



IPM E-Connections

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In This Issue

[Immersion Experience Reflection by Tiffany Lee: Visiting the Dominican Republic during the Earthquake in Haiti](#)

[Visit to Port Au Prince—Update on Haiti from Joana Peterson](#)

[Join us for Namaste! 2010](#)

[IPM Global Citizens Program Raises Nearly \\$60,000](#)

[Upcoming Immersion Experiences](#)

[Check out New IPM Videos on YouTube](#)

[IPM Proud Community Partner of Cleveland International Film Festival](#)

[Erin McIntyre Joins IPM Staff in El Salvador](#)

[Italy Immersion Experience—A Road Less Traveled: History, Caravaggio, and Social Justice](#)

Dear Friends,

One month after the devastating earthquake in Haiti, the country and its people continue their struggle towards some semblance of recovery. IPM's friends and Partners on the ground have communicated with us about a myriad of devastating tragedies, and moved us with their hope for the future. Over \$2,000 was raised from our initial appeal for IPM's Emergency Fund for Haiti, which is going directly to our Project Partners in the Dominican Republic who are best able to bring necessary supplies from their home communities to the affected areas of Haiti. Below you will find two reflections from recent weeks, one from IPM Education & Outreach Coordinator, Tiffany Lee, following her Immersion Experience to the Dominican Republic during the earthquake; and the other from Joana Peterson, Project Coordinator for IPM's Project Partners in the Dominican Republic. As we all join together to process the difficult reality of this devastation, as well as to envision a better future for

Haiti, I hope these reflections serve to provide thoughtful information and perspectives from members of the IPM Family.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph F. Cistone

Executive Director

To contribute to IPM's Emergency Fund for Haiti, [click here](#).

Immersion Experience Reflection: Travel in the Dominican Republic During the Earthquake in Haiti

By Tiffany Lee

As members of our delegation to the Dominican Republic this January prepared for the experience, we could not have imagined we would be only 45 minutes from the border of Haiti during the devastating 7.0 earthquake that struck this month. Although we did feel the quake as we sat in the schoolhouse in Abra de las Yayas, hearing from the community, we were unaware how devastating this earthquake had been to our neighbors in Haiti. Thankfully there was no visible damage in this particular village. With unreliable electricity that is commonly out for days at a time, and spotty cell phone service in the mountains of the Dominican Republic, it was actually a text message later that night from my parents in the U.S. that would alert us to the magnitude of the disaster nearby.

Though we did not witness the physical results of the earthquake, our group did feel the fear and uncertainty of the island as news trickled in about tsunami warnings across the island; particularly in Santo Domingo, where we had stood by the coast outside the aquarium, admiring the water just the day before the earthquake struck. We were hearing of people retreating from



The IPM delegation from Oberlin College (Ohio, USA) during their Immersion Experience to the Dominican Republic in mid January

this now familiar city, in fear of threatening waters. We also braced ourselves for potentially serious aftershocks near the border in El Cercado (both of which, thankfully, did not materialize). In being present on the island during the earthquake, we experienced a degree of solidarity I've never before experienced as we were together through the waiting, the uncertainty, the fear, and the heartache of our neighbors.

Our itinerary changes also reflected what was happening nearby. We canceled a day trip to the market in Sabanette, Haiti for Thursday and did not meet with MUDHA, a Haitian women's group in Santo Domingo as planned, so that they could focus on the pressing needs of locating family members still in Haiti and organizing supply drives for their native country. Another women's group in El Cercado, which had originally planned a fiesta to send us off, canceled it, as Dominicans came together, putting aside a long, complex,

and at times, acrimonious history with Haiti to share in the three days of mourning with the Haitian Community, to organize supply drives, and to pray for successful relief efforts.

On our last day we stopped and ate lunch at Biyeya Beach on our way from El Cercado back to Santo Domingo and watched helicopter after helicopter cross the bay from Santo Domingo, headed toward Haiti with critical supplies. Each helicopter costing \$5000, we counted the thousands of dollars above our heads and were incredibly moved to see Dominicans taking a lead in the initial emergency relief efforts, especially given the relative poverty we witnessed in the Dominican Republic during our experience the past week.

In visiting the El Cercado market, IPM Project Coordinator, Joana Peterson explained to us that the 5 foot tall piles of second hand clothes stacked for sale were actually from Haiti. Because Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere it receives many donations of all sorts. However, the donations do not always meet the most pressing needs: when Haitians can not feed themselves or their families, clothing is not their first priority. Therefore, Haitians living near the Dominican border “make a living” by selling the donated clothes to the Dominicans and using the money to buy food for their families – as a regular practice, not just during times of catastrophe.

In the wake of this disaster, many are asking how they can help and donate, but as we saw in the market, and as Immersion Experiences so clearly illustrate, we come to know the needs of the people by being with them, listening to them and those who are living, working, and experiencing it with them. Our friends and colleagues on the ground in Haiti and the Dominican Republic are currently requesting cash donations to fund helicopters and trucks to bring supplies, or to buy supplies that are available in close proximity and will reach those affected more quickly than sending other types of donations at this time. We continue to listen to our Project Partners in the Dominican Republic and our friends and colleagues in Haiti to hear the latest updates and requests for support. We will continue to share these with the larger IPM family who we know are very concerned and anxious for information and guidance on how to assist.

I join my fellow members of the Immersion delegation, and our Project Partners, in gratitude for the thoughts and prayers for our safety during our experience, as my own thoughts and prayers remain with those most closely affected by this devastating earthquake. Thank you for the expressions of love, solidarity, and generosity.

Visit to Port Au Prince—An Update on Haiti

By Joana Peterson, Project Coordinator, *El Cercado Community Development (El Cercado, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC)*

Thank you for your concern about my family and our mission in *El Cercado* after the earthquake measuring 7.0 in Haiti. Yes, we all felt it when it happened. When it happened I was in a small village with students from Oberlin College, traveling with IPM; the floor moved and the walls shook but buildings and structures did not fall in the Dominican Republic. We still continue to feel small tremors from Haiti which they are estimating will continue for about a month. Fourteen days after the earthquake, they found a young man under the rubble. But it is doubtful that the 67 Rescue missions from other countries with the United Nations (MINUSTAH), many whom are still present in Haiti, will

continue to find live bodies.

The figures are staggering:

*Estimated 150,000 dead in Port au Prince and possible an additional 50,000 elsewhere in the country,

*Estimated 250,000 wounded with thousands of amputees,

*Estimated 1.5 million homeless, the majority located in hundreds of open space camps in the city. René Prével, President of Haiti, has asked the U.N. for 200,000 tents to substitute the sheet and sack houses that the people have constructed. An estimated 400,000 people will be relocated outside of the city in the next few days,

*90,000 bodies have been found and buried in collective graves: 7,000 and 10,000 at a time,

*Thousands of bodies are still not found and will not be discovered because their bodies are underneath the rubble that will take months and years to clean up.



A for story apartment building in Port Au Prince, HAITI, destroyed by the January 12, 2010 earthquake.

A sheer disaster. Everyone here in the Dominican Republic, as in almost every country in the world, has been sending some kind of help. In every main town in the Dominican Republic drives were held to collect food, water and medical supplies, to be delivered to the border, or straight to Port au Prince. Dominican hospitals along the border and in the Capital area are overfilled with wounded Haitians.

From El Cercado, we delivered to Port au Prince 3 truckloads of food and water. We left at 7AM and returned at 2AM after 5 flat tires and many, many delays. To our surprise we saw no soldiers in the streets only on the border. The United Nations guided us from the border along with 11 other vehicles in a caravan. There were no disturbances, no mobs, no one panicking. Lots and lots of people were walking around late into the night without homes, and with nowhere to go, we guessed. Many people seemed to be in a daze. We passed building upon building completely destroyed: such as a 4 floor school where 200 children died, a five floor apartment building, two hospitals, the Catholic seminary where all of the 150 seminarians perished along with their teachers, the Cathedral where the Bishop and a priest died, the completely destroyed UN building and hundreds more. The smell of dead bodies in these fallen down buildings was overwhelming. We all had masks but at a stop signal someone begged me for mine, and I gave it away. I later got sick from the smell. Dead bodies were still in the streets. When we stopped at a signal that was not working, a wall of a two story building fell down next to us on the car along side of us, the people inside quickly jumped out of the car windows. What a loud noise when a building falls; we could not even imagine what the sound was like when thousands of buildings began to fall all at once on January 12th. Port au Prince is still without electricity and many parts without water. A minimum of 50 tremors have been felt, some measuring 4 and 5 on the Richter scale.

It will take years to dig out the rubble. The pictures can not do justice to the disaster that is there, so please try to contribute where you feel comfortable doing so.

For our part in El Cercado, we continue to ask for donations to make up food

bags that contain: sardines, rice, cornmeal, chocolate, dried milk, spaghetti, sauce, beans, salami, soap, toilet, spices, cod fish, macaroni, tooth paste, condiments and candies. All for US\$12 a bag: pretty economical. We currently are crossing the border on a weekly basis using local trucks including the church's medium size dump truck and taking the food directly to a NGO who normally works with HIV/AIDS patients, but like many of the NGO's in Haiti, they have set aside their work and are now doing relief work with the homeless. This NGO was recommended to us for being very serious and for delivering food to many of the open air camps with houses made of sheets. So we will continue to work with this NGO and bring food and water to them that they in turn will deliver to the camps.



A temporary refugee camp in Port Au Prince, HAITI, housing survivors of the devastating earthquake

There are many good organizations collecting money and materials. The most important thing is to choose one and add your grain of aid for Haiti, the poorest country in our part of the world. Today in our local newspaper they are estimating that 2 million people need food but only 500,000 have received rations to date. We have a long way to go. The longest road is the reconstruction of Haiti's roads, electricity, water systems, houses, and public buildings. 575 million dollars have been promised by the international community but only half of that has been received to date. If you have already sent a donation thank you for your gift.

Sorry this is so, so long, it has been a real eye opening traumatic experience for all of us. Thank you for your many prayers.

Take care, many blessings this year 2010 for you and your family, good health and strong spirit.

Peace,

Joanne

To contribute to IPM's Emergency Fund for Haiti, [click here](#).

Join us for Namaste! 2010

On Thursday, March 4, 2010, IPM will host our 8th Annual Namaste!- A Cultural Celebration at Trinity Commons, downtown Cleveland. Join us for this fabulous evening of international food, live music and entertainment, and wine bar, and a silent auction full of exciting gift packages open for bidding with proceeds to benefit IPM's Project Partners around the

world. For ticket reservations, and more information, call the IPM Office at +1.216.932.4082.

IPM Global Citizens Program Raises nearly \$60,000

In 2009, IPM launched the Global Citizens Program as an avenue for socially responsible corporations and small businesses to directly partner with IPM Projects around the world. To date, we have received \$59,000 in new contributions towards fulfilling the full funding goals of our Project Partners. This extraordinary response allows our Partners to continue their remarkable work serving children, women, and youth around the world. For more information on how to get your corporation, congregation, or school involved in this program, contact Ilze Fender at ifender@ipmconnect.org, or +1.216.932.4082.

Upcoming Immersion Experiences

Join us on an upcoming open Immersion Experience! These Immersions are a great way to see firsthand the work of our Project Partners, and get a unique view of each country that few tourists ever have the opportunity to see. View the full Immersion Experience Calendar online by [clicking here](#), or contact Tiffany Lee at tlee@ipmconnect.org to organize a group of your own.

NICARAGUA – April 5-11 with Joe Cistone & Zoraida Soza

EL SALVADOR – April 6-13 to mark the 30th Anniversary of Romero's Martyrdom with Rev. John Lentz, Erin McIntyre & Julieta Borja

ITALY – May 16-30 with Joe Cistone & Fr. George Smiga

EL SALVADOR – June 23-July 7 Educate the Educators with Erin McIntyre & Julieta Borja

KENYA – July 13-22 with Joe Cistone & Hellen Maina

WYOMING – August 9-15 with Ilze Fender & Caroline Mills

INDIA – September 19-30 with Karen Hanson & Mahesh Upadhyaya



EL SALVADOR –November 28 – December 5 for the 30th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Four American Churchwomen with Joe Cistone, Erin McIntyre & Julieta Borja

For more information, or to participate in one of these Immersion Experiences, contact Tiffany Lee at tlee@ipmconnect.org or +1.866.932.4082 (toll free in Canada and the USA)

Check out New IPM Videos on YouTube

New videos are available on www.youtube.com/ipmvideos from recent IPM Immersion Experiences to Nicaragua and Kenya.

Subscribe to our YouTube channel to receive alerts when new videos are posted from our Project Partners around the world!

IPM Proud Community Partner of Cleveland International Film Festival

IPM is pleased to be a Community Partner for the 35th Cleveland International Film Festival. The 34th Cleveland International Film Festival (March 18 -28, 2010 at Tower City Cinemas in Tower City Center) has grown to attract nearly 67,000 admissions for 11 days to Tower City Center. More than 300 films originating from over 60 countries are showcased during this annual Spring arts tradition.



cleveland international film festival www.clevelandfilm.org the week of February 15th.

www.clevelandfilm.org

For more information on the 300+ films that will be shown between Opening Night and Closing Night of the 34th Cleveland International Film Festival, log on to www.clevelandfilm.org the week of February 15th. Tickets go on sale to members only Friday, February 26th and to the general public on Friday, March 5th.

Advanced ticket prices for most films are \$10 per film for CIFF members and \$12 for non-members. Tickets are available online at www.clevelandfilm.org, by telephone (1.877.304.FILM), at the CIFF store in the lobby of Tower City Cinemas, or by mail using the Program Guide order form. Program Guides will be available throughout the region, including all Dollar Bank locations, the week of March 1st.

Erin McIntyre Joins IPM Staff in El Salvador



Erin McIntyre, fourth from left, with members of IPM Project Partner, Mujer y Comunidad, and members of

the Zaragoza Community in El Salvador

We are thrilled to welcome Erin McIntyre to the IPM Staff in El Salvador! Erin will be working from the IPM Office in Zaragoza for one year, as our Acting Regional Director for the Latin America & the Caribbean Regional Office. She will be collaborating with Julieta Borja, and Gustavo Ayala, in coordinating our Immersion Experience Program and working with our Project Partners. Erin partnered with IPM for several years, leading Immersion Experiences from Magnificat High School, where she worked as a campus minister. It is our great pleasure to welcome her to the IPM Staff!

Italy Immersion Experience Program—A Road Less Traveled: History, Caravaggio, & Social Justice

Most trips to Italy begin in Rome and then move upwards to the Northern half of the country. This trip takes the road less traveled. Beginning with a brief stay in Rome, we will then move south through Naples, Reggio di Calabria, Sicily, and Malta.

Explore the historic and archeological tradition of the region with visits to the National Archeological Museum in Naples, the Riace Warriors in Reggio di Calabria, the Greek Theater in Syracuse, and Valley of the Temples in Agrigento. Artistically, follow in the footsteps of Caravaggio with viewings of *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, *The Raising of Lazarus*, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, *The Burial of St. Lucy* and *The Beheading of John the Baptist*. And also enjoy relaxing time in beautiful Taormina, Sicily and a ferry ride to the island of Malta.



The highlight of our journey will include spending time visiting with IPM Project Partner *Speranza II*; meet with Project Coordinators, the Nigerian Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and meet Participants who have been rescued from forced prostitution and sex trafficking, who are now residing at this safe haven, learning skills such as sewing, bag and purse making, and Italian language and composition.

www.ipmconnect.org