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SOIL Newsletter

Fall 2010

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Dear Ann Marie,

It has been a long 8 months since our lives in Haiti changed. We are so grateful to all of you who have walked with us in spirit through these challenging times where a day feels like weeks and the months pass by in the blink of an eye. Each day we awaken with the sun to the site of hillsides cloaked in tattered tents, the sounds of a city rising from the rubble. The heat is relentless and sometimes I imagine that it is fueled by the fire of solidarity that still burns in the hearts of those who have not forgotten Haiti. It is that fire that gives us the strength to keep moving forward and feeds the hopes and dreams of our Haitian brothers and sisters. So thank you for all you have done, for your tenacious commitment and your unwavering support. You are always with us.

With love from Port au Prince,

Sasha Kramer

Latest News

SOIL Creates First Viable Alternative to Environmentally Disastrous Sludge Dumping in Port-au-Prince

Following the earthquake, SOIL expanded operations to Port-au-Prince and began a new project with Oxfam (Great Britain) to pilot ecological sanitation in emergency settings and to create a sustainable ongoing sanitation solution for the greater metropolitan area. Up until this project, sludge from toilets in Port-au-Prince was being dumped, untreated, at a

Emergency Sanitation

SOIL's EcoSan Toilets Revolutionize Emergency Sanitation

SOIL's clean, effective and well-received ecological sanitation (EcoSan) toilets in Port-au-Prince following the 2010 earthquake have been widely recognized as being some of the most well-functioning toilets in the city. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the International Organization of Migration (IOM), Mercy Corps, SOLIDARITÉS International and Concern Worldwide have all contacted SOIL to express

2010 Earthquake

Thank You To Our Friends and Supporters Who Helped SOIL Respond to the 2010 Earthquake

Following the 7.0 earthquake on January 12, 2010, we packed up our little SOIL pickup truck with supplies and staff from Cap-Haitien and drove the 6 hours to the capital. We arrived in Port-au-Prince late evening of January 15th and immediately got to work.

As a small organization operating in Haiti since 2006,

poorly designed site on the edge of the city where it leached into ground water and permanently polluted the surrounding land.

After just a few months on the ground in Port-au-Prince,

- SOIL has constructed 110 urine diversion toilets, 50 humanure composting toilets and 3 arborloos with many more in the works for the coming months!

- SOIL is currently providing sanitation services at 28 sites in the communes of Delmas, Tabarre, Petionville and Cite Soleil.

- SOIL toilets are accessible to over 20,000 people living in temporary camps around the city.

- 10 masons and 200 carpenters have been trained in how to build several models of ecological sanitation toilets and 12 people have been trained in how to set up and maintain a compost site.



Nick Preneta and Sasha Kramer get their hands dirty at SOIL's composting waste treatment facility.

- And last but not least, SOIL has established Port-au-Prince's largest composting facility which treats over 3,000 gallons of poo per week and turns it into valuable fertilizer critical for reforestation and food production efforts.

interest in incorporating ecologic



Kids at the Nou Se Fanmi (We Are Family) Camp in Port-au-Prince pose in front of their composting toilet.

al sanitation methods into their longer term plans in Haiti. Traditional sanitation interventions have primarily involved the digging of trenches and pit latrines or the installation of port-a-potties and above ground latrines. Pit latrines placed in heavily populated refugee camps are subject to flooding and structural collapse, which could lead to fecal contamination of water supplies. The need for constant desludging of port-a-potties and above ground latrines also poses a serious problem as countries reeling from a natural disaster often do not have the time or resources to develop proper dumping sites to receive the large amounts of waste generated in refugee camps. What more, Haiti has never had the infrastructure in place that would support the large number of trucks that are now transporting over 30,000 gallons of waste per day from these latrines as Port-au-Prince had no officially sanctioned sewage treatment site prior to the earthquake.

Thanks to the support of our partners and our donors worldwide, SOIL has demonstrated that ecological sanitation is an effective solution for emergency sanitation and the waste treatment composting facility that we have constructed will be providing a long-term, low-cost sustainable sanitation solution for the city.

we had the fluency, freedom, and contacts to begin traveling the ravaged city to find the communities with the greatest need. While many organizations were waiting for clearance to distribute resources, SOIL was able to put money and materials directly into the hands of community organizers, enabling them to reach the people waiting for aid. Thanks to the generosity of our friends and supporters around the world, we were able to provide over \$60,000 of aid, with all money going directly into emergency relief. Take a look at what we accomplished together.

Port-au-Prince Response

- Delivered over 100,000 gallons of water to displaced people living in camps throughout the city.
- Gave over \$25,000 to community organizers, who purchased food from local businesses and delivered to areas most in need, reaching thousands of families.
- Purchased and distributed over 1,000 tarps, providing temporary shelter to displaced families.
- Provided logistics and medicines for mobile health clinics, medical translation, and transport of patients between hospitals.

Cap-Haitien Response

In Cap-Haitien, SOIL was one of the first organizations to provide aid for victims of the earthquake relocating to the North:

- Rented tents for the hospital and mayor's office in Milot
- Purchased and distributed \$30,000 of food, medicine and hygiene kits to earthquake

When Toilets Go Bad

by Anthony Kilbride, SOIL Engineer

One of the problems with sanitation in Port-au-Prince post-earthquake, is that very few people in 'the business', who were mobilized and flew out to Haiti after the 12th of January, actually knew of the historical sanitation situation in the country, or have kept in touch with the goings on in the myriad spontaneous camps throughout the capital. This general lack of experience amongst sanitation professionals, in responding to an emergency like the Haiti earthquake, and the lack of monitoring in camps, has led to a series of worrying errors.



A port-a-pottie gone wrong.

These errors can be organized into two groups. Firstly, poor toilet design and construction and a disastrous excreta disposal strategy have left the city with many malodorous and fly ridden pit latrines (which are not meant for the urban context) and fecal contamination of soil and groundwater in the camps and in the ultimate resting place of Port-au-Prince's poop: the hellish municipal dump site known as 'Troutier'. Such is the disgust that these toilets generate amongst their users, that some communities have torn down and removed the offending toilets. What lies beneath the fallen structures however, are leaching pits of human excrement; sores amongst Port-au-Prince's patchwork of tents and broken buildings.

Update from Northern Haiti

SOIL's staff in Cap-Haitien, Milot and Borgne in northern Haiti have been working around the clock to help with SOIL's provision of emergency sanitation services in Port-au-Prince while still maintaining programs in the north. As our projects in Port-au-Prince have taken off, our original staff have, for the most part, been able to return to the tasks at hand.

Current projects in Cap-Haitien include:

- Maintaining and developing our urban waste treatment site.
- Expanding the health clinic in the Shada neighborhood of Cap-Haitien.
- Continuing our youth programs including Fatra Pa Egziste and Looking Through Their Eyes.

We also have a big plan to improve operations in the north, by converting all our public toilets there to the new and improved design that we have been implementing in Port-au-Prince to great success.

We owe a sincere thank you to all our staff and partners in the north that helped us respond quickly and effectively to the earthquake and we're excited to see the new designs and ideas that come from a continued collaboration between our two offices.

SOIL Hosts Huge Sanitation Celebration and Training Event in Port-au-Prince

On August 21, 2010, SOIL hosted a sanitation celebration and training event to promote the construction of ecological

victims in hospitals and temporary IDP camps in the north.

Thank you to all of the big-hearted people that donated to make these results possible. Your generosity touched the lives of so many, and for this we are deeply grateful.

About Us

Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods (SOIL) is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting soil resources, empowering communities and transforming wastes into resources in Haiti. We believe the path to sustainability is through transformation, of both disempowered people and discarded materials, turning pollution into valuable resources. SOIL promotes integrated approaches to the problems of poverty, poor public health, agricultural productivity, and environmental destruction. We attempt to nurture collective creativity through developing collaborative relationships between community organizations in Haiti and activists internationally. Empowering communities, building soil, nourishing the grassroots.

Get Involved

Join Us for the 2011 SOIL Calendar Fundraiser!

Our wonderful SOIL volunteer, Corinne Law, helped us design beautiful new calendars for 2011. If you are planning an event, looking for a unique holiday present or know a group of folks that might be interested in purchasing one (take them to your office!), please email us at info@oursoil.org today to place a bulk rate order. We ask that

Secondly, toilet maintenance and toilet maintenance monitoring has been largely absent, and so the real state of the toilets never reaches back to those who commissioned them. The well accepted way to avoid this pitfall is to empower the community, through education of toilet users and payment of toilet cleaners, to be responsible for their toilets. However, community participation and education (the pillars of SOIL's success in Port-au -Prince) has been insufficient, and the resulting sanitation landscape has very few pretty privies.



SOIL's public toilets are so clean that people sometimes use them to hang their laundry.

On a positive note, SOIL's privies are very pretty; they even have flowers in them!

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toilets in the Port-au-Prince region. An estimated 200 carpenters trained by SOIL in EcoSan toilet construction attended the meeting along with representatives from several major sanitation organizations and the Haitian government's water and sanitation agency (DINEPA). The full day event included presentations from many of SOIL's staff and partners, a thank you to participants and partners and the presentation of new hand saws as a special recognition of the foremen who trained the many carpenters. After lunch, participants headed home with a certificate of participation and a sample of SOIL fertilizer to share with their communities.



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you purchase calendars in packs of 10 or more that you can either gift or resell. All proceeds will directly benefit SOIL's ongoing relief efforts in Haiti.

SOIL Website Now Accepts Monthly Donations

Please consider supporting ongoing recovery efforts through a monthly commemorative donation to SOIL. You can donate online at our website : www.oursoil.org.

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www.oursoil.org

or mail your tax-deductible contributions to:

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