

HAITI CONTINUES TO REBUILD

Categories: Emergency Assistance/WASH/Community Building

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Emergency Assistance

Concerns over Regional Virus Outbreak

In a region lacking adequate sanitation and proper hygiene, the spread of diseases is deemed inevitable. In fact, due to the shortage of treatment centers in Haiti, many people are left without access to treatment or care.

Thus, the recent outbreak of the Chikungunya virus in the Caribbean has been a rising concern not only for JEN staffmembers stationed in Haiti, but for the Haitian population. In a country that has faced a detrimental cholera epidemic in the past, the potential outbreak of a new virus can hypothetically delay Haiti's process in internal restructuring.

The virus itself is transmitted by infected mosquitos. In fact, the outbreak began at the start of the rainy season, and due to the lack of proper drainage systems throughout Haiti, standing water as well as open water containers serve as perfect breeding grounds for such mosquitos, thus putting local communities at high risk for contracting the virus. Symptoms include fever and joint pain, and other signs may include nausea, rash, and muscle aches.

However, there are no vaccines for the illness, save for medicines that may simply reduce fevers.

Following the initial outbreak in neighboring Caribbean islands, JEN staff members stationed in Haiti mobilized a team to inform communities about the virus and how to prevent contraction.

In a country ravaged by long-term internal instability and a recent natural disaster that damaged the region's social and economic stature, JEN continues to seek ways to create a self-reliant nation for long-term rehabilitation.

WASH

JEN Celebrates World Water Day



Above: Children learning to properly wash their hands

In 1993, the United Nations formally recognized March 22 as World Water Day. In respect to the internationally recognized day that emphasizes the importance of water, JEN successfully organized a series of hygiene promotion events in four of their eighteen communities.

With the help of the water management committee and volunteers, the event was ultimately successful in spreading knowledge about how one can maintain a healthy lifestyle through proper hygiene. A myriad of activities including games, quizzes, and training attracted both adults and children, and hygiene kits donated by UNICEF and Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) were distributed to participants.

With an emphasis on the slogan "Dlo + Tretman = Sante" (which translates to "Water + Treatment = Health"), JEN sought to teach the local communities the notion of self-reliance.

COUNTRY: HAITI

Community Building

Locals Celebrate Annual Rara Carnival

Towards the end of April, a number of JEN staff members were lucky to witness and take part in a traditional Haitian festival known as Rara. The term “Rara” refers to a music genre that is used for street processions, which is precisely what the festival itself was composed of. The week-long celebration included singing, dancing, and drinking along main streets, often creating inconvenient traffic for those in a hurry.

JEN staff members were curious as to how such a tradition came to be, and went about interviewing local Haitians. The festival itself originated from Africans and Afro-Creoles who were enslaved in Saint-Dominique and who were said to parade with music instruments on Easter. This practice has essentially continued to the present day, with evidently a number of changes to reflect the modern day through the use of instruments such as trumpets and saxophones.

In fact, prior to the rainy season which typically begins around April, local farmers ask one another for help in cultivating their fields, a task that frequently occurs during the night (past tense?). The parade this year began at 6pm and was finished at 10am the next morning.



Above: Locals gather on the street to observe the Rara festival

For the JEN staff members, participating in local events such as Rara is not only a time to enjoy the array of music, but to also experience the local culture up close. Cultural barriers often pose a risk in delaying missions that aim to improve the health and well-being of local communities. In fact, JEN’s presence at the Rara festival allowed for them to promote

awareness on proper hygiene practices which could ultimately prevent the risk of certain diseases.



Above: JEN staff members show festival attendees the proper way to wash their hands



The 7 EN’s of JEN

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Entrust
Encourage
Endeavor
Enjoy
Encounter
Enable

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NGO JEN (Japan Emergency NGO)

7/F, Daini Tobundo Bldg, Ageba-cho, Shinjuku,
Tokyo, JAPAN 162-0826

Phone: (81) 3-5225-9352 / Fax: (81) 3-5225-9357

Email: info@jen-npo.org / web: www.jen-npo.org

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