June-July 2012 Report

Field Trip at

Association Amis des Enfants de l’isle de La Gonave

Under the auspices of

ISHRA
Intern. Society for Human Rights Australia

RRA
Refugee Relief Association
Introduction

Our three weeks trip to La Gonave involved on-going community consultations with AAE LG four branches, whose representatives remained available at all times.

Our aim was to assess the overall situation, detect problems and find their solutions, find new, feasible, productive, income-generating projects for the community focussed on self-sufficiency, design a future plan of action, budgeting for future projects and for the further development of the current ones.

Most time was spent with community members allocating financial resources, planning for projects future developments, and budgeting for new projects.

We visited the AAE branches in Anse a’ Galets, Palma and Nan Coton and discussed with the AAE representative for Mare Sucrin and Nan Riske, while more villages are asking to be included into AAE projects.

Our findings and outcomes are in this 2-part report: Part 1 is Overview of the island situation; Part 2 Projects is our report about AAE projects status.

The decision making process was speedy and on-going and the representatives consulted with their local communities when necessary. This process appeared as a fluid communication channel that AAE and communities have set in place independently from our visit and probably due to lack of social infrastructures in the island.

Objections were mainly of a practical nature and conceptual objections were next to nil, as most projects had been previously discussed via email and obviously already deliberated at AAE/community level. New concepts were debated after hours, and decision was to further deliberate about them at a later stage and according to finances and respecting the priorities of projects already underway.

AAE LG four committees are a tight-knit system, in constant communication with each other and their communities, each volunteering work and freely sharing resources, finances and tools where it was needed.

All volunteer members are totally dedicated to the benefit of AAE and offered their time freely at all times.

In the picture from left, Nadal Damour, President with representatives of: Anse a’ Galets, Palma and Nan Coton Nan Riske, Mare’ Sucrin.

We remain with the feeling that a spontaneous, flexible albeit basic form of self-governance is well established within AAE and the community at large, probably derived from the lack of infrastructures, but certainly strong, fluid and democratic although with an appalling lack of physical resources, and perhaps because of it. This self-governance is certainly not an indicator of a community relying on hand-outs, rather of a definite and wide spread feeling that self-reliance is the only way possible at present.

Orietta L’Abbate
CEO AAE Australia Inc. for AAE La Gonave

Barbara Zoland
AAE Australia Inc. Vice President
La Gonave, an island of 63km x 15km, population approx. 130,000, lies in the middle of the Haitian gulf. Its mountainous Western side belongs to the Haitian Grand Massif, has elevations up to 600/700mt. and it has a basic agricultural/marine economy. The Eastern part of the island is levelled and relies mainly on marine economy. Most of the island’s requirements rely on the mainland supply. Local production, trade and commerce, even at small scale (and probably the only current option) must be developed to lessen the island’s dependency. Similarly, individual family’s (food) self-sufficiency must be ensured efficiently and quickly to free their meagre income for basic expenses (medical, etc.)

The island has been traditionally neglected by the central government, except as a source of tax revenues and for pillaging charcoal that leaves the island by the boatful, at the expenses of an already extremely depleted environment. Recently, there have been several sources mentioning a new “la Gonave development plan”, whereby the government might be reaching a political consensus to change the constitutional “private State’s property” status of the Haitian islands in order to open it/them to new developments; this might very well implicate the exploiting of natural resources.

La Gonave people, like most islanders, have a strong community bond, with a quick and effective communication system (no, no drums ☺, but an efficient and capillary mobiles system used like a walkie-talkie) throughout (at least this part of) the island; people have implemented consultation and decision making processes and it seems that the community is very acquainted with a self-initiated, albeit possibly rudimental, type of self-governance probably in lieu of mostly non-existent community infrastructures. A first impression of anarchy gives way to a better insight into a community that is trying to self-direct itself as it can, whereby the few authorities on-ground seem to actually appreciate this in self-regulating approach that frees them for taking action.

AAE Association is led by Mr Nadal Damour, President and Samuel Michel, Vice-President. AAE headquarters are in the island’s major town, Anse a’ Galets, and they are in constant contact with the AAE branches in Palma/Nan Coton, Nan Riske, Mare’ Sucrin whose respective presidents organize the local committees and activities according to collective decisions. All representatives meet regularly and have set in place a pyramidal system of implementing projects and distributing benefits.

1 La Gonave, likewise the other Haitian islands are described in the Haitian constitution as “domain privee’ de l’Etat”, or private State property. This would mean that private developments in the islands can become state property. This information is only recently becoming more widely known. The few who were aware of this avoided proceed beyond an initial stage of development, pending a constitutional change that sounds underway, and – more importantly – proceeded with a proper land survey of their properties, as in the island the only title citizens have been given so far is a purchase receipt with no properly surveyed plan attached.

Another change seemingly underway is the concession of SEZ zones (Special Economic Zone with tax and/or custom relief/exemption), that have also been discussed for years to no avail. In the last year, three SEZ have been issued in the North of Haiti (industrial/mining areas around Caracol). One was asked for La Gonave years ago is by a USA private enterprise that I believe might be now manoeuvring in the constitutional change direction rather than pursuing a perhaps more limiting SEZ or that might be seeing both at government level. Recent – August 2012 - article: http://haitirewired.wired.com/profiles/blogs/study-details-intractable-issue-of-land-tenure-in-post-quake
La Gonave’s infrastructure

- **Roads** are unpaved and in terrible conditions; a 20km trip outside the major town requires a two hour drive. This makes distribution of all/any fresh produce virtually impossible beyond a much localized radius. Road construction/repairs require a large scale intervention. Most traffic is via motorbikes, Chinese imports at an average of US$ 1,700, with a life span of 3-5 years, greatly affected by saline air and dust. Only 4WD can be driven on these roads therefore their cost makes them unfeasible at a similar 3-5 year life span. Trucks can be hired locally for goods transportation.

  a) Road transport: private taxi service on motorbikes (local fee negotiable in a few Gourdes according to distance), once-weekly bus to rural areas (market days), private car hire at approx. US$100-140/day.
  b) Sea transport: several ferries of different size/conditions, most overloaded and with poor maintenance status. Ferry fee: Gourdes 250=approx. US$ 6.50 per person. Accidents and related drownings are frequent. Life savers implemented only briefly after such accidents. Docks supervision/control not detected.
  c) One goods ferry once a week, on Saturdays.

- **Power**: new power lines have been installed. Power is now rather reliable between 6.30pm and midnight. Small scale solar power is quite common and people are very much in favour of this system. Power metres have also been installed on power poles along the road and connected to individual households. Rural areas still without connection, portable solar lights rather common in town and in the rural areas.

- **Health**: Overall health seems relatively healthier than in the past. From what we have seen: far fewer children with reddish hair or distended tummy, dental health limited to broken teeth or age-related missing teeth. Only one seriously disabled young man met in town, a small group of less than ten deaf people. Dust related ailments seem surprisingly few given the extent of dust, conjunctivitis seems occasional but quite contagious. The local Wesleyan hospital, charges fees where possible. Wesley Hospital is sponsoring overseas doctors rather often, offering free services (hospital fees charged). No other hospital of note in this part of the island.

Local diet as experienced consisted of rice (USA import), goat meat, chicken, fish and conch shell and beans. Diet lacks of milk, dairy products and eggs. The daily vitamin requirements seem satisfied (just) by fruit, always good and plenty, and fresh salad. Apparently, moringa leaves are eaten as salad in the countryside.

- **Social services**: virtually non-existent. Community feeling is quite strong and the population seems to cling together and offer reciprocal help where needed, e.g.: extended family, reciprocal road assistance, house repairs (service barter), individual enterprise micro credit, children supervising system, etc. Private associations such as AAE and religious associations seem to absorb many of the social service duties.

- **Education**: several state schools provide for education under ministerial guidelines with a traditional curriculum, with many schools under religious management applying fees still to be better investigated. State school do not seem to be computer equipped or connected to power grid. It is unknown schools offer meals. Current AAE computer and English courses seems to fill a much sought after market niche and their fees cover for younger, needy children after-hours/weekend education, providing snacks and meals when possible.
- **Bureaucracy**: extremely limited, and multifunctional. Population seems to only recently being discovering that reliance on limited and ill/little advising bureaucracy is not always in their best interest (see land surveying issue). Recent opening to outside sources of information (internet) has revealed much inadequacy of the local bureaucracy (“the Haitian way”). This type of information outsourcing should be further implemented; however confidence in virtual information is still hesitant and trust occurs when a local confirms issues.

Council: unable to provide for waste collection service, rubbish tip, machinery disposal, etc. consequently the island is littered with plastic waste as people are unable to dispose of it. Conversely, beer bottles are carefully collected for returns. Plastic collection would require an incentive and could be implemented at a certain scale as there is a plastic collection point in PaP. It would require a basic financial study of feasible quantity/cost ratio and shipping rates, inclusive of incentives to collectors. Schools could be involved thus embedding education.

- **Economy and working conditions**: likewise most of Haiti, the money system is based on three currencies, of which one must have a good grasp and a considerable small change of at any given time. The Gourde is for local (market and shops) purchases, but large shopping centres in PaP accept US$. The Haitian dollar has a “middle man” function that is still unclear to me, and the US dollar is for hotels and not for small transactions other than as a donation or taxi fee.

Regardless of the government having set the minimum daily wage at US$12.50 (trade) late last year, the average worker is still struggling for US$3.00-5.00/day, except when employed (mostly on a verbal contract basis) by international organizations. In the island, a few managed to be paid at US$16.00/day, but this is a rare occurrence and job offer is scarce and recruitment seems to work on a personal basis. Apparently, organizations either arrive with their own employees or recruit through pre-existing contacts, and basically we acted accordingly in AAE projects, only outsourcing what not available within AAE and the community.

Pay conditions at large private developments should be better investigated than in this limited report, as many workers receive training on the job, which is inclusive of food and accommodation in most cases, and does include a day pay. Another association in Haiti reported to have agreed with workers willing to participate to a community project and to pay them for four days out of seven, while food was being offered for the whole week. This system was well received by AAE communities as we discussed it in view of building AAE school, it has to be seen if it will be implemented in September when the school building will start.

Construction materials were very reasonably priced by our standards, but expensive for Haiti and even more in La Gonave (shipping costs) hence available in limited quantity in the island. Chinese imports into Haiti are massive and predominant, beating the USA on price. Shipping costs to the island are rather reasonable but sum up (truck-boat-truck) and must be organized personally from depot; shipping goods is once a week on Saturdays.

Local production in the mainland is focussed on arts and crafts, whereby the Haitian paintings have resurfaced everywhere in Port au Prince after the EQ, largely maintaining the pre-EQ style. Metal works are also largely available and prices have remained the same. Other productions on sale along the streets are terracotta pots, woven crafts and baskets, large turtle shells and recycled materials bags. Street stalls are now found next to affluent organizations and suburbs as tourism is close to nil in PaP. There is no craft production in La Gonave, although AAE would like to revive these trades, but there still is a presence of embroidery (for which Haiti was once famous), basket-weaving, wrappers-weaving pickles and jams and “new” patchwork.
Local food production in La Gonave is limited and so is distribution. There is much scope for improvement, providing a few changes are implemented. Chicken and goats are exclusively raised for meat and export to the mainland; milking/cheese practices should be implemented. Fish is widely and now intensively so – fished and not replenished. Charcoal is the island’s major export and source of income, whereby La Gonave is Haiti’s charcoal mine and major supplier. Although much of the island seems still green, there are vast, bare areas and even though the population is largely against continuing with this practice, no alternative cooking method or income-generating activity have so far been created to profitably replace tree cutting/charcoal business.

Population is very much interested in education and most make great sacrifices for their children to attend school. However, rural areas families also have to rely on their kids’ manual work and must decide between education and field help, beside the lack of schools in most rural areas.

- Environment:
  a) Agriculture: crops in most of the rural areas have resented the lack of rain this season. Rain started later than expected and most farmers were complaining about the loss of crops, although the late rains might have spared some crops at the last minute. Agriculture in this part of La Gonave is mainly beans, peanuts and corn, plus fruit trees where established. The land remains in need of consolidation (vetiver, moringa and guadua) and replenishment/fertilizers/composting should and could be done at capillary level (see projects started).

  b) Erosion: the communities are quite aware of the need and willing to stop tree cutting, but need the support of a feasible alternative reforestation that is still very limited, if at all in existence, but a reforestation plan is of immediate need. The island is still healthy enough – in many areas – to allow for hope that a decent reforestation education/enforcement/project can actually put a remedy on time. Alternative fuel sources (solar cookers) should also be provided along with a wide education/demonstration campaign to modify cooking habits.

c). Dust: consequent to the poor road maintenance and erosion (limestone?), the amount of dust is massive, though still – and surprisingly so – causing remarkably few respiratory and eye problems.

d) Waste: plastic and waste are a major problem in the island. There seems to be the need for more incentives (some women are already doing it) to collect plastic, for collection points and for an organized disposal system not necessarily of a large scale. Rural areas require a vast clean up. Most plastic waste consists in empty bottles and the industrial plastic sachets for single dose water that are cheap, widely consumed and disposed of thorough the island. Moreover, plastic containers travel for weeks under the tropical sun and thus develop all the chemical toxins as reported by literature. Plastic gets abandoned along streets and runs with discharge water downhill to the dock and into the sea, polluting the marine environment.

e) Urban environment: the town is littered with broken road machinery that could be fixed and reused for badly needed road repairs. There is no provision for disposal of cars or motorbikes, tyres, batteries, etc. not for domestic waste or its sorting and/or composting other than at private association levels. Rubbish bins/waste collection system is non-existent. Composting system from local markets waste has proved quick and successful, and it is undergoing more exposure to the community. Sewage is non-existent. Open drains discharge into the sea/saline areas, on their way creating vast stagnating areas along major roads to the port.

f) Fishing: although fishing is still carried out with basic sailing vessels and methods, the post-EQ population increase has intensified fishing which is one – if not the only – still reliable, local food source. Consequently, fish resources are being depleted and not renewed, mainly conch shell, a local popular staple. There is the risk of creating an unbalanced environment with consequences in the food chain (see Resilience, by A. Zolli, pp.33 et seg.) that might take a few years before they become evident and irreversible. However, the island is blessed with circling banks that seem suitable for fisheries, therefore fishing could be easily regulated and the marine environment protected.
g) Water: major issue. Only a few houses have running water and water tanks requiring power to pump up water. Only a few buildings have gutters and rain water collection tanks. However, PVC pipes are available locally and water tanks are not excessively expensive (US$300 for a 4 gallon tank). Perhaps a project combining three households into one unit could improve the situation. Rural areas logistics would allow for self-made, underground tanks in most cases, perhaps even underground water collection system. The great majority of the population relies in a few, hand-operated community pumps.

h) Maintenance: the overall concept of maintenance still escapes most. Education in the importance of maintenance is underway at some level; although it might take quite some time, people seem to become more responsive when the “donors” threatens to withdraw unless maintenance is secured and efficient.

Further notes

In Anse a’ Galets

No visible public ambulance system.
No parking rules, designated areas or signs.
No speed limit signs.
Footpaths mostly non-existent.
Street lights only on main road.
The only stretch of paved road is about 1km downhill to the docks, I nicknamed it “Indianapolis”.
Accident-prevention measures consist in beeping nonstop, not in slowing down.
Animals, people and vehicles negotiate a road at any given point as traffic rule is neither left nor right, but conditional to cracks and holes.
Neither public rubbish bins nor collection points.
Open drains discharge all waste.
Shops work on demand, mainly by personal call to neighbours or over mobiles.
We counted five churches in 500 metres, all well-kept. Churches hold a service most days.
Main square is a community gathering/meeting point and it includes goats 😊. Stalls are ubiquitous and we were told they pay a nominal, but unknown fee to the council.
The island is virtually crime-free and safe to walk, however lack of night lights and the road conditions makes it impossible. Cigarette/tobacco smoking is non-existent, tobacco and perhaps other drugs are confined to a little known, remote part of the town, not publically visible/accessible.

Docks supervising, ferry overloading controls and life jackets enforcement only appear after a tragedy (a ferry sank on July 7th, when 14 drowned); supervisors made their anger clear as these measures are notoriously short-lived.
Around Anse a’ Galets

There are a few new projects underway in the surrounding of Anse a’ Galets: we did not have time to better research them all, a few we are aware of are:

We visited the Haiti Wish orphanage under construction in the airport area: it is a private enterprise in conjunction with a USA engineering firm. Plan is in two stages (stage one being completed in August 2012) includes a small school and clinic. Solar power and a massive water tank system connected to well. The complex is in a flat area close to the sea, and water table is at 50 feet. Each housing unit is for 10 children (6 and 4 bedrooms) and they also have chosen to build small, detached units for safety reasons, although their building method is still the traditional cement block and concrete. Much care is put into proper cement mixing ratio and practice and they offer on-site training to local people. Potential for cooperation with AAE (education and income-generating activities) was discussed in person. Forecast completion time of stage 1: August 2012.

Quite a considerable amount of private constructions under way in Anse a’ Galets.

Wesley Hospital seems to be still undergoing extension plan and we did not visit it.

Former WV grounds in Palma are now under Palma community management. We visited the WV guest house and spoke to one of the managers. The guest house (main building) seemed lived in and we were reported that seminars are held there at times, while the smaller building (former guest house?) looked uninhabited. Toilets unkempt and in disrepair, sport ground in disrepair but used by children. The WV agricultural project looks in good order and is relatively productive, plants are still being distributed on demand and we admired the drip system in one garden along the road to Palma.

We did not visit the other WV former project (disaster management) and had no comments from our people about them.

Concern is very visible in this part of the island, along with Compassion International. Concern has installed an internet private antenna that we were told is “reserved for special projects”; AAE is trying to investigate the issue further and see if the connection is open to community associations such as AAE. However, it seems AAE might receive by the end of the year a new set of self-supporting servers currently being completed in the USA.

The Haitian president’s son visited the island and rumour was that he is investigating the construction of sport facilities (a new soccer stadium) in La Gonave…however, the existing one would require a far smaller investment to be refurbished.
Part 2. AAE Projects

1. Roof repairs at AAE HQ - Completed

The AAE HQ existing roof structure was missing two trusses and other elements (uprights, joists and rafters), wood was rotting and unsafely joined (only nails, no bolts). Current tin metal roof was old, worn and rusted. Solar panels installed two years ago were too heavy for the existing and perished structure.

Restructuring was carried out in four stages. 1. Installed missing trusses and elements, bolted structure throughout; 2. replaced tin roof with new Colorbond sheets/capping; 3. reinstalled and reconnected solar panels, reconnected water tank; 4. repainted whole building.

Front veranda to be redone after side rooms are completed.

2. Land survey with water drilling technicians – Completed

Roman Cipus and his two technicians came to La Gonave for two days to survey Nan Coton and Palma lands and gave a confident report that water can be found at about 150-180ft.

3. Land survey and plans for rural school - Completed and titles registered

Carried out land survey at Anse a’ Galets, Palma and Nan Coton locations.

Survey includes: titles registration, building working drawing and building permit for school.

Title registration for AAE HQ, inclusive of new side rooms (under completion) and outline of foundation for new classroom and two toilets at the back.

4. Purchased area aside AAE HQ to complete front shop and sewing room – Completed

Purchased a side portion of AAE HQ building consisting in two rooms under construction, to be devoted to shopfront and sewing business.
5. Purchased resource books for library and disposables for printing/photocopying - Completed

Donated consultation books for AAE library, cartridges for photocopiers donated last April, discussed better business plan to ensure proper profit.

6. Review of permanent IT connection - Underway

This project aims to enable online education, applying new technology to provide AAE with own server/s to service La Gonave and for AAE to offer online education. Requires reorientation/replacement of satellite dish and new internet connection. Servers’ equipment is being assembled and shipping organized from Va, USA.

7. Chicken reproduction, eggs production - Underway

Start-up includes: construction of two chicken coops approximately 7 x 7mt in Nan Coton and Nan Riske using recycled materials from AAE HQ renovations and additional if needed, purchase of initial 35 chicken for the two coops, food and water. Aim is to reproduce good quality chickens and eggs for local consumption and sale at local markets, redistribute chicks to create other two chicken coops in Mare Sucrin and Nan Riske branches and so on including cooperation with local farmers and support the one small coop per family goal that would improve both diet and income.

8. Goat project - Underway

There is a significant number of goats in La Gonave, not always tied to trees. This should be further promoted and the tethering system could be improved as goats destroy cultivations.

Goats are only raised for their meat, no milking or cheese making has been considered as the only cheese available in the island is imported.

AAE has started a goat reproduction projects, where by two children and their families share the care of a goat and the goat kids will be distributed to other two families and so on in view of starting a small and local milk and cheese production. Both the chicken and goats project are inclusive of a local veterinary on call.

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9. Composting demonstration drums - Underway

Purchased three drums to be fitted for composting demonstration in the rural areas of the AAE branches. Project includes a composting worker collecting green waste once-weekly from the local market in Palma and to care for the compost. AAE members will weekly demonstrate/promote compost efficiency to community on market days, and instruct how to create permanent composting pits. Composting was already initiated two years ago, and AAE has been continuing with this activity in Anse a’ Galets with success, however it needs much development to become a wide-spread practice in the rural areas. Pit composting has already been done in Anse a’ Galets and other pits are being built in the other AAE branches.

10. Sewing activity - Underway

Sewing machines were donated and delivered to AAE last April. AAE is to complete the side room for sewing business. This project is under Mme. Dieumercie Occeus, local sewing lady currently working at school uniforms from home. The focus is on recycling rice bags (plastic bags have been banned from Haiti as from August 2012) and sails sewing and repairs for the boats sailing the area, providing custom issue can be solved. Sails repairs were already carried out in April 2012. There still is a presence of embroidering activity and other sewing crafts in the island as found at a local fair in June and the room for sewing are being completed at AAE HQ.

11. Peanuts cultivation - Ongoing

Peanut and corn cultivations are already established in the Palma and Nan Coton lands. The last peanuts crop gave several bags of peanuts, but current crop is still unsure due to lack of rain before July 8th. The contribution is to purchase more plants and develop AAE’s production of peanut butter for the children at school/holiday program and for resale, if so. Commercial jars are available and price availability are being investigated. Peanut butter is quite popular in La Gonave, but no local production is available.

12. Construction of outdoor internet kiosk at AAE Anse a’ Galets – Under budgeting

Square, approx. 5 x 5m outdoor kiosk for internet Wi-Fi connection, mobile recharges and evening gatherings with drinks point of sale to be built on AAE grounds. Wood included in purchase of AAE HQ roof reconstruction, banana leaves roofing already ordered, fly wire cost t.b.a. This activity will create a small, steady income for AAE that has solar power and a fridge for drinks.
13. Vetiver cultivation - Ongoing

A few thousand vetiver seedlings have been donated and a further 1,500 is pending; they have been planted, propagated and distributed. Some plants failed due to lack of rain/improper planting (in soil and not in containers). AAE has believed in the benefits of this plant and continues to promote it with more education/seminars because the population is still quite confused about the uses of vetiver in agriculture as they cannot see its immediate worth.

As AAE receives more community consensus, the project is for local farmers to cultivate, propagate and plant vetiver to reclaim land that has been eroded and depleted. First aim is to strengthen the abandoned terraced fields cultivate them again.

14. Nursery in Palma - Underway

AAE, one acre land in Palma is at walking distance from the 2.5 acre land in Nan Coton (that is earmarked for the school project) and it has been properly surveyed last month. Palma is presently cultivated with corn and peanuts, and was earmarked for a permaculture centre, propagating plants aiming to reforest the area.

As AAE has recently received a permaculture grant it will now setting up a proper permaculture centre with nursery; more vetiver seedlings are to be sourced from a local nursery in the same district. AAE is also in contact with the former WV agricultural project, now under a local committee management that supports the creation of such centre in Palma and reforestation in the island.

As more projects will become feasible (bee-keeping, worm composting, fruit drying, etc.) the permaculture centre will run seminars for the community.

15. No.: 4 Youth Clubs – Underway

Each AAE branch (Anse a’ Galets, Nan Coton/Palma, Mare Sucrin and Nan Riske) runs a Saturday morning program with sport and environmental education sessions, plastic awareness, etc. for an average group of 90 children at each location, and offers the children a morning snack.

These groups are quite important as rural children have little opportunity for organized sports and even less for environmental awareness, which would also interest their parents. Once the school in Nan Coton is completed, the venue will attract more children and parents will better see the benefits of education alongside agricultural education for their children and as a source of information and cooperation for themselves.

We have secured the sponsorship for the four groups and project is to start in October 2012.
16. Water well drilling - Underway

Roman Cipus’ team is currently drilling in AAE, Nan Coton land; quote includes installation of hand water pump, possibly later to be replaced by a solar pump. AAE will build a pump enclosure to ensure water safety and fair distribution. Water well is to service both the upcoming school and the community that already sources water from another community-managed well nearby, charging a small fee for maintenance. AAE will probably work along similar lines. Providing water is found, AAE will use the water filters donated to supply clean drinking water to the Youth Club children, the school (once completed) and community, aiming to eliminate bottled water usage/purchase/waste in the area.

17. School/educational centre – Start September 2012

The conceptual drawings were approved by the AAE committees and working drawings have been prepared by an engineer. The first stage of the school consists in three 7mt x 7mt classrooms (as per new, Haitian building requirements), one kitchen, two double pit composting toilets, one water tank, playground and kitchen garden. Site to be fenced. Construction typology was decided by the AAE committee as a solid (blocks) wall 1.5mt high, and light-weight (composite wood panelling) structure above. All AAE committees rejected the earth bag building system due to the previous failure of a prototype building soon to be restructured. The second stage involves adjoining three classrooms, as six classrooms is the minimum required for Haitian school registration.

The educational plan is to offer rural children the national curriculum as well as much environmental education, involving parents in the school program and its regular hands-on activities. The school is to act as a reference centre for agricultural know-how and distribution/collection of produce.

The school envisages working in conjunction with the upcoming nursery in Palma and continuing to cooperate with the former WV agricultural centre. Involvement of rural community around the school is paramount to create an active two-way exchange with all families involved, promoting better agricultural practices, propagation and cultivation and thus achieving food sustainability for all.

School fees and teachers’ fees requirements sponsorships are under consideration.

Ideally, this six-class unit can be replicated in the other AAE branches, pending fund raising and self-funding.

18. Algae fertilizer - Underway

An initial batch of seaweeds is undergoing fermentation. Once properly diluted it will be tested on AAE vegie patch. If successful, organic fertilizer can be easily made and AAE can distribute instruction to the communities as well as distribute it in rural areas on the hills.
**AAE Projects Under Consideration**

The following projects have been discussed at AAE meetings and are under consideration, pending more information/finances. Most of these could be started in the next few months.

**19. Goat cheese making**
The conversation with AAE committees about cheese-making led to suggest a free distribution/promotion/education (about nutritional values) timeframe as people would need to acquire the taste because goat cheese is rather distant from the sweeter, Haitian diet taste. Although cheese-making normally requires the cold chain, domestic production could be started with a small investment, and coinciding with the nearby, local market days for sales/promotion. It has to be ascertained that the island has the right type of goat for milk production.

**20. Cookers, solar et al.**
Templates for solar cookers were sent a couple of years ago, just prior to the EQ. One volunteer group gave AAE a solar cooker demonstration recently using a wrong model and performance was poor, hence AAE shelved the project. However, AAE is to employ a local sheet metal worker to manufacture a prototype from the template sent and retry.

AAE members are first in line on the rocket stove training centre listing in Archaie. The course offers an embedded business plan as it supplies trainees with materials to start business in their communities and in turn train/educate the community, while Archaie remains available for supplies and/or training on demand. AAE and the communities around them are totally aware that either or both systems are the only hope for tree cutting to eventually stop.

**21. Pasta making**
Spaghetti is quite popular in La Gonave, and totally imported from the mainland. AAE discussed the possibility to make pasta locally and we are organizing recipes for pasta making with/without eggs and with the available type of flour as there is a small mill just outside Anse a’ Galets. Objection was that once the recipe is well known people would make their own rather than buying it, and this would be a success all the same, as it eliminates reliance on imports and frees money for other purchases.

**22. Salt production**
Considering setting up a small local salt evaporation projects, thus making table salt available at local level and generating a small income, rather than relying on imported salt for domestic consumption.

**23. Fruit drying**
AAE seriously considered a small project of fruit/vegetable drying project, using the traditional method (mesh trays and muslin, night-time under cover). Researching more information, though it is pretty straight forward.

**24. Worm composting** (Palma nursery)
This project has only briefly been discussed, pending more research into worm composting in arid/marine climates.

**25. Bee-keeping**
AAE members brought this issue to the table as they have heard about similar projects, possibly in Haiti itself, and queried the appropriateness of using the African bee (?) as more suited to their climate. More information is being researched.

**26. Micro-credit lending system by AAE**
Although no funds are available for this at present, it would be an excellent local system.

**27. Fishing and marine areas**
This issue issues were only briefly raised but raised interest quickly. AAE seems well aware of the problem. We made contact with an international Marine Protected Areas organization that is already active in Haiti, offers local training in Haiti and said they are interested in talking to local fishermen associations willing to consider MPAs.
Thank you

Over the last twelve years supporting AAE La Gonave, great many and generous people have joined in from three
continents, strengthening the spirit of international cooperation in aid to the less fortunate.
Many are virtual friends whom we have never met, yet they also gave up much time and donated generously
to this association unknown to them in this small, almost forgotten island.
Our thanks to their great hearts, wishing to continue along together supporting the AAE communities and their
children to reach a dignified and self-sufficient life standard, soon.

AB Inflatable’s USA
Alsaph
Baja Satellites
Cavalier Shipping
Conch Navy Republic/CRN
Cruiseimers Net
Elcie Expeditions
Endangered Planet Foundation
Green Group – E-Paint Yachts
James Bourlet INC
Kevis’ Custom Computers
Medshare.org Misea Group
Palm Beach Sailing Club
Seven Seas Cruising Association
Sunbrushed Inc.
The Wishing Well International Foundation
WWIF founder Guillermo Guzman

Al Golden, printers
Art Miles
Caribbean Weather Watch
Chemo Inc.
Cracker Boy Boat Works
DooDah Net Control
Electric Yacht
Global Marine Network/Software
Jake Brock
Jay Catering
Ocean Watch North America
Misea Group
Sailors Without Borders
Shoes of Hope to Haiti
Sun Electronics Miami
The Millar Family.
WHO Cholera Prevention Guidelines

Ben Smith, Bob & Mina Linely, Brian Low, Cal Landau, Cap. Cameron, Leilaha, Maya and Flynn Murray, Capt.
Joan & Commander Greg Conover, Charlie Howard, Chris Parker, Claude & Dennis, Dick Giddings, Donna Lange,
Joost & Irth, Kristina Ritz Alsaph, Linda & Elie Edmonson, Matt Woods, Richard Sheppard, Ron Wilson, Sandy
Brewer and Meryl Sarty, Sue Slater.

Architecture for Humanity
Baraka Imports
Benelke Imports
Crystal Technologies
Fermi Institute Frascati
Friends of Isle a` Vache
Geiger Research Institute
Haiti Reconstruction International
Illumination Solar
Lowe Lippmann Chartered Accountants
Permaculture International
Permaculture Fund Australia
Shibuki
Veticon Consulting

Australia Ecosystems
Bendigo Bank
Clarence,
Eltham College
Fonkoze Bank
Foress Foundation and Vicky Vidor
GiveLove
Heart for Haiti
HSSA Environment Renewal
Permaculture Haiti Forum
Permaculture Italy
Rotary Club Horsham East
The Spectator Print team
Water for Haiti
Zoland Family Nominees

Alessandra Di Renzo, Amy Silver, Anne Hastings and staff, Ariella Stone, Barbara and Ally Zoland, Bob Easton,
Bobilee Shainie, Chantal L’Abbate, Charlie Howard, Chrys Symons, Chuck Larsen, Cory Zhang and friends, Criss
Juliard, Daniela L’Abbate, David Aitken, Elena Parmiggiani, Enrico Petrangeli, Fatima Baraka, Helder Valente,
Jennifer Daverington, Joel Ducasse, John Calvert, Johan Smooremburg, John McKenzie, Julien Lewis, Lee-anne
Fairban, Leigh and Peter Hanham, Lisa Joseph, Lisa Van Dyke, Mark Slatzman, Mike Mahowald, Mike Perret,
Nick Barr, Orietta L’Abbate, Owen Geiger, Patricia Arquette and Alisa Puga Keesey, Prof. Paul Truong, Roberto
Regnoli, Rodrigo Silva, Roman Cipus, Seila Hierk, Rosalie Edmonson, Susan Wirawan, Susanne Craig, Ted
Johnson, Valeria Vernon, Walter Franceschi, Ysabel De La Rosa, Zara Lim and friends.
Au revoir a’ Lagonav!