Since its formal launch in January 2011, Inveneo’s Haiti Rural Broadband Initiative (HRBI) continues to make progress in all key program areas.

Network Build Out/Infrastructure

- Inveneo engineers and our local partners have successfully completed Zones 1 - 5 of the network. This backbone comprised of hundreds of radios at 31 tower sites now provides a fully operational and stable network to connect these regions of Haiti.
- The Zone 6 network that will cover the South — Grand Anse, around Jeremie — continues to be an interesting challenge. Digicel and Voila, two major telecommunications companies, officially merged in April. Once the merger is complete, Inveneo will be able to proceed along with its trained and now experienced Haitian partner Transversal in deploying the final zone.
- The leadership of Haitian telecommunications company Haicom and their team have taken over the Network Operations Center (NOC) responsibilities. On a daily basis, they monitor the ever-growing rural network based on inputs primarily from the young Haitian Inveneo-trained IT entrepreneurs (BATI) and only occasionally from Inveneo engineers in San Francisco.
- There are currently 65 clients on the network.

Our Approach:

- A multi-stakeholder Initiative
- Carrier-neutral, shared network infrastructure
- Use of ultra-low-cost, wireless technologies
- Increased sustainability through entrepreneurship and IT capacity building
- Phased deployment with low bar for provider participation
- Focus on strategic “anchor tenants” as early paying customers

Watch two videos that show the Inveneo effect in Leogane and in Beraud.
Entrepreneur Training – BATI Program

A total of 64 BATI have now been trained throughout six provinces of Haiti: Artibonite, Cap Haitien, West, South East, Central Plateau and Grand Anse.

• 11 BATI trained in Mirebalais in the Central Plateau (03/11),
• 16 BATI trained in St. Marc in the Artibonite (05/11);
• One woman BATI certified during the St. Marc training;
• 10 BATI trained in Jacmel in the South East (09/11);
• 15 BATI trained in Cap Haitien in the North (11/11);
• 10 BATI have received start-up funds as loans from local MFI Fonkoze;
• 13 new BATI participated in a seven-day training in Jeremie and successfully completed the certification process. (03/12)

Network Governance and Operations

Inveneo handed off the day-to-day operations of the network to Haitian organizations this quarter, reaching a significant milestone. Yet Inveneo continues to provide structures to ensure the success of the HRBI network and to date has:

• Established a framework by which BATI provide the first line of support followed by the Haicom Network Operations Center. ICIP Transversal handles every physical installation and all maintenance of the equipment across Haiti.
• Created procedural manuals for the operation of the network and documented every configuration.
• Moved to have by-laws and other organizational documents ready for review by the ISPs in early May.
• Prepared for the late May in-country meeting with the ISPs to finalize the documents in order to incorporate the organization established to manage the long distance network.

Haiti Connected Schools

Inveneo is partnering with Microsoft, World Vision and HP to deliver 40 ICT labs in rural schools across the regions where the broadband network has been deployed. In Q1 of 2012, HCS met the following milestones:

Our Goals for Social Impact in Rural Haiti

• Deploy network and trainings within 12 – 18 months
• Deliver high-quality broadband to 6 key regional “zones” and 22 population centers
• Partner with 2 – 4 Haitian ISPs
• Identify and train 40 local ICT entrepreneurs
• Serve 200+ NGOs and organizations with broadband
• Drive $120,000 per month into the local ICT economy
• Define a new model for rural broadband and the economic development it helps foster
• Deploy ICT labs in 40 rural schools, connected to the broadband network to enhance educational opportunities.
• An additional six schools (19 in all) have solar-powered computer labs in four departments in Haiti: Artibonite, Central Plateau, Ouest and Nord.
• In the first quarter, 18 teachers were trained with the new basic curriculum and 5 with the advanced administrator curriculum. This brings the total teachers trained to 98.
• Those BATI who gained real experience with the labs in the first phase of the implementation helped complete a lab installation manual.
• Eight BATI are currently involved in connectivity deployment, computer lab installation and support and teacher training.
• Ten BATI attended a training workshop to learn about lab installations, support and ongoing maintenance of the school labs.
• One school installation was completed with a new solar partner, Solar Electric Light Fund, a US-based non-profit.

Next steps:

These next months will bring rapid program expansion to more schools in rural Haiti now that processes, materials and qualified local resources are in place.

Inveneo and NetHope received a grant from Intel to provide basic computer training in rural communities. Together, the two organizations will leverage the curricula, local trainers, train-the-trainer approach and computer labs implemented through HCS to offer training to new populations in the communities.
Monitoring & Evaluation

Independent evaluation experts Mission Measurement (funded by the USAID Global Broadband and Innovations Initiative) released a draft version of the closing report on the social and financial impact of the Haiti Connected Cities program. The final version will be available in May 2012.

Some affirming statistics from the report include:

• In the case of NGOs, the increased efficiency [from broadband Internet connectivity through HRBI] drives development outcomes by allowing the organizations to better deliver their services through increasing beneficiary access, service quality and timeliness.
• One of the strongest assets of the model, the BATI training program, has led to a strongly networked group of local IT entrepreneurs who have built their own businesses, acquired clients, hired employees, obtained ISP contracts, and enjoyed increased incomes.
• As of April 2012, the broadband network covers 20.72% of the Haitian population.

Variations from the Project Description, Challenges and Solutions

The telecom merger between Digicel and Voila delays Inveneo’s ability to deploy Zone 6. However, once the available tower sites are clarified, the installation team is at the ready. Customer acquisition is slower than anticipated. This is due to a number of factors:

Complex processes within the ISPs to absorb the BATI; Speed of customer order process – organizations in rural Haiti need to work through multiple steps in order to get contracts signed by their country offices located in Port-au-Prince; Insufficient sales capabilities of the BATI themselves.

We are currently seeking additional funding in order to conduct supplemental entrepreneurial, marketing and process training with the BATI to accelerate customer acquisition. Inveneo is currently developing a detailed proposal to share with potential funders.
About the Initiative

Inveneo is committed to bringing real economic and education opportunities to Haiti in 2011-2012 through the Haiti Rural Broadband Initiative and related efforts. HRBI is a collaborative program involving Haitian Internet Service Providers (ISPs), Haitian IT entrepreneurs and the many organizations – NGOs and otherwise – that will benefit from access to reliable and affordable broadband Internet.

This program is supported by an innovative collective of organizations whose focus is ICT entrepreneurial capacity building, rural economic development and education through ICTs, including Aruba Networks, Clinton Bush Haiti Fund, Craigslist Charitable Fund, The EKTA Foundation, Google, HP, Intel, Microsoft, NetHope, the Orr Foundation, the USAID Global Broadband and Innovations Alliance, the Voila Foundation and Zero Divide.

About Inveneo

Inveneo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit social enterprise whose mission is to help rural and underserved communities get connected and get empowered through ICTs (Information and Communications Technologies).

We work with NGOs, multilaterals, and government organizations that deliver services to communities; and enable them to serve people in need through technology access. We specialize in delivering the right solutions for challenging environments, and building local capacity through skills development for local ICT entrepreneurs.

Inveneo and our local ICT entrepreneur partners in 25 countries have delivered projects in 27 countries, impacting the lives of over 2.02+ million people in some of the poorest and most challenging regions in the developing world.

Figure 4: What to do when a swarm of bees has nested on a tower? Transversal engineer Nixon puts on a beekeeper’s suit and climbing equipment before heading up the tower.

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