over to orphanages as “economic orphans” because their parents cannot afford to take care of them anymore, after the damage of the earthquake (Mysanantonio.com). Many have adopted Haitian children in attempts to help the suffering children after the earthquake (Baptiststandard.com). Unfortunately, many of these children are not orphans and child trafficking has and still is common in Haiti. Already, two Americans have been jailed for attempting to steal 33 children from Haiti (Hostednews). In response, Haitian police have slowed down the adoption process, requiring the proper signed documentation in order for a child to be adopted (Voanews), and have seized children they think were kidnapped (Hostednews).

RENMEN ORPHANAGE:
(Babette) The Renmen Orphanage in Haiti is a non-profit organization that was founded on April 19, 1993 by Florence Thybulle. It is located in La Plaine du Cul de Sac, a small city north of Port au Prince. Renmen provides education, recreation, food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care to the numerous orphans there.
Future goals of Renmen are to create a professional school for continuous education, an expansion of their cafeteria to accommodate more children, a medical/research center, acquiring a school bus, and building a community library. After the earthquake of 2010, much of Renmen must be rebuilt, and these goals must be projected farther into the future (Renmenhaiti.org).

CONCLUSION:
Corruption has always been a problem in the small country of Haiti. However, since the earthquake, the problem has only escalated. The government is taking all the monetary donations it receives and putting it in to the hands of its politicians (CNN.com). The people are left for dead as the entire country deteriorates (Politicalnews.com).

PROJECT:
The focus of this project is geared to acquire as many donations we can for the Renmen Orphanage. To accomplish this goal, we plan on devoting time to making phone calls. More specifically, we will be making phone calls to manufactures, distributors and large corporations that deal with the selling and the shipping of appliances, such as refrigerators, washing machines, etc. Because Royal Carribean agreed to ship what items we received from their port in Miami, Florida to Haiti, we also decided to call stores and companies located in Miami, since they are close to where we need the items to be for shipping. In addition, we will spread the unfortunate news about the Renmen Orphanage to friends and the Rutgers community. We plan on doing this by creating a group on Facebook that has a direct link to the donation site of Renmen. Also, we plan on spreading news about Renmen by holding bake sales and donation drives throughout Rutgers Campuses. We will be in constant in contact with Father Michel. He is our direct link to Haiti. He sends us pictures and updates about Renmen and what they are in need of. We will also be in contact with Yanick Gautier. Mr. Gautier formally works to help Renmen, whose permanent location is in South Florida. Carol Robinson is a person who has introduced us to Renmen Orphanage and gotten us in touch with students in Temple University who are working on the same goal, to help the orphanage. We believe that working together on this will be most beneficial and yield the maximum donations to Renmen.

Methods:
There have been numerous ethical issues with Royal Carribean International (RCI) still stopping at Haiti to let tourists tan in the Haiti sunshine while Haiti itself is devastated (spiegel.de, 2010). While they are not only bringing tourists, who help the economy by spending money, they are also bringing much needed supplies, like the donations we ourselves are requesting, to Haiti. Many organizations have items to donate, but have run out of shipping money (as we found out in our phone calls). Since Royal Carribean is bringing items without charging shipping, they are doing a very helpful thing. As a group, we searched for all the different companies that would manufacture or sell the items we needed, and found their customer service phone numbers. We compiled the list of numbers, and divided them up, so each group member would call different numbers. Over the next few weeks, we each called the numbers on the list, and any other numbers we might have found along the way. In addition, we produced an email that explained our group’s purpose and goals to send to companies that required an emailed request.
(Babette) When we made our facebook group (Helping Haiti: RENMEN Orphanage), we put in numerous pictures from both the Renmen website and photos that Father Michel sent us. Aside from that, we put in information about our mission, and a list of the items that we were requesting.

(Babette) Aside from the phone calls, we also planned to hold an information table at the Cook Campus Center. Here we would inform passerbys of our cause, and give them a flier with information on how to donate to Renmen through the Renmen website (www.renmenhaiti.org). Originally, we planned to host a donation drive or bake sale, but this required the permission and funding of the department, which we were unable to receive.

(Babette) The third phase of our project was to become pen pals to the actual children in the Renmen Orphanage. We would construct a letter that told them all about us and life in the US and Rutgers, and would mail it to them.

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Results:
(Renna) Our facebook group was very successful. We collected about 150 members, a few of which personally emailed us for more information on how they can help. We told them that they could donate to the orphanage through the Renmen website.

(Renna) After calling companies for donations, we found that most of them were unable or unwilling to donate merchandise. We mainly targeted big-name stores, in hope that we would have the most luck with them. Many of these companies had departments within their company specifically for donating to charities, which seemed hopeful. However, these companies would either tell us they already donated a large sum of merchandise or money to Haiti and were not planning on giving more. Other companies, were willing to help us, but not by giving us donations. These companies offered to sell us merchandise at a discounted price for no profit.

(Renna) Although we were unable to get any significant donations from these large franchises, making these calls was not fruitless. We were usually directed to philanthropic organizations that exist simply to aid with the distribution of donations or sending people down to disaster sites for assistance, such as Gifts in Kind and Interaction. Gifts in Kind was our most successful prospect. They collect all types of donations (except appliances) from large companies then hold them in their warehouse until they are called for by a 501c charity. They were unwilling to do business directly with us, but told us that if someone directly associated with Renmen Orphanage was to contact them (so we forwarded this information to Father Michel at Renmen) and provide the pertinent information proving they are a viable non-profit organization, they would donate the items needed, given they have them in stock.

(Renna) We also received a monetary donation from Phi Delta Theta for $193. The money was collected by standing outside the Rutgers Student Center and asking for donations to help Haiti. They have donated the money via PayPal on the Renmen website.

(Renna) As for the information table, we handed out over 100 fliers with information on how to donate to the Renmen Orphanage. We also informed many other passerbys of the situation in Haiti and how they can help. Several of students seemed genuinely interested, asking more questions, and noted the website.

(Renna) We would like to thank Sears, Home Depot, Mattress Giant, Overstock Mattress, Mattress Town, Staples, Walmart, Above All Appliances, Cold Storage, Abot Mills Appliance and electronics, Miami Appliance, AC & heating repair, Eletric Generators Direct, Diesel Service & Supply Co., Generator Joe, GE, Lowes, Serta Mattress, Simmons Mattress, Duracell,
Maytag, Walmart Corp, Whirlpool Corp, Interaction, Sears Corp, Kenmore, Energy Star, Sleepy's, 1-800-Mattress, Office Depot for their time, cooperation, and help.

(Renna) Professor Fagan suggested that we establish a pen pal relationship with the children who are at Renmen. We were informed that there were 63 children; therefore we wrote one letter (in the interest of time) and made 80 copies of it. We also convinced the Rutgers Bookstore and the Dean’s office for donations to send to the children. Each child was sent a Rutgers folder and pen, along with an inspirational letter (one is English and one in Creole- translated by Helene Planquette a post doc at the Institute of Marine and Costal Sciences). Our letter included a little bit of information about us and emphasized on the education system here, in America. We tried to inspire them but telling them that in America, the opportunities are endless and with some hard work they can achieve anything they want. Once the letters were packed with the pens, we shipped the whole package to Haiti with the help of Professor Fagan.

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References


Helping Haiti: RENMEN Orphanage
Denise Currier

(Denise) The RENMEN Orphanage and School in La Plaine du Cul de Sac, near Port of Prince, Haiti, is in trouble. After the massive earthquake, the orphanage, which currently houses 63 children, is in need of supplies and someone to fix the structural damage that has occurred. My team members Renna Patel, Babette Hammerling, Dr. Julie Fagan and myself, from our Ethics in Science class are currently working together with Father Michal in Haiti, and Yanick Goutier, Public Relations Officer of the RENMEN Foundation in Florida, a 501(c)3, to try and help the RENMEN orphanage and school. We began by contacting manufacturers and distributors for the large ticket items they requested; including a generator, washing machines, mattresses and mosquito netting for the beds, refrigerators and freezers. Dr. Fagan has arranged for Royal Caribbean to ship these items if donated from Florida to Haiti. Royal Caribbean has already donated over a million dollars in relief funds to Haiti. Previously in the semester, another group of students had shipped to Haiti eighteen boxes of medical supplies from Dr. Fagan’s lab.

(Denise) Just recently, Professor Fagan came up with the idea of connecting us directly with the children of RENMEN. We wrote pen pal letters (which were translated into French by Helene Planquette a post doc at the Institute of Marine and Costal Sciences) and attached pens to folders with our RU logo that were generously donated by the Co-op Bookstore and RU. Our pen pal packages were mailed to Florida where a contact of the Professor will deliver them to the orphanage and school when she travels to Haiti this week!

(Denise) In our letters to the children of RENEMN, we tried to give them hope and inspiration. We introduced ourselves, discussed RU and told them to follow their dreams and overcome the challenges life throws their way. I believe that the hardest part of accomplishing a goal is gaining the ability to think that you can actually do it. It is our hope that some of the children will be inspired by our letters and write back to us, and who knows, maybe someday come to America to attend college (RU maybe?).

(Denise) This is obviously a very difficult time for the citizens of Haiti. The media has been pulling back coverage of the disaster. This gives us, the viewers and readers, a feeling that Haiti is improving. However, Haitians are still very much suffering.

(Denise) On Wednesday April 7th, Renna, Babette and I will be at an information table at the Cook Campus Center from 9am-12pm. If you have any questions, please feel free to stop by and hopefully we can answer them. If you can’t stop by and still have questions, please feel free to visit RENMEN’s website: http://www.renmenhaiti.org/. RENMEN is an active distribution location for the community of La Plaine and when they receive donations, they are shared with the other orphanages in the area and the families of the surrounding communities. Any donations are welcome, and help your is greatly appreciated.
Editorial: Orphanages Suffering in Haiti

(Babette) After the earthquake in January of this year, Haiti suffered much destruction, and its citizens are desperate for food, water, shelter, and other necessities. What many may not realize is that orphanages — already short with supplies — are often the victims of attacks from the desperate locals.

(Babette) This theft is a travesty; orphanages are home to children who already suffer in that they have no family, and little to call their own. Now, to add insult to injury, these poor children are being stripped of the very few things they have. Without their own food and water, they may die. Not only that, but because of the earthquake, there are many more orphaned children who are in need of a safe, secure home. However, since many orphanages suffer structural damage as result of the earthquake, there are fewer places for these children to retreat to. While we should help all of Haiti as much as possible, we need to ensure that Haitian orphans are not only receiving the care and supplies they need, but protection from local robbery, as well.

Thank you,
Babette Hammerling

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HAITIAN ORPHANAGE IN NEED OF BIG-TICKET ITEMS.

By Renna Patel

(Renna) As the hype about the devastation in Haiti dies down, it is easy to forget that this little country, located about 750 miles off the coast of Florida, is still desperately in need of our help. (Renna) Two of my classmates and I were notified of some of the problems experienced particularly by the orphanages by our professor, Julie Fagan. She was informed about one specific orphanage, Renmen Orphanage (http://renmenhaiti.org/). Renmen is a non-profit organization that helps children in Haiti, providing food, water, shelter, education, clothing, and counseling to its youth. It is located in La Plaine du Cul de Sac, a small city North of Port au Prince. Due to the affects of the earthquake, they are also housing families that have been displaced from their homes.

(Renna) We do not realize that the victims of the earthquake are in need of more than just the bare minimum. In order to rebuild their country back to its previous state, it is in need of larger, more substantial items. My classmates and I are in contact with a volunteer who is currently at Renmen, Father Michel, who has compiled a list of items that are needed. This list includes washing machines, freezers, ovens, mattresses, and kitchen utensils, to name a few. We are looking for aid from big-name franchises and manufacturers for merchandise, in hopes that they will be willing to donate supplies. Electricians, architects, and carpenters who are willing and able to donate their time are also needed. Please do not forget about Haiti. Help us help Haiti!

(Renna) For more information, join our Facebook group—Helping Haiti: Renmen Orphanage.

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