

Wasted Energy: Just completed my 4am journey around the compound chasing goats only to have them return as I sip cold coffee. Coffee is premium with enough for two days left! One "bleat impaired" goat, signals, "we won!." I must decide, if collecting goat poop on my stairs is less a problem than drinking my coffee while it is still hot. But, I'm a poor loser.

Reading recent articles related to why Haiti continues to deteriorate with billions of dollars of foreign aid and NGO's everywhere you look, is depressing. Blame falls on government, history, culture, world powers, law enforcement and military (too much or too little) and of course, corruption being the major power.

Recently, Virginia Bell and company visited sousafilip. Doused and battered by the boat rides, feeling a bit soiled with no water to bathe, but well fed since they brought food, they gloated that we should visit Les Cayes for some R&R and civilization. In an email this week she recounted losing some customers because their car battery was stolen in the compound; police were rude; and, the technician fixing the car gouged the price! The group didn't appreciate "civilization!"

We met Sunday afternoon with a group of 15 from surrounding communities to discuss the need for a full service clinic on sud lagonav. I out-lined the process to procure a physician and basic laboratory, staff, equipment, meds and technology for education and practice. Reminded of recent history related to inadequate, unsafe and unavailable healthcare it was suggested we just start up "the way it was." I took a deep breath and said delicately, "NO!"

When we first arrived, a young boy, Jonny, attached himself. We've shared his seizures, malnutrition, high fevers and community beatings. His father is old, ill and "not right" and his mother unable to thrive with caring for an old man who "buys cards", a nursing baby and a growing naked, gregarious boy. Giving money or food brings increased begging as we get our sidewalk swept.

The other afternoon, Mona leaned against the house, rubbing her tummy and I thought, "what happens when we leave?" I said, "no" and walked into the house. They slowly walked down the stairs, Jonny crying, Mona looking back, as I stood tearfully in Joe's embrace.. Later, I hired her to work daily and gave her an advance on salary. What will she do when we leave?

There are battles to fight here and free range goats are part of it. There are challenges that take unbelievable determination. There is work that takes courage. There are Haitians wanting to make changes and move forward rather than run away and hide. There are many who need to be taken care of or left to die, and there are those who, with a bit of help, will survive and lift up others with them. There are rocks to throw, young to educate and many tears to shed. Pick your battle. What do they do if we leave?

Shirley, sud lagonav, 17 Mas 2009. "When the wind blows."

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