



Radio Instruction will Provide Education in Post-Earthquake Haiti

Washington, D.C., January 28, 2010: Education Development Center Inc. (EDC), the Freeplay Foundation, and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) today announced plans for a joint program to ensure Haitian children receive ongoing education in the aftermath of the January earthquake. A start-up program can launch in a few weeks, but additional funding is needed to reach a significant percentage of those thousands of Haitian children in need.

The joint program will use EDC's expertise in primary education and youth training and utilize more than a thousand Freeplay wind-up and solar-powered Lifeline radios to reach students in grades 2, 3 and 4. Via interactive radio instruction, a form of distance learning, the program will provide important life skills lessons on such topics as water and sanitation and classes in math and Creole. The program also will include accelerated primary education lessons EDC originally developed for out-of-school youth.

NDI will work with its extensive network of Haitian community action committees to identify children whose schools have been destroyed, distribute Lifeline radios and identify committee members who can serve as radio mentors to the children. EDC will also provide the content and instruction for an early childhood education program that caregivers and children can follow together. In addition to formal education content, these broadcasts will be designed to incorporate post-trauma programming and give psychosocial support to earthquake survivors.

"Radio programs can be implemented rapidly, providing high quality education and continuity to displaced and traumatized children," said Katharine Yasin, EdD, director of EDC's Center for Latin America and the Caribbean. "The children, their teachers, and mentors will benefit from a regular school routine, and the radio instruction is interactive, fun, and educationally sound."

The three organizations have worked together in Sudan since 2006 to bring civic education to hundreds of thousands of Southern Sudanese.

"We have identified the most effective placement of our Lifeline radios for the rebuilding effort in Haiti. They're robustly engineered for large group listening," said Freeplay Foundation CEO Kristine Pearson. "Thousands of children, including those newly orphaned and those who cannot attend formal school, will receive vital math and language lessons even under the most basic of conditions. We cannot allow more time to be lost – education is the key to mitigating poverty in their lifetimes."

"Since the earthquake, NDI has been providing advice and support to members of a network of Haitian community action groups that has begun working to improve access by their disaster-impacted communities to humanitarian aid," said Jim Swigert, NDI senior associate for Latin America and the Caribbean. "These

extraordinary Haitians are grassroots activists, leaders in their own cities, towns, and villages, who are uniquely positioned to identify and coordinate emergency community needs with local Haitian authorities and international aid organizations and support this emergency education program.”

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About EDC: Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) is a global nonprofit organization that develops education and health programs to address some of the world’s most urgent challenges. EDC pioneered the use of radio to bring curriculum and teacher training to classrooms in some of the world's least-developed countries. Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI), which requires only a radio and a facilitator, reaches large numbers of teachers and learners who are isolated by distance and poor infrastructure. EDC develops radio curricula that enliven the classroom with imaginative use of stories, songs, physical activities, and role-plays that encourage and model interactive exchanges between teachers and students. www.edc.org

About the Freeplay Foundation: The Freeplay Foundation uses clean, renewable technologies to provide access to education and information, energy and light. The Foundation’s prime objective is to get solar and self-powered energy solutions – Lifeline radios and Lifelights – to those who need them most. The Freeplay Foundation has been involved in disaster relief since 1999 and understands the importance of ensuring that displaced and at-risk populations have sustainable access to information from local and international broadcasts. As rebuilding in Haiti begins, the Foundation will choose projects with an emphasis on supporting women, children, and other vulnerable groups. www.freeplayfoundation.org

About NDI: The National Democratic Institute (NDI) has worked in Haiti since 1997, creating a national network of 179 community action committees throughout the country. NDI is helping these “Initiative Committees” to create citizen-run Relief Coordination Centers in areas devastated by the earthquake and those receiving displaced persons. These committees will link people in need with resources, collecting names of missing people, identifying urgent needs, and developing assessments for long-term rebuilding. NDI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness, and accountability in government. www.ndi.org

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