

CTI Technology Helps Malnourished Children in Haiti

Hundreds of children and their parents converged on a rural clinic near Cap Haitien in January to receive food supplements designed for malnourished toddlers. The clinic is at Tovar, a village near the north coast of Haiti. It was the third event sponsored specifically for these children by The Haiti Mission, a volunteer group of medical professionals from North Carolina. Compatible Technology International (CTI) supplied the project with food processing technology and training.

The food supplement, called RUTF in the medical literature, looks and tastes like sweet peanut butter. Haitian workers bought over 800 pounds of peanuts, dried milk, sugar, and vegetable oil in the Cap Haitien market and processed them into three different formulations designed by pediatricians for children at various stages of malnutrition. Mothers of 150 children received cups of the peanut-based product sufficient for two weeks. In contrast to milk-like formulas, RUTF does not require mixing with clean water, and can be stored safely at room temperature. Fifty children with edema (swelling) received two other formulations that do not contain peanuts. They will switch to the RUTF later. Mothers and children will return to the clinic every two weeks for examinations and more supplements. The Tovar clinic is currently treating over 200 malnourished children and keeps medical charts on them so that gains in height, weight, and other measures attributable to the therapeutic foods can be evaluated.



CTI provided the devices and training needed to prepare the food supplement. Haitian women roasted peanuts using both the CTI solar oven and traditional large kettles over charcoal fires. After blending the roasted peanuts and other ingredients, workers used the CTI Omega VI grinder to produce a creamy paste. While on-site, a CTI volunteer completed construction of two more solar ovens to reduce their dependence on fossil fuel. The technologies, developed by CTI volunteers, typically do not require electrical power.

Dr. Patricia Wolff, a long-time volunteer at the Haiti Mission and other projects around the world, leads the Tovar malnutrition project. She obtained Rotary funding to add this care to other services provided at the clinic. Dr Wolff and her colleagues at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have been evaluating the effectiveness of RUTF

in alleviating malnutrition in Africa.

The clinic at Tovar is one of two established by The Haiti Mission; the other is at Latannerie, also near Cap Haitien. Each clinic has a full-time Haitian health care worker and is visited three weeks each year by a team of medical volunteers from the U.S. A typical team consists of doctors, a dentist, nurses, and support persons. Haitian translators and drivers are employed to support the medical team. A small group of Haitian women now produce the three different therapeutic foods. The Haiti Mission has been operating for about 20 years.

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