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# LOCAL WORKS

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AT LOCAL  
WORKS

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# BUILDING TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY FOR THE “NEW NORMAL”

By Alexis Marquez, Local Works Field Specialist

Amidst the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) global pandemic, the Local Works Dominican Republic team has collaborated with its participating community based organizations (CBOs) to find innovative programming solutions for the Access to Aid Course (AAC). The Dominican Republic (DR) has projected opening all societal operations by early August 2020, but the circumstances are evolving on a daily basis with an unforeseeable date of when society will truly be able to safely go back to “normal.”

Despite efforts of reopening on behalf of the government in the DR, the Local Works team and Access to Aid Workshop participants are taking no chances and capitalizing on this opportunity to expand technological literacy capabilities in addition to foundational business operations and access to aid practices. For ethical development programming to be effective, the benefits to local actors must be immense and the risk must be minimized as much as possible during this public health emergency. “Originally, the Access to Aid Course was going to be an in-person training, but due to COVID-19 the participants and I have collaborated via WhatsApp to discuss the use of other virtual platforms to continue with our plans,” said Alexis Marquez, Local Works Field Specialist.

Field research was conducted prior to the design of the Access to Aid Course to identify barriers to aid for CBOs along the Dominican border. A need for capacity building in business operations such as leadership, administration, human resources, finance and application to aid were determined as focal points for the training. After consulting with participating CBOs, the Local Works team has decided to offer the workshop via Google Classroom with weekly check-ins via WhatsApp and for remote participants a Technical Support Technician will be rendering support services.

Participating CBOs will be trained on Google Classroom and applications such as Google Docs through technical videos linked to their activities via YouTube, which will also be offered in downloadable versions for participants with weak signal.

“Our adaptability to the current public health crisis gives Local Works DR the opportunity to develop their virtual programming to broaden development communication,” said Marquez, “And participating CBOs will be able to implement sustainable, locally-led business practices and expand their technological capabilities to thrive in an evolving tech-based economy.”

## Upcoming Events

Access to Aid Course

Backbone Montecristi Training

Whole System in the Room -  
Montecristi



**For More Information, Please  
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# MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ACTION PLANS TOWARD WATER SECURITY

By Alexis Marquez, Local Works Field Specialist



The Libón River sub-basin is part of the Artibonito River binational basin and includes territories of both the Dominican Republic (DR) and Haiti. It has an area of approximately 400 km<sup>2</sup> of which approximately 230 km<sup>2</sup> belong to Haiti and 160 km<sup>2</sup> to the DR. With an altitude of 600 and 800 m, this mountainous area is rough terrain that is relatively isolated.

Despite this area's wealth of natural resources, the complexity of binational management, the inappropriate distribution and use of these resources remains a challenge due to either the interdependence of the two countries on the management of natural resources or to the chronic poverty that affects both sides of the border.

Eventually, those challenges lead to serious environmental degradation, vulnerability to disasters, risk of conflict and unsustainable agricultural and natural resource management practices and affect socio-economic development; thus aggravating poverty and food insecurity. However, due to the proximity of both towns and the need to seek joint solutions to the problems that the border populations are facing, an opportunity for cooperation, exchange of best practices and a development of plans have been presented in search of a shared vision.

To improve the quality and quantity of water in the Libón River hydrographic sub-basin and to promote local action and collaboration between organizations, the Libón Verde Basin Council, with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Rural Economic Development Dominicana (REDDOM) Foundation, organized a planning workshop in Restauración, DR from March 4-5, 2020 whose purpose was to reach a consensus on the main priorities related to the availability of water quality and to generate action plans to strengthen water security in the basin. The facilitators used the Whole System in the Room (WSR) methodology which incorporates a highly interactive and participatory approach to promote intersectoral dialogue and collaboration.

The specific goals were:

1. Develop common ground to improve water security in the Libón sub-basin;
2. Analyze the current reality of the basin and collectively decide what needed to be done and should be changed;
3. Build a relationship between diverse stakeholders from a variety of organizational, geographic and disciplinary settings connected by their interest in the watershed;
4. Generate initial ideas and work plans on what to change and how to make this change; commit to short-term (three months) and long-term (three years) initiatives towards the shared vision.

More than 90 stakeholders came together for a two-day workshop to reflect on the past, map and prioritize current trends affecting the Libón sub-basin, envision a desired future, find common ground to mobilize, and develop various action plans to respond to the identified priorities.



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