

Building a Healthy Haiti

The disastrous earthquake that occurred in Haiti in January has plunged the poorest nation in the western hemisphere into an even deeper dungeon of depression and despair. Their human and natural resources are so poorly developed that many believe their situation is hopeless. Nearly half of their adults are illiterate. The Haitian labor force is largely unskilled. There is a severe shortage of potable water and, as a result of the earthquake, a critical shortage of permanent shelters. The forests on the hills and mountains of Haiti have been ravaged for fuelwood and lumber and by wildfires. Haiti's infrastructure and government operations have been disrupted and debilitated. In short, Haiti has been turned into a societal basket case. When comparable catastrophes have befallen poor nations in the past, recovery and restoration efforts have had limited success – often taking decades or centuries, if at all. But, with the advent of new technologies – and ones that are just on the horizon – Haiti can be rapidly rehabilitated. The problems of illiteracy and limited job skills can be partially solved through the establishment and operation of a national information dispensary system (abbreviated NIDS), a system that can give the entire population access to new reading tools that will enable everyone to read, and eventually, will enable most readers to become superreaders. The reading tools will include (1) a new software invention, *interactive movable type*,

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