



Dear Alumni:

I have been asked to write to you about our Haiti Project as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Director in AIESEC ALUMNI IBEROAMERICA.

I have always understood that AIESEC came to be in 1948 due to a sense of responsibility towards others within a group of students, and in the aftermath of a catastrophe. They were not coerced in any way, but a sense of leadership brought about a response. Sixty-two years later, 250,000 people died in the Haiti earthquake - a tragedy that touched the world. Not coincidentally, shortly thereafter, email messages started going around in Latin America, from AIESEC Alumni, wondering how we could contribute vis-à-vis this unfortunate event. I can imagine the European students of way back when, sending each other letters through snail mail, wondering about the exact same thing, what can we do? What came of that is a response that has evolved through the years, to become what AIESEC is today.

We put that initiative together in Colombia and put it forth at the AIESEC ALUMNI IBEROAMERICA meeting in March 2010 in Lima, Peru. The proposal was unanimously accepted, delegating the responsibility to me. The first thing I said to the assembly was that if we were to embark in such a task, it would have to be with a long-term commitment, meaning temporary solutions to alleviate our souls would not be acceptable. Bigger organizations were already carrying out fundraising efforts. Time has proven me right, as the funds collected have not solved the underlying basic problems. Haiti is in chaos and it is getting worse every day. I am still imagining our European friends discussing whether to collect funds for the reconstruction of Europe or, instead, develop some exchange program to train future enterprise leaders in order to achieve change. It wasn't about changing the world, but about changing their world and their reality. We know the path they chose.

We don't aspire to change Haiti, it is, and will continue to be the poorest Latin American Nation, and one of the five poorest in the world. What we can change are the lives of a part of the most vulnerable population, children. Hence, **the proposal is to contribute to the rehabilitation of 10 orphan, disabled children in the aftermath of the earthquake, working with them until they reach adulthood.** I still dream about these children going to school, studying whatever they wish, through scholarships, in any of the universities where AIESEC is present. I think again about the European students coordinating the exchange for the first trainees (20 or 30?) ... what I am certain of is that last year we reached 10,000 trainees and not just Economics and Business Administration students. Where can the HAITI LIVES Project end? I don't know, but if we maintain that sense of social responsibility or leadership, or whatever you want to call it, it can get very far. It started as an email, then a proposal where 30 Latin American delegates were gathered, and now we were in Mexico with over a hundred Alumni from all over the world.

After eight days in Port-au-Prince, I was able to find an orphanage that suited our purposes as none of the government or private institutions responded to my pleas for assistance. The first thing I was told was that no one had visited this orphanage before or after the earthquake to offer them relief. It was lost in the outskirts of the city, and I say it was because on December 2010 the owner of the house it occupied – a former director of a Haitian bank living in Miami – ordered them to vacate the premises as they could not afford the rent. Presently the orphanage is in one of the inner parts of the city.

Mama Doris, the person volunteering to manage the orphanage, is a Dominican woman with a heart bigger than the earth. She told me she could find the 10 disabled children; she already knew of two and could find the others as her husband is a doctor and works with some hospitals. She could coordinate the rehabilitation programs, but we also needed to think about the clothing, education and housing needs for those children. This is when I realized we needed to consider additional concerns I had not foreseen. How to differentiate these children from the others at the orphanage? How to monitor them? My definition of social responsibility was established at that moment and I thought, if we have enough room and rice and beans for 10 children, we have enough for 40! .We cannot stop at good intentions.

In the Haiti video you can see some scenes of a boy disabled as a result of the earthquake. A few days ago I spoke with Port-au-Prince and was told, they didn't know what to do anymore. Stevenson Sonson broke his crutches three times and screams, "Mama Doris, don't you understand I don't want these sticks! I want God to give me back my legs so I can walk and play like I used to..." She replied he needed to be patient and not to worry, and that they would find the solution at some point.

For me, personally, the concept of social responsibility translates right now in helping the children of that orphanage. [Spin the Wheel ! HAITI LIVES. Click Here](#)

Thank you.

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PLEASE, LET'S US KNOW IF YOU WILL JOIN US IN ORDER TO FOLLOW UP WITH YOU.
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