

Mid-Year Grant Report Narrative for Vista Hermosa

Haiti Capacity Building³ Project

(March 2009 – February 2012)

September 4, 2009

For period March through August

Brief description of activities/items funded under Vista Hermosa grant:

- CB3 Meeting #1; May 7-10, 2009

This meeting convened **42** members of our network of educators and community leaders. It included orientation of the 3-year program and collaboratively finalizing the covenant agreement, transportation reimbursement policies, etc. Participants chose between 2 concurrent seminars: *Integrating Reflection Circle Principles and practices into National Curriculum* and for non-teachers *Open Space as a Leadership Strategy*.

- CB3 Meeting #2; June 25-28, 2009

70 educators and community leaders convened for the Annual Open Space on Open Space meeting. 38 of them are participants in CB3. This meeting served as a natural opportunity for members of our network to share successes and challenges in the field using the methods and approaches they're learning.

- CB3 Meeting #3: August 6-9, 2009 (Made possible with 2nd grant from Vista Hermosa)

30 CB3 members participated. Attendance down because mtg date was planned in July. The theme was *How to strategically use Reflection Circles to help a group evolve in healthy ways*. It was also an opportunity to focus on self-assessment aspect of program.

- Six months of advisory services from The Elevation Group: branding, marketing, strategic planning and grant development.

Specific outputs and outcomes measured:

- We've enrolled 42 participants in the program. There's been so much interest that it's difficult to say no to people, especially people who are strategic because of institutional affiliations and relationships. While this is seven more than we originally planned, it's fair to assume that four to seven people (10-15%) will be absent at each meeting.
- We have signed contracts for 35 of the 42 participants.
- 30 of the participants have self-organized into "Accountability Groups" of three people.
- We've received 24 Self-Assessment forms (electronically). We've really encouraged people to think carefully about their goals and strategies as relates to their involvement in CB3 so we don't see it as a problem that a number of people have not yet submitted them.

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- As discussed in the *Social Enterprise for Advancing Education* project, we discovered that our assumptions regarding what could be accomplished together were a bit off. Given the emphasis we place on participatory decisions and hearing each person's voice, we felt it was important, once we were in process, to take more time than originally allocated for the group to discuss the Covenant Agreement and make sure that everyone felt on board with it. This also involved developing together policies about reimbursement for transportation, exchange visits, laptops, etc. What we feel extremely encouraged about is that the way in which we've made decisions and gotten things accomplished so far totally respects our philosophies and principles regarding participatory and even servant leadership. The key organizers (myself along with four Haitian colleagues) are present to help assure good stewardship of the grant and to make sure that the CB3 program evolves based on input, involvement, and the wishes of participants. The comments we've been receiving really encourage us: "Leadership of CB3 along with the committees really listen and are willing to rethink their proposals and change them based on input from the participants. I've been really impressed from our initial meetings by this." Jean Marie Desilus, Director Adjoint, Floresta
- We've created an extensive Google website, and all participants have access but it is not public. This website has name, address, telephone number, email, etc., of all participants; indicates who we have signed Covenants with and who we don't; who has received laptops and who have not; the proposal submitted to Vista Hermosa in English and in Creole and other key documents. It also has names of people on committees, (Logistics, Transportation Reimbursement, Exchange Visits, Laptops, Communication, and General Coordination), links to photos and videos, self-assessment documents, information regarding who is grouped together in "Accountability Groups"; dates for future meetings/seminars through December 2010, and the program and agenda for the next meeting (this December). The center where our meetings are held has wireless access (most of the time). During the recent meeting there were about 15 laptops being used, usually with small teams of people, to get work done, learn and explore. People are also learning how to use our Google website: committees post their meetings there along with principles and guidelines for their work, individuals are putting their Self-Assessment plans there, updating their personal information, etc. During the evenings we set up the projector hooked to a laptop and spend time working on things they want to learn about: how to use Google sites, how to navigate using a Mac, using Word, using the internet, etc. While all members of CB3 have received packets with essential booklets (Open Space and Reflection Circle guides), key documents (CB3 description), Covenant Agreement, list of participants, etc., we opted not to issue 3-ring binders and are putting more emphasis on website and electronic filing.
- All CB3 members are part of a Google group as well. It's quickly become a very active group with lots of exchange (typically one or more per day).
- Based on input from participants, we decided to provide them with refurbished Mac laptops. Thus far, 12 have been purchased and nine have been distributed. Three had problems and needed to be returned. The criteria for receiving a laptop is to have completed and signed the Covenant Agreement, be a part of an Accountability Group, training another group in Reflection Circles and Open Space and to have submitted their Self-Assessment Plan.

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- Friends Mark and Claire Dowds have assumed responsibility for finding funds for these laptops. To date, they've raised about \$12,000 and have committed to raising \$30,000 in total. Thus, their commitment is making it possible for us to have much better laptops (each with a two or three year service agreement) than we originally anticipated. The goal is to have the rest of the money raised and laptops purchased and distributed by end of December.
- With input from CB3 participants, the Exchange Committee has established policies and procedures for exchange visits and has made these available electronically and in hard copy. They've invited CB3 participants to submit proposals to request funds and members of CB3 who are open to receiving teams have identified themselves. This information is on the website as well and has been distributed on the list serve.
- Books: As of April we had already printed 5,000 of the 8,000 Reflection Circle books that we committed to during the 3-year period. Still having a substantial stock of both the Reflection Circle guide books and the Theology Reflection books on hand, we expect to print more of these in grant year two or three.

Steps taken to establish sustainability of the project:

- The collegiality that's forming among the CB3 group, even among some of the members that are newer to our network, is extraordinary. We've heard over and over again during closing circles at the end of a day seminar, "I'm surprised about how comfortable I feel with everyone in this group." People are really excited about this training and really digging in. We believe that this unique experience is building mutually reinforcing professional relationships that will sustain long after this particular training.
- We're blessed to have a semi-professional photographer as part of our group. Hundreds of photos taken during our meetings are grouped into albums and available at <http://gallery.me.com/englejohn>. We expect that this increased visual documentation will help us increasingly attract constituents to our work as we move forward.
- Replication of training: Tracking who is doing training and names and background information of the training they're doing is among our challenges. We have at least five new groups who are receiving six month Circles of Change training by members of CB3 already underway. We are working to increase the number of these trainings and to improve our tracking procedures.
- Thanks to monies from the *Social Enterprise for Advancing Education* project grant, we will soon acquire Newdea grant management software. By using this software for the CB3 grant, we expect to refine our management procedures and improve our tracking and reporting capabilities enormously. This will not only help us to do a better job to satisfy the objectives of the CB3 grant; we expect that it will also help us attract future funding.
- The Elevation Group has provided assistance in the presentation of our work on website www.haitipartners.org. David Jones will spend three full days (Sept 9-11) with Kent and John doing strategic planning and including an evening and a full day with our board members.