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Other in-kind donations of
services, supplies, and materials
by consultants and volunteers.
Review our needs list (page three)
to see how you or your
organization can make Eritaj
Foundation's dreams come true
by August 2001.

Country and Culture: Haiti

Geography

The Republic of Haiti is located 750 miles south of Miami, sharing the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic. Approximately 8 million people live in an area about the size of Maryland. Haiti has tropical coasts and large valleys where it is very hot and humid. In the higher elevations (in the mountains) it can be very cool at night. Once a forest covered island, many of Haiti's hillsides are today severely eroded due to uncontrolled exploitation of the natural resources.

Economy

Most of Haiti's population depends on agriculture for its existence. The land that is available is often unsuitable for agriculture due to poor soil quality and loss of topsoil. At least 30% of the land being farmed is located on slopes that need to be protected from erosion or on land that would be better used as pasture-land, for tree planting, or left idle. People work on land that has been divided and re-divided from generation to generation with little left for each



family to farm. Many of the young emigrate from the rural areas to the larger towns and cities, and the towns and cities are growing.

Culture

Creole is Haiti's official language and is spoken by the majority of the population while French is the language of the upper socio-economic class. Previously it was also the language of the government.

About 80% of Haitians are Catholic with Catholicism being the national religion. Voodoo beliefs, however, remain an important aspect of the culture and daily life in rural society. About 10% of the population is Protestant.

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ERITAJ UPDATE

A newsletter for the friends and volunteers of the Eritaj Foundation

Spring 2001

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Eritaj Foundation Working to strengthen Haiti

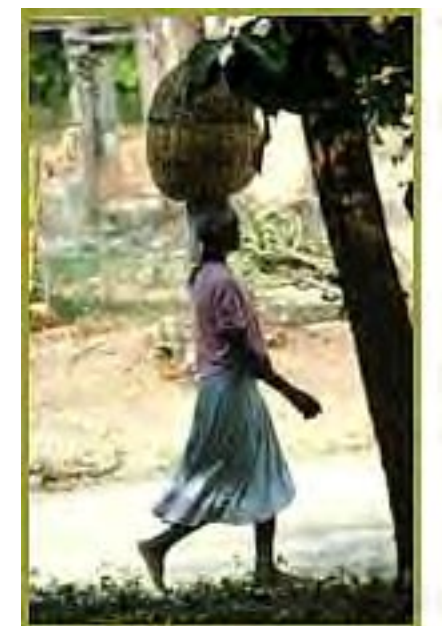
Eritaj Foundation, a charitable, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization, is dedicated to promoting the development of human services programs in Haiti. "Eritaj" is the Haitian Creole word for "Heritage."

The foundation is run entirely by volunteers and with no paid staff. It provides small grants to grassroots Haiti-based organizations that are working to strengthen democracy in Haiti

through poverty reduction and building social services programs.

Eritaj Foundation was formed in the past year to help strengthen democracy, reduce poverty and disease in the poorest country of the Western Hemisphere, by supporting the creation of social services in Haiti. The foundation started out with a small grant from the Butler family and hundreds of hours of donated time to put it together. It seeks to partner with American organizations, regional and international foundations,

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Eritaj Foundation

Continued from page one

building on common grounds and mutual interests for service provision.

Eritaj Foundation awards grants to Haiti-based organizations that are willing to embrace the non-profit model of service. Most of the scarce indigenous human services organizations are owned by individuals and don't have the board of directors organizational structure to oversee operation. As a result, these organizations are mismanaged and under/counter productive despite commitment to services.

Eritaj Foundation has supported a minimum of three organizations during its formative years. While overhead costs can be a hindrance to grant provision in the early stage, due to limited initial funds, Eritaj Foundation minimizes as much as possible its expenditures (supplies, postage, printing) to allow it to carry out its core purpose. The Foundation relies on donations of space, graphic design, computers, telephone, fax, and hundreds of hours of volunteer labor to operate.



"I would like to see a renewed commitment to social change and justice for the people of Haiti."

Mirlande Butler, Eritaj founder

Project

❖ Youth Alliance with Caribbean Peers

This program will provide poor African American youths with the opportunity to visit Haiti for two weeks, offering to them what is only available to the wealthy and advantaged population. Through this program, minority youth can start to learn a new language, build resiliency and expand the breadth and scope of coping strategies to which they are exposed while contributing to the efforts of the Haitian people by performing productive tasks.

Additional Projects

❖ African American and Haitian youth dialogue series

Youth from both ethnic groups will meet once a month to develop an understanding of respective cultures, attempt to dispel myths and explore differences and commonalities.

❖ Poverty Reduction with Jazz

A production of jazz work linking Haitian and African American cultures.

❖ Metro West Helping Hands

Through this project, Eritaj Foundation collects goods, medicines and in kind and cash donations to benefit poor families in Haiti. These donations are given to community centers as small grants or in kind gifts.

❖ Friends Fundraising Committee

This component engages Haitian constituents in an exchange about causes of deprivation and dysfunctions that make of Haiti the poorest country of the Western Hemisphere. It seeks their support for the foundation through volunteering and membership contributions..

You can make a difference

Help Eritaj Foundation make a difference in impoverished Haiti through your contributions of products or materials.

Whether you are a manufacturer, distributor, retailer, corporation, business, or individual, you can help Eritaj Foundation with donations of your surplus materials. In the past year, Eritaj Donations sent donated computers for poor schools in Gonaives, first time computers users. We need to send building materials and tools to shanty towns of Haiti to build health centers and community centers. Your donations are tax deductible and we will arrange for shipping and distribution. Suggested goods and products we can use:

- ✓ **Medical supplies:** instruments and medicines;
- ✓ **Electricity:** generators, inverters and solar power generating machines
- ✓ **Metal roofing**
- ✓ **Electrical supplies, wire**
- ✓ **Tools** (hand and electric)
- ✓ **Lumber** (especially plywood)
- ✓ **Heavy equipment** (for construction, agriculture, road and infrastructure work);
- ✓ **Plastic supplies,** drain pipe and fittings
- ✓ **Computers,** computer equipment and software,
- ✓ **Irrigation supplies** and equipment

Financial donations to support Eritaj Foundation's work are gratefully received. Credit cards are accepted.



The Youth Alliance Advisory Board meets monthly at the Harvard International Institute (Coolidge Building) in Cambridge.



Other Partners

Since its formation, the Foundation has supported the work of three not-for-profit community agencies with prorated grants ranging from \$100.00 to \$1,000.00. It plans to support two others during 2001.

- ❖ **Centre d'Accueil et de Development Communautaire** provides free health services to poor children of Gonaives and a weekly meal to their families.
- ❖ **Horizon de l'Espoir** provides nutrition to toddlers of unemployed parents of Thomassin.
- ❖ **Foyer Bon Samaritain** is a shelter in Petite Place Cazeau, a deprived suburb of Port au Prince. The shelter has two homes which currently hosts 50 children.
- ❖ **Ecole Philanthropique de Chambelland** runs schools for children whose parents cannot afford to pay tuition.
- ❖ **CHAPO** provides support to poor Haitians with HIV/AIDS and offers prevention and education.