



Restavek

Calling it by its real name

“Restavek” is a system of domestic servitude in Haiti. Long tolerated in the culture, it is finally being brought into the light and recognized as a form of child slavery.

When I first began as Director of ICCM in 2008, I learned about the restavek arrangement, whereby extremely poor parents, usually from the countryside, send their children to work for a family in a town or city. They expect the child will receive food and housing in exchange for their work. But hundreds of thousands of these children live in dire poverty with no hope of an education and in grave risk of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. They have no way to leave and no advocate to whom they can report abuse. In reality, they are slaves.

Missionary Jeannie Acheson-Munos was an advocate for these children until her death in the 2010 Haiti earthquake. A young girl named Fanya had stolen Jeannie’s heart. Jeannie did everything in her power to set Fanya free from her owners, without success. In 2007, Fanya burned to death while tending a charcoal fire. She was only one child living in restavek, but her death compelled Jeannie to help others in restavek.

ICCM’s anti-trafficking project for 2017 is to partner with “Restavek Freedom,” a Haitian organization aiming to end restavek in our lifetime.



Funds from Freedom Sunday will spread Restavek Freedom’s message throughout all 130 Free Methodist churches and schools in Haiti by several means.

All school directors and pastors will be trained in a 12-week Justice Curriculum, and then lead small groups of church members and teachers through this course. Pastors will have access to a 12-week sermon series on biblical justice.

Restavek Freedom also produces an immensely popular radio drama that educates people about the reality of the restavek system. Additionally, they organ-

ize a singing competition in which Haitian writers perform songs of freedom. Our new partnership will bring the children and teachers in our schools into the influence of these powerful communication tools.

Restavek Freedom also supports caseworkers who work to ensure children living in restavek get enrolled in school. In the worst instances of abuse, they intervene to remove a child from the situation.

Jesus came to set the captives free. Hundreds of thousands of those captives are children in Haiti. Let freedom ring!

In memory of Fanya
2003-2007





Alleviating Poverty through Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Reforestation



For over 50 years, ICCM has supported children and families in Haiti through education. Tens of thousands of children have discovered the joy of learning, hope for living and the love of Jesus through our persistent efforts.

Sponsoring children's education, providing uniforms, books and lunches, and employing teachers and others who oversee 59 schools — these are no small accomplishments! Children's education through the Free Methodist Church is our core mission.

Yet we know that for Haiti's long-term economic survival, and even to keep up with the ever-increasing cost of feeding our students and working toward paying a living wage to our teachers, we also need to work on sustainable initiatives. In 2013 we began partnering with Eden Reforestation Projects in Haiti, casting a vision for Creation Care through our schools and getting children involved with "hands in the dirt" projects. Now we are taking this partnership to a whole new level, and it's exciting!

Eden and ICCM are now partnering with Agrinotech, a successful Haitian-led agricultural group, and Harvest Craft, a small NGO, to tackle poverty and deforestation on several fronts:

- ♦ Teaching the most effective ways of planting trees and transplanting saplings; 60% of these will be fruit trees, and others will provide materials for fencing, building and burning. As thousands of trees are established, they form a canopy that lends shade and nutrients for ground-based crops.
- ♦ Teaching best practices for chicken and egg projects that are now being implemented by Agrinotech and Harvest Craft.
- ♦ Establishing nurseries at ICCM schools, training adults and upper grade students in all phases of farming.
- ♦ Working with Haiti Providence University to create an Agricultural Extension Center where small farmers can come to learn better methods, purchase vaccines and other necessary items for raising

goats, chickens and other small animals.

How do these initiatives fit with our long-term goals in Haiti? Just as extreme poverty forms the breeding ground for child labor in the rest-avek system, many other seemingly insurmountable problems in the lives of our friends in Haiti are caused by the poverty arising from the country's 98% deforestation. For instance, the absence of trees degrades soil and makes subsistence farming less and less viable. Crop failures and decreasing yield undermine food security for families and the country as a whole.

Fund for Peace rates Haiti as the 10th most fragile nation in the world. Our graduates will only have a chance at a job and an improved future if the extreme poverty is addressed. Although our impact may seem small, as we partner with others and combine our resources and personnel, we can work holistically for the Kingdom of God and the betterment of Haiti.

