



Foundation for International Development Assistance

HAITI: THE OTHER STORY

BY BETSY WALL

Betsy Wall, Executive Director of Waterloo-based, Foundation for International Development Assistance (FIDA) presents the extraordinary story of men and women choosing to rise above their adversities in a most unexpected country: Haiti, a place Betsy first visited as a teenager when the infamous dictator, Papa Doc Duvalier, ruled it. Since that time she has experienced much including the devastating earthquake of 2010. In 1984, her parents, Jack and Anne Wall, moved to Haiti. Her father, FIDA founder, believed that the future of Haiti was “with those who have their hands in the soil” and began to develop resources for communities who were motivated to advance themselves economically by becoming invested shareholders in their own productive agricultural cooperative. It has become the choice of thousands of peasant men and women who testify today they now have peace in their communities.



In 1999, Betsy accepted the opportunity to serve as Executive Director. She travels to Haiti regularly to engage directly with partners, staff and cooperative members. She also introduces interested individuals to Haiti through “Not-so-comfortable adventures- in understanding-poverty” tours. These tours provide an opportunity for participants to understand how we can respond appropriately and respectfully to those in our world when given social, political, cultural and economic disparities. Says Betsy; “the success of our work is as dependent on the will of the Haitian people to be motivated for change as it is on us, as Canadians, to listen and to support their vision for change. It is not an easy thing to do, as it requires us to challenge our traditional reasons and practices when addressing poverty. It means that we must begin by responding to the poor not with the view of what they are not and what they don’t have or cannot do; rather, with who they are and what they do have and can do. This is a relationship that is rooted in the belief that all people desire to know and experience the fullness of their humanity.”

FIDA is a registered Canadian and USA charitable organization that has been actively promoting the productive agricultural cooperative model in Haiti since 1984. FIDA, along with its working arm in Haiti, productive cooperatives Haiti (pcH), provide resources to rural communities who are motivated to become invested shareholders in their own agricultural cooperative.

At the heart of this business model is a comprehensive adult literacy program designed to empower the rural poor to become “agents of their own change”. This vision resonates among business people, the agricultural sector, and civil society organizations such as Rotary Clubs who seek to support best practices when undertaking international development initiatives.

For more information about the work of FIDA/pcH in Haiti or to arrange a presentation, contact:

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