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Veolia Environnement Foundation Newsletter

No. 5 - March 2011

Foundation Info keeps you informed of what's happening at the Veolia Environnement Foundation: the projects being supported, the sponsors' reports, volunteers leaving on emergency relief, development assistance and other assignments around the world. The links in the contents section below will give you more information on the topic: just click and find! Please send us your suggestions, comments, pictures and anything else you'd like to share. (fondation.ve@veolia.com)

FRONT PAGE -----



• Haiti: five Veoliaforce volunteers receive medals

On January 19, 2011, Professor Jean-François Mattéi, president of the French Red Cross, awarded a number of members of the Haiti Emergency Response Teams with the French Ministry of Defense a military campaign decoration, the Haiti pin, for their outstanding work in the aftermath of last January's earthquake. Five Veolia employees were among those that received the medal: **Franck Haaser**, the Foundation's emergency operations director, who managed the Water Emergency Response Team on the ground; and four Veoliaforce volunteers (**Jean-Michel Gil**, a pipe operative, **Frédéric Galano**, an operations manager at Veolia Water, **Vincent Charrin**, a laboratory technician, and **David Milhau**, a maintenance technician at Veolia Water).

The Foundation's emergency assignment in Haiti.



A year ago, the Foundation opened a "Haiti Earthquake" account to collect donations from company employees wanting to support the population of Haiti. Nearly €100,000 was donated and the Foundation has decided to use the sum to expand and extend **the program launched in Petit-Goâve in partnership with UNICEF and the French Red Cross**. The water supply network in this district, 58 km southwest of the capital Port-au-Prince, is undergoing a major overhaul. After an initial assessment in March 2010 and mapping of the entire network in June, the three partners set a straightforward objective: to improve the drinking water supply via an operational, organized and sustainable network. Nearly 80,000 people in the metropolitan area of Petit-Goâve will benefit from this program, which will also be used as a pilot by DINEPA, Haiti's state department for water and sanitation, with a view to replicating it in other towns in Haiti.

LATEST PROJECTS TO RECEIVE SUPPORT -----

The Veolia Environnement Foundation's **Selection Committee** met on January 18. A total of 26 projects were selected, 10 in France and 16 elsewhere, in outreach (13 projects), workforce development (eight projects) and environmental conservation (five projects).

During the January 31 meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Foundation decided to support two new programs: the ecological restoration of the Cap Sicié marine environment in the Var, France, and research being led by the University of Arizona in Biosphere 2 in the United States. Trustees also renewed their support to the 2011 Environment Book Prize through which the Veolia Environnement Foundation supports authors and publishers who raise awareness among the general public about environmental issues.

-WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT-



The non-profit BicyclAide in Clichy-la-Garenne, near Paris, offers professional integration to people in financial and social difficulty, through the maintenance, recycling, sale and hire of second-hand bicycles.

Details of the project.

-ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION-



Two years ago, the French town of Brest and the Vietnamese town of Hai Phong established an important partnership to improve water quality in the Hai Phong Bay and guarantee the preservation of the environment in this exceptional site. The project brings together elected representatives, manufacturers, and French and Vietnamese universities.

[Details of the project.](#)

-OUTREACH-



In Brazil, the non-profit "Conviver no Sertão" is doing its utmost to improve access to drinking water for the populations of the districts of Mirandiba and Carnaubeira da Penha. The project, which is receiving support from the Foundation, will develop agricultural activity and improve food security while guaranteeing new incomes for farmers in a community of 70 families.

[More information here.](#)

A SPONSOR SPEAKS -----



"Workshop without borders is already a success."

Apa Nova Bucuresti, the Romanian subsidiary of Veolia Water, has been involved with "Workshop without Borders" in Romania right from the organization's creation. Bruno Roche, the subsidiary's CEO, explains what attracted him to this professional integration program and how he sees the future.

[Interview.](#)

VOLUNTEERS ON ASSIGNMENT -----

EMERGENCY & POST-EMERGENCY



- **Haiti (October to December 2010):** Three volunteers were sent to Haiti in response to the cholera epidemic that broke out in mid-October. **Benoît Faucher**, an epidemiologist at the teaching hospital in Marseilles, **Jonathan Habert**, project coordinator at the Veolia Foundation, and **Laurent Wolfram**, team manager at Veolia Water Valence, assisted our partners (UNICEF and the French Red Cross) for three weeks in their attempts to prevent the spread of the disease.

[More information on the Foundation website.](#)



In December 2010, Veoliaforce then went on to support the International Federation of the Red Cross to prepare the water and sanitation components of their cholera epidemic response strategy. The document sets out the Federation's objectives for the next 12 months and aims to raise more than €10 million from Red Cross donors. The project is receiving both financial and technical support from the Veolia Foundation.



- **Nigeria (November 2010):** The Veolia Environnement Foundation intervened with UNICEF in five villages in Zamfara State in the north of the country, where uncontrolled exploitation of the open-air gold mines is polluting the ground and threatening human life. The uncontrolled gold mining releases lead dust that has already killed several hundred children in the country. **Pierre-Yves Cailleton** and **Pascal Merland**, Veoliaforce volunteers from Veolia Environmental Services, went to Nigeria for two weeks to support American NGO the Blacksmith Institute, appointed by UNICEF to decontaminate the sites. The expertise and recommendations of these volunteers will allow UNICEF and its partner the Blacksmith Institute to efficiently and sustainably decontaminate the topsoil in these villages

[Details of the assignment.](#)

[More photos here.](#)

[Interview with Pascal Merland on his return.](#)

DEVELOPMENT



- **Burkina Faso (January to March 2011): Dalton Cardozo**, a Veolia Foundation volunteer, went to Ouagadougou to evaluate 25 sanitation projects in Burkina Faso that the Foundation has been involved with since 2004.



- **Benin (February 2011): Thierry Victor**, a volunteer from Veolia Water in Valence, France, traveled to Bohicon, in the south of Benin, to supervise the water supply project that will improve the living conditions of the village's inhabitants. His assignment involved performing tests on the network to ensure that the connections between electrical equipment (pumps, generators and connecting leads) were watertight. This is the last intervention before the network is officially opened and brought into service. The project is receiving both technical and financial support from the Veolia Foundation.

Read more about the project.



- **Cameroon (January to February 2011):** Seven volunteers from Veolia Water (**Michel Boue, Frédéric Morand, Lionel Bonnefoy, Loïc Dupont, Jean-Marc Loubet, Grégory Borgo and Benjamin Moreau**) traveled to Cameroon to work on the Bangangté district's water and sanitation program in the west of the country. They conducted detailed pre-project studies for the 10 "scan-water"-type water supply networks requiring renovation, and supervised pump tests on seven of the district's wells. This assignment was part of the aid program between the International Association of Francophone Mayors (AIMF) and Bangangté district. The project is receiving financial and technical support from the Veolia Foundation.

Read about the program in detail.



- **Zimbabwe (January 2011): Baudoin Keraudy**, an engineer at OTV (Veolia Water), traveled to Zimbabwe to work on the cholera program. His assignment involved providing methodological support and technical expertise to the French Red Cross delegation that the Foundation partners. He then conducted an evaluation of the Gwanda drinking water plant (Matabeleland province) prior to its renovation.

The fight against cholera in Zimbabwe.

VOLUNTEER DEPARTURES THOUGHOUT THE WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF...



- **An international conference on the Tara Oceans expedition** took place on January 24 at the French Senate, attended by Odette Herviaux, senator of the Morbihan department and vice-president of the commission for the economy, sustainable development and regional development. Maguy Bourbigot, the project's sponsor, spoke about Veolia Environnement's support to cross-border scientific research. Thierry Vandeveld, the Foundation's executive officer, spoke of the importance of collaboration between the private and public sectors for research in the area of biodiversity



- A four-way partnership agreement for the **Ariguanabo basin project (Cuba)** was signed on January 25, 2011. As well as the Veolia Environnement Foundation, the other organizations to sign the agreement were ACCF (the French aid for Cuba non-profit), INRH (the Cuban national institute for water resources) and SIAAP (the Greater Paris wastewater authority). The project aims to develop sanitation systems to protect water resources in Havana. The project's sponsor, Dora Volpert Boucher (Veolia Environnement), made the first payment from the grant (€50,000) on the same day.

The project.

- The student non-profit project "Un stage et après?" [What happens after training?], which was among the winners of the **2010 Student Solidarity Awards**, assists school children from underprivileged districts of the Paris region to make contact with companies. Since it received the award last June, the project has continued to support young students and has created



a website: www.usea.fr. Today, "Un stage et après?" is expanding and opening up to more junior high schools to help students in other cities in France.

PUBLICATIONS



- The Veolia Communications Department has produced a **biodiversity pamphlet** introducing the different activities of the company along with many of the Foundation's projects. It is now available in French and English. For your copy, [send us an e-mail](#).



- *Au Coeur de l'action* [At the heart of the action] is a book published by La Martinières on the activities of the Veolia Environnement Foundation. Sub-titled *Agir pour un monde plus juste* [Take action for a fairer world], this stunning book has been available since January on the [Editions La Martinière](#) website.

AT THE FOUNDATION



- The Veolia Environnement Foundation is welcoming a new vice-chairman: **Jean-Pierre Frémont**. Mr. Frémont, who is Veolia Environnement's Senior Executive Vice-President in charge of Public Entities and European Affairs, will chair the two annual meetings of the Foundation's Board of Trustees. The Selection Committee will now be led by **Bernard Lecomte** (Veolia Environnement's northern French management), who will chair the committee's six annual meetings to decide on the projects that will receive support from the Foundation.



- In February 2011, **the Veolia Environnement Foundation's logistics platform was moved to Massy**, just south of Paris. Some 1,500 sq. meters at the site are now dedicated to warehousing materials for emergency and development outreach interventions. The platform plays a central role because the entire logistical organization for sending materials to the field is managed there.

FOUNDATION DIARY



- **October 1, 2010:** Thierry Vandeveldé spoke at the symposium "Providing drinking water to humanity" at France's Life Sciences Institute (created by Dr. Charles Mérieux and Baron Edmond de Rothschild). He particularly stressed the inseparable link between water and development: "We must make a concerted effort to strive to improve local capacity and involve the authorities on the ground."

- **January 27, 2011:** the Veolia Foundation was asked to participate at Admical, a French corporate philanthropy organization, on the theme of practical skills transfer. [Read the report of the morning meeting here.](#)



- **February 5, 2011:** Senegal's Prime Minister, Mr. Souleymane Ndéné Ndiaye, and Thierry Vandeveldé, executive officer of the Veolia Environnement Foundation, met to discuss the progress of the **Enda Third World project**, the aim of which is to reduce the price of drinking water in the Kaolack region of Senegal.

[Read more about the project.](#)

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Feedback



Apa Nova Bucuresti, the Romanian subsidiary of Veolia Water, has been involved with "Workshop without Borders" right from the organization's creation in 2009. Bruno Roche, the subsidiary's CEO, explains what attracted him to this professional integration program and how he sees the future.

Why and how did Veolia become involved with the Workshop without Borders (ASF) project?

Veolia directs its support to three principle areas in Romania: environmental conservation through the "Tu faci Bucuresti" campaign, support for the French Embassy's cultural actions, and special partnerships like that with the "Samu Social" emergency services unit for providing assistance to homeless and distressed people. ASF can be considered a logical extension of the "Samu Social." The emergency requires a follow up: a structure that is able to help individuals reintegrate into the workplace. It was therefore also logical that we become a part of ASF. We provide both financial support and materials, because we donate all the used computers from our Bucharest and Ploiesti computers to the workshop, which then reconditions them.



Why is ASF's work so important?

There are no existing structures for professional reintegration in Romania, and dozens would be required to meet the needs. ASF is there, setting the example, and it is therefore an example that must be encouraged. Today, it is just a drop in the ocean in terms of the needs, and that is exactly why the initiative must be supported by providing work for the employees. I'm not sure that hiring people in reintegration programs is in people's mentalities here, and that makes it even more important.



Would you consider hiring ASF employees?

Yes, it could be a possibility. I have seen highly skilled, motivated people during my visits to the workshop. It is the next step, the logical progression of our commitment and the last link in the chain, because these employees need to access the job market. ASF is already successful, but it will be even more so when we can be sure that all the employees will go on to be hired by companies. We will soon be launching a major recruitment campaign for the new water production plant. We will consider applications from ASF and, if their profiles correspond to our requirements, they will have their chance. What we will not do, however, is charity; it's not about a crutch system, and ASF does not adopt this attitude either, but we must open opportunities for these people. It is up to them then, to seize them and to integrate into the company that has opened their doors to them.

What do you believe ASF can do to "improve" its actions?

The simple fact that they have had the courage to launch a professional reintegration program in Romania, and to successfully run it for more than a year, is already an achievement. I think ASF has a card to play with French companies, particularly as the organization is a member of the Franco-Romanian Chamber of Commerce. Long term, French companies must develop a reflex to consider ASF when they have appropriate human resources requirements. We know that it is a reliable structure and that employees have received proper training when they leave. Ideally, the next step would be to open the door to subsidiaries in other major cities in the country, but this would require support and the social sector is not a priority in Romania, certainly not for the moment.

Read more about the project receiving support from the Veolia Foundation.



In November 2010, the Veolia Environnement Foundation went to Nigeria to work alongside UNICEF. Invited to join the team for its expertise in waste management, the Foundation sent two Veoliaforce volunteers to Zamfara State in the north of the country to audit the decontamination of lead-polluted land. Nearly 400 families benefitted from the expertise of Pierre-Yves Cailleton and Pascal Merland, volunteers from Veolia Environmental Services, Hazardous Waste Management. Pascal Merland recounts their assignment.

You went to Nigeria for two weeks as part of an extensive lead poisoning prevention program. What was the situation on the ground?

Pascal Merland: So far, eight villages have been confirmed as contaminated. Two were decontaminated at the beginning of the summer, five are currently being worked on and one remains. The pollution was caused by recent mining of local rock that contains small traces of gold but also large quantities of lead. When performed without care, this gold mining carries risks. The ore is brought back to the village by the men to be ground down to a fine powder by the women and children. The lead dust that is released and widely distributed is a danger both to the environment and to human health. When inhaled or ingested it causes lead poisoning. All the children tested are showing abnormally high levels of lead in the blood. They are the biggest victims of this pollution: in some of these villages, 20% to 30% of children under the age of five have died in the last six months.

UNICEF is already present on the ground, isn't it?

P.M.: It was UNICEF that appointed the Blacksmith Institute, an American NGO that monitors the most polluted sites on the planet for the United Nations. It was in this context that the Veolia Environnement Foundation was invited to contribute to the program, and with a very precise objective: to ensure the best use of UNICEF funds on the ground by optimizing the solutions deployed. Pierre-Yves Cailleton and I therefore went to the region to audit the processes. Practically speaking, the decontamination consists of isolating the polluted topsoil. The waste management process must prevent any renewed contamination from occurring in the next few years.

How is this hazardous waste usually treated?

P.M.: It should be stored in compliance with local regulations and following risk and impact studies. The Zamfara, however, have no laws covering this issue and there is no geological or hydro-geological data available. Monitoring systems are therefore required to track this waste and flag up the slightest problem. In fact, our recommendations were largely focused on this area.

You say "recommendations" because you closely monitored the Blacksmith Institute's work.

P.M.: The American teams began by approaching the Hausa tribes, informing the heads of families about the situation and therefore being able to enter their homes. A pollution map was then established by house and by district. Local teams were recruited to implement an action plan with the Blacksmith Institute working in a supervisory and coordination capacity. Houses in each village are first emptied and cleaned, and the floors loosened. A clearing team then comes in to take out the polluted earth. Clean soil is then brought in to replace the polluted earth before the families move back into their homes. Children falling sick are treated by Médecins sans frontières (MSF) [Doctors without Borders] and a cement floor is laid down in their houses to prevent them having further contact with the earth.

This is an important point: how do you guarantee that the houses have been properly decontaminated?

P.M.: Samples are taken and analyses performed regularly during the entire decontamination operation. In the longer term, we would like to provide waste disposal sites as near as possible to the gold extraction sites, in case their uncontrolled exploitation continues despite prohibition by the Nigerian authorities.

How were you received by your partners during the trip?

P.M.: My contacts were very keen to have some external support to optimize their operating processes, just as I was happy to be able to be in regular contact with the Foundation's team in Nanterre during my trip.



[More photos here.](#)

Everybody is focused on the essential objective: to provide sustainable support to a population in danger.

[Read about other Veoliaforce volunteers' assignments here.](#)