



Village Partners International  
partnering to help people help themselves

AUGUST, 2014

# Building Relationships

OUR

MISSION:

**VILLAGE PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL SEEKS TO DEVELOP AND ENHANCE COMMUNITIES WITH PROFOUND NEED. THROUGH PARTNERSHIP, WE SEEK TO STRENGTHEN THEIR MEDICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND MATERIAL RESOURCES. WE ARE SEEKING TO HELP MAKE THE WORLD A STRONGER COMMUNITY BY SHARING GOD'S LOVE, ONE VILLAGE**



It has been several months now since our medical mission trip to Haiti, so I have had plenty of time for reflection. There were many memorable moments during our week in Mombin Crochu, but one in particular has stayed with me.

If you are reading this, you likely believe in God, and you are motivated to live out a life that is pleasing to Him. In particular, He asks us to help others in need, but He doesn't always describe how to help. There are many types of help, but two main ones the way I see it: immediate relief and sustainable assistance.

Immediate relief is assistance that instantaneously improves the conditions of the targeted group of people. Donating the necessary funds to feed children who would not otherwise have food is this type of help. It is important to point out, this type of assistance does not come without its dangers and can sometimes become the type of help that ultimately hurts. It's a slippery slope where immediate relief can become enabled dependence, and when the relief ceases, it can transform into hurtful negligence. Sustainability is at the heart of "teaching others to fish," such as helping to bring education to those without opportunity and giving them a



chance to change their circumstances through knowledge and/or skill. If they learn to "fish," they can feed themselves for a lifetime and dependence and negligence is not even part of the equation.

What is missing in the above breakdown and all of the jargon is what is in the heart, what is between you and the people you are helping. It is what brings you to tears when a person who speaks not a lick of English looks you in the eyes, smiles, and non-verbally says "Thank you". It is most of all about relationships. The moment that I continue to reflect on is when our Pastor

John met with the Pastors' Association.

It was a sight to behold - outside in the dirt, sitting on homemade chairs - one very tall American pastor with all of the Haitian pastors from the local mountain region. I was expecting several requests for money or promises for future help to begin at any minute. The meeting covered the standard business keeping items, but eventually the heart of the gathering was revealed. It was not what the tall American could do for them or to fix some problem they had; rather, the focus was to share concerns, to pray for one another, and ultimately to be in relation with one another. Pastor John pointed it out best, "We don't need to come here and paint or build a house, the Haitians are excellent painters and builders," we need to pray with and for them, be in fellowship with them, be in relation with them, and through a faith-based community, we will share hope with each other. I realized that it is through relationships that sustainable help becomes help sustained and it is in this way that VPI, through years of annual mission trips, has impacted the people of Mombin Crochu.

Well, that is my two cents for trying to figure it out: I must live according to God's will, be accountable for the blessing God has given me and not be afraid to live into my discomfort and God's desire. This is one of the fundamental reasons why you reading these words - because there is something bigger and it is not all about us.

Dan Chan, MD

***"I realized that it is through relationships that sustainable help becomes help sustained and it is in this way that VPI, through years of annual mission trips, has impacted the people of Mombin Crochu."***

**Dr. Dan Chan**

## Morning Star Students Reach Out to Help Others

### **The Morning Star**

*The morning star rises in the east as the night slowly turns over its dark watch to the day, awakening the sun to cover the earth as its warmth illuminates the day. The morning star heralds a new beginning - fresh, untouched, unspoken.*

- Sylvia Campbell, MD

There is a school in Tampa called Morning Star School. It is a small school, which embraces 78 students within its loving walls. The children at Morning Star have reached out across the water to strengthen the bridge that is growing between the people of Papoli Uganda and Tampa, Florida. Together these young students were able to raise \$469.52 in their own "Pennies for Papoli Program" to bring food and medication to other children who, without help, would have no future.

What a beautiful statement of God's love, which sees beyond the darkness, to herald in a new beginning of light and hope. Like the Morning Star, this unconditional love, given to others who never will be known, offers hope to a world that sometimes seems lost and alone. May we all find our own Morning Star to guide us home.

*You too can have a "Pennies for Papoli Program" in your school.*

Contact us at:  
[www.villagepartnersinternational.org](http://www.villagepartnersinternational.org)



*Piped water is a dream come true in the village of Papoli, Uganda*

You are invited ...

to our

**SUMMER**

**SHOWER of**

**Blessings and Love**

*in celebration of*

*the completion of*

**VPI's water project**

**in Papoli**

For more information visit:  
[villagepartnersinternational.org](http://villagepartnersinternational.org)

## Papoli Community Development Foundation-(PACODEF)

PACODEF is a community owned and controlled development organization that was initiated by community members of Papoli village 10 years ago. At its inception village leaders sought it pertinent that bringing community members under one umbrella organization would harness efforts of members and enhance their joint planning, sharing of resources, bargaining for financial and technical support and over all learning by members from each other, one family at a time. PACODEF brings together over 5,200 people in 11 small villages in Papoli parish/village. The organization has a pool of committed salaried technical and manual staff as well as many dedicated volunteers.



## VPI Continues to Fund Mobile Clinic For Mombin Crochu Hospital



The mobile clinic travels to areas of great need and serves those who would not otherwise have access to medical care.

it is all here . . .

within this tiny village  
the poorest of the poor  
bathed in morning light  
it is all here

lying in the mountains  
found only by chance  
covered in loss  
And empty promises  
it is all here

morning dawns  
opening a day  
unchanged by passing of the years  
as amber light shines upon faces  
now worn  
now new  
it is all here

suffering  
loss  
need  
hopelessness in deep despair  
love  
joy  
laughter  
beauty  
caught in the fragility of life

we sit and watch  
days continuing in the quiet living

all that is needed  
all that is true

it is all here

- Sylvia Campbell, MD





## MISSION TRIP

101



*When asked to write about my experience in Mombin Crochu, I was dumbfounded. The mission trip was such a layered, holistic experience that I did not know how to break down any of it. So I did what I do every day as a soccer mom: I made a list. I pretended my daughter was going to Mombin Crochu, and I made a list of what she should know and do. Hopefully, some nuance of my gratefulness will be conveyed between the numbered points.*

1. Before you leave, take a long and thorough hot shower. While on your trip, you will only shower once every three days. And when you do, it will be the most frigid shower of your life. Don't count on having hot water at any time. In fact, don't even count on having water. You also must be careful not to get any water in your mouth, as the water is not treated and is not drinkable. Brush your teeth with bottled water. So, before you get on that plane, shave your legs and ampits. Shampoo your hair the cleanest you can get it. Scrub your face and your feet. The luxury of unlimited water is not available, so your shower there must be quick; therefore, get the cleanest you can before leaving.
2. Pack a bandana. You will need it while riding in cars or trucks. The roads in Mombin Crochu are not paved, and an unbelievable amount of dirt and dust is constantly kicked up in the air as you drive. You do not want to inhale any of it; thus, the bandana covers your mouth as a guard.
3. Invest in a waist pack that lies close to your skin and is not obvious. Your money, passport, and phone need to be with you at all times. Although the community is very safe and the residents are very warm and welcoming, you must be smart about protecting your most valuable assets. Make sure the waist pack is comfortable, as you will only take it off to briefly shower. I even slept with mine. Please note that I did not mention to protect jewelry. That's because you should not take any significant jewelry with you in the first place. I even left my wedding ring at home, and replaced it during my trip with a simple, inexpensive silver band.
4. Break down your money in fives and ones. Mombin 's merchants line their local goods on the ground, eager to make a deal on their beautiful and unique souvenirs. The exchange between you and the seller happens overtly and quickly, and you want to be able to buy your gifts in a swift gesture, without waiting around to get change. A crowd will immediately form around you, noting every detail.
5. Find organic bed bug spray. It's always a good idea to travel with it, no matter where you go- even when traveling in the US! Despite this precaution, there were no usual critters or insects.
6. Pack a small suitcase with gently-used clothes and shoes you are willing to leave behind for the community. You are going to the poorest part of the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Every item can be used- even your toiletries. I arrived with a small carry-on suitcase and backpack. After my week was over, I endorsed this philosophy: if I can replace it, then I leave it. Consequently, I left with my backpack, which was only filled with gifts.
7. Stock up on tuna packets and peanut butter if you are not a big meat eater. Haitians mainly eat goat. If this is not your preferred protein source, bring your own choice which does not require refrigeration. We also were served fabulous freshly made bread every meal, and ripe banana, papaya, mango and pineapple. Of course, you can also bring your favorite comfort food, e.g., chocolate, gum, candy, as you will not find any of these goodies in Mombin. Always keep your water bottle filled and a granola bar handy. You will be busy, and unpredictability is the only surety in Mombin Crochu. Constantly hydrate your body, and expect that a granola bar will be your lunch one day. And when that happens, be sure to remember that many Haitians do not even get to have that much food in a day. That granola bar will taste precious.
9. Take anti-nausea medicine if you get car sick. The journey to Mombin Crochu is rough. Upon landing in Port au Prince, you will ride on a congested bus for 15 minutes before hopping on a small plane. After landing on grass in a field, you will crowd into the back of an open-air truck that will take 90 minutes to travel 20 miles on a dirt road due to the rocky and unstable terrain. (In retrospect, I should have just hiked next to the truck.) This is where #2 above is really important.
10. Lastly, after heeding all the above points, take a breath and smile. Let go of any expectations of what you think your experience should be. Come with your heart and mind open, with the intent to serve. For in exchange, without your realization, it is you who will receive so much more. You are about to enter a gentle and faithful place; for amidst the grinding poverty and the lacking infrastructure, God is present. God is there. And upon return, you will join a family here who carry this piece of grace in their hearts, unknown to the general public, like a precious, fragile secret held sacred.

Renu Parker

SAVE THE DATE!

VPI Fall Fundraiser October 4, 2014