

International Action improving access to clean water and sanitation in Haiti

Anna Nordquist

UCLA Blum Center for Poverty and Health in Latin America, University of California Los Angeles

Introduction

In Haiti today one in every eight children die from waterborne illness. This issue is easily preventable yet each day children still die because most Haitian people are too poor to provide themselves with clean water. The main issues focused on are:

- Haiti already had issues with clean water, before the 2010 earthquake.
- After the Earthquake, Haiti lost much of their already small supply of clean water.
- The earthquake also wiped out much of their infrastructure including health clinics and hospitals. Without access to clean water or sanitation the people of Haiti suffered. communicable diseases started increases and a cholera outbreak claimed many lives.

One solution to help alleviate the burden brought by communicable diseases is to prevent them. An NGO called International Action teamed up with the American Institute for Research to provide clean water, education, and jobs to Haitian communities.



Fig. 1. Children at a school that is receiving help from International Action, help carry their new water tank and filtration system to its installation site.

Materials and methods

This program is relatively new and has not published a complete report on their methods of research. However, they do have a summary published which states that they utilize both quantitative and qualitative studies. For materials, they try to buy everything from the communities in which they work in order to help support the economy so that they can help the community even more.

Fig. 2. School children being taught about sanitation and proper hygiene in a school that is part of the the Clean Water in Schools Program.



Materials and methods

One of the ways that this program worked to teach children was through pamphlets that were explained in class and then sent home so that the students could teach their families about sanitation and clean water.

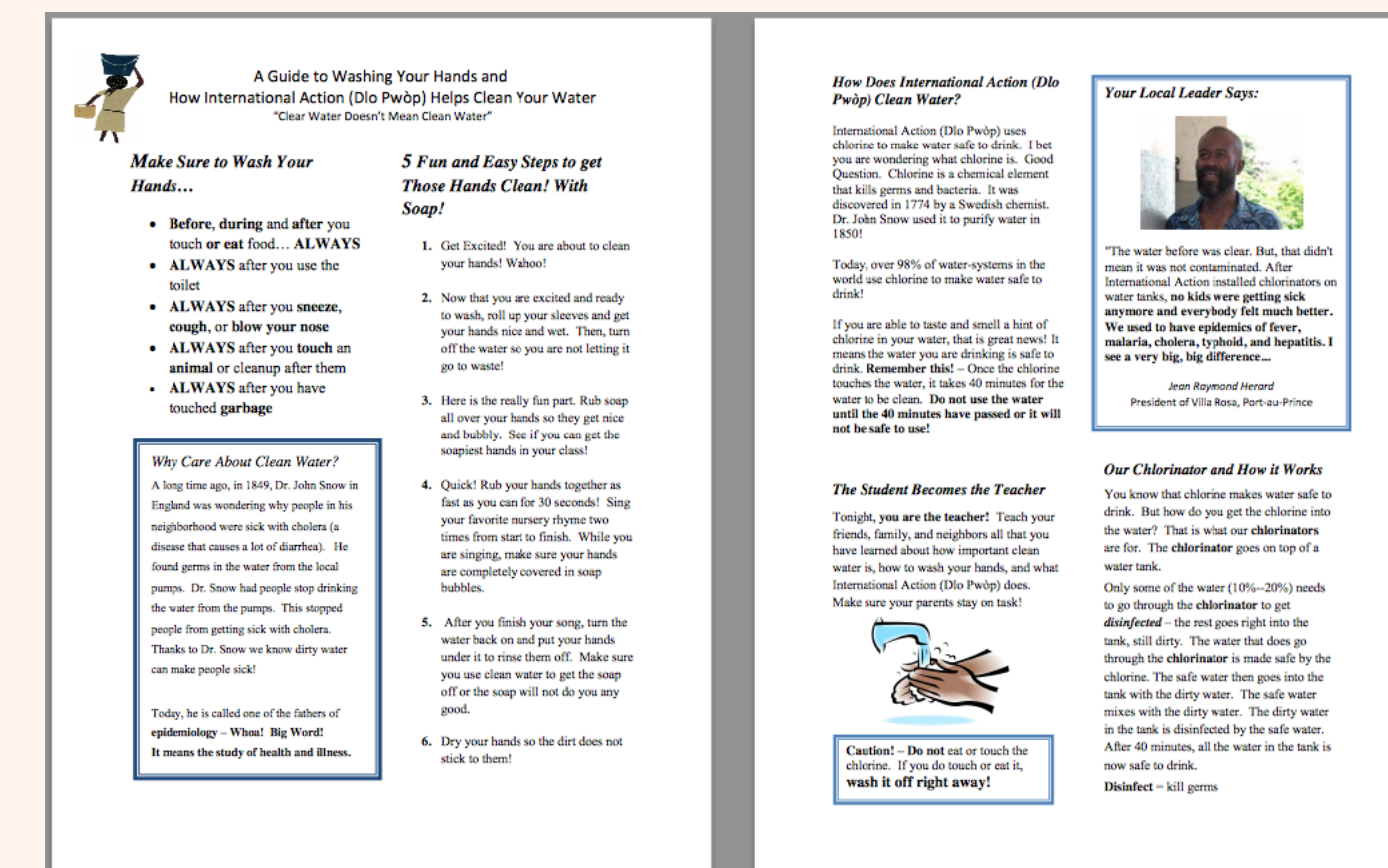


Fig. 3. This is the pamphlet with information about the importance of clean water and sanitation. The Creole version was distributed to school children in Haiti as part of the Clean Water in Schools program. It is the translated version.

Results

International Action currently provides water to 92 schools in the slum area of Cite Soleil. These schools include: Ecole Mixte Frere en Jesus, Ecole Mixte des Vaillants and more. Overall this program provides clean water for 13,000 students.

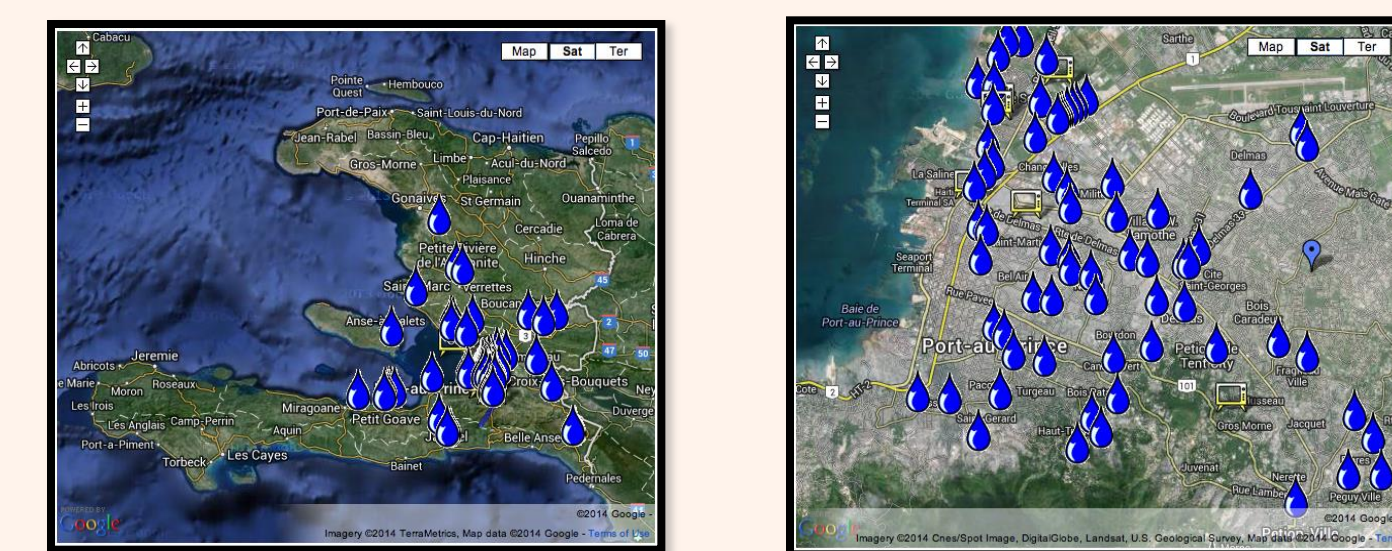


Fig. 4(a-b). The maps illustrate locations that International Action is providing water to with all of their programs including the Clean Waters in Schools program. The figure on the left shows the entire country of Haiti and the figure on the right shows the Port-au-Prince area.

This program is still a work in progress, they have not yet published their final results but from preliminary data and previous programs implemented by International Action it looks as though this program is going to be successful. Even if it doesn't make as large of an impact as expected for the quantitative results, the lives of people that it has impacted made it worth it.

Cholera Outbreak and Results:

After the Earthquake of 2010, there was a cholera outbreak in Haiti. One of the main reasons behind this outbreak is a lack of access to clean water and very poor sanitation. However, after groups like International Action worked to improve sanitation, the spread of Cholera has begun to decrease.

Table. Geographic Variation in Cumulative Cases of and Deaths From Cholera in Haiti, 20 October 2010 to 2 February 2011*

Department or City	Total Cases, n	Hospitalized Case Fatalities, n	Nonhospitalized Case Fatalities, n	Case-Fatality Rate, %
Artibonite	59 937	550	313	1.4
Centre	18 958	180	173	1.8
Grande'Anse†	13 026	324	521	6.2
Nippes	1904	52	83	6.8
Nord†	25 499	576	43	2.4
Nord-Ouest	15 222	169	68	1.6
Nord-Est	7922	104	144	3.1
Ouest†	12 854	164	77	1.9
Port-au-Prince	53 621	412	16	0.8
Sud†	7532	138	45	2.4
Sud-Est	2117	34	148	8.0

* Data are from reference 2.
† Complete data were not available.
‡ Excluding Port-au-Prince.

Fig. 5. This figure illustrates the cholera outbreak that occurred immediately following the Earthquake in 2010 and how it has improved in the following year.

Fig. 6. This figure is an image of a temporary clinic after the earthquake. It illustrates how the cholera outbreak has affected the people of Haiti.



Conclusions

Clean water is extremely important perhaps even more important than access to health care. This program has the potential to be powerful because it focuses on prevention and takes the social determinants of health into account. Its community-based approach is impressive in its ability to get individuals involved. This particular NGO holds community meetings and listens to the locals. In surveys done by the Harvard School of Public Health, only 24.4% of people felt that they got to participate in decisions pertaining to water. But for International action about 80% of the people in the communities that they were working with felt that they were included in the decisions. This program is successful because it works on combating the problem from the perspective of multiple social determinants, involves the community, and focuses on prevention rather than treatment.

Future

The next steps for this program involve the participation of the government. Since the clean water and education program have been successfully implemented on the community level by an NGO, it is time for the government to create a proposal and a new policy to help alleviate the struggles caused by poverty and lack of sanitation/clean water. The best way for the government to follow through with this would be to create a government NGO partnership with the NGO that started the program. There are a myriad of reasons this partnerships would be beneficial. One of the main reasons for government involvement is that the government has more power than an NGO, but in Haiti the NGO can secure better funding than the government. Furthermore, an international NGO cannot buttress Haiti forever, so the Haitian government must play a role in implementing policies that include education and sanitation so that the improvements made by this program will last.

Literature cited

Haiti earthquake PDNA (Post-Disaster Needs Assessment) : assessment of damage, losses, general and sectoral needs (Research Report No. 70102). (2010, January). Retrieved from World Bank website: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDS/IB/2012/06/19/000333038_20120619012320/Rendered/PDF/701020ESW0P1190R0Haiti0PDNA020100E_N.pdf

International Action. (2014). Bringing clean water to Haiti [Map]. Retrieved from <http://www.haitiwater.org/our-work/maps>

Jain, S., & Harshfield, E. (2011, August). *Evaluation of International Action Water Chlorinators in Port-au-Prince, Haiti*. Retrieved from International Action website: <http://haitiwater.org/sites/default/files/Final%20Report.pdf>

Lambi Fund of Haiti. (2013). Haiti Health Data [Chart]. Retrieved from http://www.lambifund.org/test/news_HaitiStats.shtml

Varma, M. K., Satterthwaite, M. L., Klasing, A. M., Shoranick, T., Jean, J., Barry, D., . . . Lyon, E. (2008). Woch nan Soley: The Denial of the Right to Water in Haiti [Rocks in the Sun: The Denial of the Right to Water in Haiti]. *Health and Human Rights, 10*(2), 67-89. Retrieved from JSTOR database.

Walton, D., Suri, A., & Farmer, P. (2011). Cholera in Haiti: Fully Integrating Prevention and Care. *Annals of Internal Medicine, 154*(9). Retrieved from <http://annals.org/article.aspx?articleid=746955>

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the UCLA Blum Center for all of their support in creating this poster. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Rodriguez, Dr. Commins, and Angela Ju for their guidance in researching the topic and learning about poverty and health in Latin America in general.

For further information

Please contact anordquist@ucla.edu. More information on this and related projects can be obtained at UCLA Blum Center poster information.