



道教蓬萊閣

Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism

Registered Charitable Organization #11893 4371 RR0001

Construction starts on Haiti grade school funded by *Taoist Tai Chi*[™] *Fung Loy Kok*[™]

TORONTO, May 4th -- Construction started this month on *L'École Presbytérale de DesSources*, a school located in the community of Labrousse, south-west of Port-au-Prince, in Haiti. The foundation is now in place and the elementary school should be completed in July, on time to welcome 400 students for the Fall term.

This school is being built thanks to the \$100,000 contribution by members of *Taoist Tai Chi*[™] *Fung Loy Kok*[™] worldwide after a massive earthquake struck Haiti in 2010. Construction was conditional to the full satisfaction of the requirement by Fondation Paul Gérin-Lajoie, the project manager, that international building standards, including seismic and environmental norms, be implemented.

During the time that elapsed, our funds were used as seed-money to leverage \$600,000 from the Canadian International Development Agency to rebuild five additional parochial schools. Grand Opening of the schools is slated for November of 2012, after the hurricane season.

Accountability before Bricks and Mortar

The project includes site work, six 50-sq.m. (538 sq. ft.) classrooms, six washrooms, a potable well, the principal's office and a kitchen area that will serve a cafeteria to be built at a later date.

Challenges met by construction projects in the region include a landslide-prone mountainous terrain, mud roads too soft to support truckloads of material (cinderblock transports are banned), archaic means of communication etc. Most grade school in the area are makeshift huts with thatched roofs. They are described as "having no blackboards, no desks, no chairs; children are packed on dirt floors in rickety shacks."

A turning point in moving this project forward came when the hamlet of DesSources received official "parish" status. As a result, its school was placed under the patronage of the parish's presbytery -- hence the name "*École Presbytérale de DesSources*" -- and the parish priest was made accountable for its proper management.

In Haiti, schooling is not free and only 15 p. cent of the costs are funded by government. Some 85 percent of the funding comes from Catholic or Protestant organizations. The families of *L' École Presbytérale de DesSources* will be expected to contribute the equivalent of five dollars annually per student.

Fast-Tracked Through Red Tape

Our society's partnership with Fondation PGL spared it reams of red tape. Since the school construction ban was lifted on July 12th, 2010, the backlog of projects awaiting approval mounted sky-high on officials' desks. Thanks to PGL's reputation, this one was fast-tracked through all bureaucratic hurdles.