

# LOUNE VIAUD

Loune Viaud, Director of Operations and Strategic Planning at Zanmi Lasante (Partners in Health – Haiti), has worked with the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights since 2002, when she received the RFK Human Rights Award. Loune was recognized for her innovative human rights-based approach to establishing health care systems in Haiti. Loune was honored, not only for her groundbreaking work in effective, rights-based HIV/AIDS treatment, but for advocating that health, access to medicine, and clean water are all fundamental rights, and working with the local government and citizens to build the government’s capacity to respond to those human rights.

In collaboration with the RFK Center, Loune has worked to transform the international community’s interventions in Haiti, many of which undermine human rights, including the rights to health, water, and food. Loune’s primary concern has been to address the flow of international donor assistance and loan funds into Haiti that have undermined the Haitian government’s ability to fulfill its human rights obligations. Although the Haitian Constitution guarantees the right to health and education, ineffective and poorly coordinated international assistance meant that the Government of Haiti lacked the resources to deliver basic services such as education and health care. Accordingly, the advocacy of Loune and the RFK Center focuses on promoting accountability for the human rights obligations of international interveners in Haiti.

Loune’s ongoing work in Haiti took on an even greater urgency when Haiti was hit by a devastating earthquake in January 2010. Loune has since been working to provide health care to the most vulnerable populations and to strengthen the health care sector. Loune also worked in partnership with the government and other organizations to help establish a children’s shelter for orphaned and abandoned children, many of whom are disabled. She has testified before the U.S. Congress on the urgent need to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Haiti following the earthquake and to effectively include Haitians in the reconstruction.



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“CHILDREN IN HAITI, PARTICULARLY HOMELESS, DISABLED, AND ORPHANED CHILDREN, STILL DESPERATELY NEED SHELTER, CARE, AND PROTECTION. WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT THEIR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF HAITI IS EMPOWERED TO FULFILL THESE RIGHTS.”

REMARKS BY LOUNE VIAUD:  
2002 RFK HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD CEREMONY  
November 20, 2002

I am grateful to the Kennedy family for this prestigious recognition and thankful to the staff of the RFK Memorial for all their hard work in getting the ceremony together. I also want to thank the staff of Partners in Health, and the Haiti Solidarity group for helping to organize this week's events.

There are many reasons for me to feel privileged today. In the 21st century, the task of "representation" cannot be taken lightly. Who among us can claim to speak for the poor or for those who have their rights abused? As honored as I am to receive this distinguished prize, I do not claim to speak for all those fighting for human rights. What I can say with confidence, however, is that I represent a group of people, many of them Haitians and many of them not, who are fighting for the rights of the poor merely to survive. This is our human rights struggle, a struggle we believe to be neglected by many, even some within the human rights community.

Do the sick deserve the right to health care? Do the naked deserve the right to clothing? Do the homeless deserve the right to shelter? Do the illiterate deserve the right to education?

The group I represent is Haitian, American, Russian, Mexican, and Peruvian. It is the family that constitutes Partners In Health, the group I have served and helped to build for all of my adult life. We all believe the answer to each of these questions is a resounding YES.

Martin Luther King is credited with saying that "of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhumane."

The struggle for health and human rights is only part of our struggle, because we believe that the poor must be respected when they say, as they so often do, "we want to see health, education, and welfare (including water) as our birthrights." These basic social and economic rights must be part of being human.

As a Haitian woman who has seen first-hand what it means to be poor and sick, I know that we can all do better. We can move from the way things are, where the bottom billion is merely struggling not to suffer, to be as we say in Haiti, *kapab pa soufri*, to a place in which *tout moun se moun*. Everyone is a person. We are all human.

For the RFK Foundation to choose me, a humble footsoldier in the struggle for health and human rights, as the recipient of this prestigious award means more than I can say. For I am a Haitian, and the Haitian people have always stood for equality. From 1791, when we fought against slavery to become the world's first independent republic born of a slave revolt, until 1986, when we began to cast down a brutal family dictatorship, we Haitians have always struggled against long odds. In 1990, when we again declared as a people our belief in social and economic rights as a human rights platform, some understood our message but many did not. Two hundred years of struggle, much of it in isolation even from those who profess a belief in human rights. It has often felt lonely.

Thank you for reminding us that we are never, in fact, really alone. I could not finish without singling out a person in the audience, my hero: Tom White! In many ways, Tom is responsible for what's happening in Cange, the village represented here today. In fact, Tom is responsible for me being here. For, how can we heal the sick and clothe the naked without moving resources from those who have so much to those who have so little? Tom's checkbook is always available to us for sending a patient to Boston for surgery, for building a school or a water project, for buying medicines for our tuberculosis and HIV patients. I would ask if you could please join me in applauding Tom White. Tom, you mean a lot to the poor of Haiti.

Someone else could not make it today, my other hero, Paul Farmer. Paul, wherever you are, you are here with us in our heart. We love you, champion of the poor!

Last but not the least, I want to mention the refugees' situation. It was with great sadness that I read last week about the plight of the over 200 Haitian refugees. Haitians who come to the United States should be treated fairly and equally. That they are singled out for such treatment is inhumane. It's almost as inhumane as the aid embargo against my country. Over the centuries there have been refugees from Haiti for many years, those fleeing slavery, war, dictatorships. In recent years, as Senator Kennedy noted, the U.S. administration has blocked even development and humanitarian assistance to my people.

The sanctions have been imposed upon Haiti primarily because the United States and the Organization of the American States deemed the May 2000 parliamentary elections to be inadequate. Many countries who do not even try to emerge as a democracy, as we struggle to do, are not punished by such embargoes. We now have refugees as a result of the sanctions.

Allow me to express our gratitude to the Kennedy family, which has always sided with the Haitian people in our struggle for democracy. We need friends in this city in order to take on the root causes of much of our recent suffering.

My country has the highest HIV prevalence rate in the Western Hemisphere. Not only do these sanctions deny Haitians their fundamental human right to health, but it also denies many their right to life.

The International Development Bank (IDB) has withheld loans to Haiti totaling \$146 million for health care, clean water, basic education and rural road rehabilitation. By continuing its policy to not release these funds the IDB is violating, not only its own Charter, but also the human rights of the Haitian people.

Robert F. Kennedy once said: "*the obligation of free men is to use their opportunities to improve the welfare of their fellow human beings*". If RFK was alive, he would help the Haitian people to improve their lives.

# HEALTH CARE AND POTABLE WATER

LOUNE VIAUD

LESSON GRADE LEVEL: 6-12

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES: HEALTH CARE AND POTABLE WATER

## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

- **Article 25:** Right to Adequate Living Standard

**TIME REQUIREMENT:** 80 minutes

## OBJECTIVES:

After this lesson, students will be able to

- Connect the study of human rights in the past to the work of Loune Viaud.
- Understand the widespread lack of clean drinking water and health care in the world today, especially in Haiti.
- Be aware how ordinary citizens have made a difference fighting those abuses.
- Encourage our students to also become human rights defenders.

## STUDENT SKILLS:

- Drawing inferences and making conclusions
- Organizing and interpreting information
- Participating in group planning and discussion; cooperating to

- accomplish goals
- Map and globe skills

## NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS:

- Social Studies Standard 1: History of the United States and New York
  - Intermediate KI 2 PI 4; KI 3 PI 1, 2; KI 4 PI 1, 2, 3
  - Commencement KI 2 PI 4, 5; KI 3 PI 4; KI 4 PI 3
- Social Studies Standard 2: World History
  - Intermediate KI 1 PI 1, 3; KI 3 PI 1, 2, 3; KI 4 PI 1, 2, 3, 4
  - Commencement KI 1 PI 1, 2, 3, 4; KI 2 PI 3; KI 3 PI 1, 2, 3; KI 4 PI 1, 2, 3, 4
- Social Studies Standard 3: Geography
  - Intermediate KI 1 PI 4; KI 2 PI 1, 2, 3, 4
  - Commencement KI PI 1, 4, 5; KI 2 PI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- Social Studies Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government
  - Intermediate KI 1 PI 1; KI 4 PI 1, 2, 3

- Commencement KI 1 PI 1; KI 3 PI 2; KI 4 PI 4, 5, 6
- English Language Arts Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding
  - Intermediate Reading PI 1, 2, 3, 4; Writing PI 1, 2, 3, 4
  - Commencement Reading PI 1, 2, 3, 4; Writing PI 1, 2, 3, 4
- English Language Arts Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation
  - Intermediate Reading PI 1, 3; Writing PI 1, 2
  - Commencement Reading PI 1, 2, 3, 4; Writing PI 1, 2
- English Language Arts Standard 4: Language for Social Interaction
  - Intermediate Listening/Speaking PI 1,2; Reading/Writing PI 2
  - Commencement Listening/Speaking PI 1, 2, 3; Reading/Writing PI 2, 3
- Mathematics, Science, and Technology Standard 4: Science
  - Intermediate Physical Setting KI 2 PI 1

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### ANTICIPATORY SET:

- Show to the class photos of Haitian children getting water. (Symbol for link)
- After showing these pictures, the instructor should have a similar five gallon jug filled with water at the front of class.
- Have each student stand up and pass the container to each other. It should be noted that doing so is difficult, and some of the students will find it challenging, which is exactly the point!
- After completing this activity, ask the students the following questions:
  - Why would it be difficult to carry your own water like that?
  - How did it make you feel?
- After asking these questions, ask one student to take a paper cup and walk to the nearest supply of clean drinking water. (Tell them they will be timed, but that they should walk at a regular pace, and **not** to run, as there is no rush.) In most situations, the student will return from a nearby drinking fountain within less than a minute. The instructor should ask the students the following:
  - Because you have such great access to clean water, what can you do that students in Haiti cannot? It is estimated that some children in the world carry water between 10-20 hours a week.
  - What else could or should they be doing with that time instead?
- Point out to the students that in the country of Haiti there are thousands of people who get their water in plastic jugs. In addition to the physical hardship that goes with that, hundreds of Haitian children die each year from water-borne diseases like diarrhea, typhoid, and cholera.
  - With these facts mentioned, show the video of these hardships (symbol for link)

### ACTIVITY 1:

- Distribute to students the article entitled "Woman of the Year 2003", by Jennifer Margulis: (symbol for link)
- Instruct students to read the article. The information will be used in the second activity.

- o Intermediate Living Environment KI 7 PI 1, 2
- o Commencement Physical Setting KI 2 PI 1, 2
- o Commencement Living Environment KI 1 PI 1; KI 6 PI 3; KI 7 PI 1, 2, 3

#### VOCABULARY:

- Defender
- Human rights
- Water-borne diseases
- Haiti
- Health care worker
- HIV-AIDS

#### CONCEPTS:

- Human rights
- Global citizenship
- Justice
- Government
- Power
- Individual responsibility

#### TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED:

- An LCD projector
- Five or six laptops around the classroom, or a computer lab

#### MATERIALS:

- Biography of Loune Viaud <http://www.rfkcenter.org/node/279>
- RFK Memorial Center projects with Loune Viaud [http://rfkmemorial.mediathree.net/legacyinaction/2002\\_Viaud/](http://rfkmemorial.mediathree.net/legacyinaction/2002_Viaud/)
- A five gallon plastic jug
- Photo of Jane Addams <http://www.swarthmore.edu/library/peace/Exhibits/janeaddams/addamsindex.htm>
- MIT safe water project [http://web.mit.edu/watsan/meng\\_haiti.html](http://web.mit.edu/watsan/meng_haiti.html)
- Children in Haiti collecting water [http://www.google.com/images?q=photos+of+children+in+Haiti+collecting+water&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-SearchBox&oe=UTF-8&rlz=117RNWE\\_en&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=univ&ei](http://www.google.com/images?q=photos+of+children+in+Haiti+collecting+water&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-SearchBox&oe=UTF-8&rlz=117RNWE_en&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=univ&ei)

=BBaSTKbejMaNnQfG4oTdBw&sa=X&oi=image\_result\_group&ct=title&resnum=1&ved=0CCcQsAQwAA

- Video of the problems of getting potable water in Haiti produced by Partners in Health: [http://www.livestream.com/global\\_health\\_equity/video?clipId=flv\\_c2a52f39-b039-4f33-adf9-0f3ecd52169d&utm\\_source=Ispayer&utm\\_medium=ui-content&utm\\_campaign=global\\_health\\_equity&utm\\_content=global\\_health\\_equity](http://www.livestream.com/global_health_equity/video?clipId=flv_c2a52f39-b039-4f33-adf9-0f3ecd52169d&utm_source=Ispayer&utm_medium=ui-content&utm_campaign=global_health_equity&utm_content=global_health_equity)
- Article “Woman of the Year” by Jennifer Margulis, Ms Magazine, Winter 2003 [http://www.ms magazine.com/dec03/woty2003\\_lviaud.asp](http://www.ms magazine.com/dec03/woty2003_lviaud.asp)
- Loune Viaud speech accepting the RFK Human Rights Award [http://rfkmemorial.mediathree.net/legacyinaction/2002\\_november\\_20\\_2002/](http://rfkmemorial.mediathree.net/legacyinaction/2002_november_20_2002/)

#### ACTIVITY 2:

- Using several laptops around the classroom in learning station format—or in a computer lab—the teacher will transition from the reading on Loune Viaud by showing the class that students around the country have followed in her footsteps by becoming human rights defenders for Haiti as well.
- Working in small groups or on their own, the students will then read/watch the following articles and/or videos. Students should view the videos and read the articles, keeping in mind the following questions:
  - o How have schools around the country been defenders for Haiti?
  - o What can we learn from the example from Viaud?
- <http://cafodbrentwood.wordpress.com/2010/08/11/hef-haiti-earthquake-fundraisers-at-st-francis-school-braintree-send-875-13/>
- <http://www.pioneerlocal.com/highlandpark/news/2563102,highland-park-bike4hope-080510-sl.article>
- <http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=J6S2-z-GqiY>

- <http://www.berkeleydailyplanet.com/issue/2010-01-28/article/34537?headline=Berkeley-High-Students-Raise-10-000-for-Haiti-Relief>
- [http://www.gazette.net/stories/01212010/clinnew182204\\_32548.php](http://www.gazette.net/stories/01212010/clinnew182204_32548.php)

#### ACTIVITY 3:

- Once those basics are established, the teacher should then have the students read an excerpt on Loune Viaud, as taken from her 2002 acceptance speech for the RFK Human Rights award in Washington (symbol for link)
- Following the example of Martin Luther King Jr., the students should write a one-sided version of their own “I have a dream speech,” similar to the one of Loune that was just read in class.
- The students could share some of their work the next day, or make a video in which their speech is supported by pictures and images.

Loune Viaud chose to devote her life to helping the poor of Haiti. Perhaps students could become a defender by taking part in one of the following activities:

- Use the examples that this lesson described to help you plan a fundraiser for Haiti.
- Collect bandages and band aids and mail them to Loune's group Partners for Health in Haiti, <http://www.pih.org/pages/haiti/>
- Have a health care worker or even a school nurse come in to talk about the needs of your community. Ask them what help they would like to address those concerns, and how your school might be able to help.
- Talk with people in your community about what their health care needs are, and what their health insurance covers. Create a short video documentary on what you find.

## TELL US ABOUT IT

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The Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights is sponsoring an annual contest honoring a student who submits the best advocacy activity based upon the lesson studied. A goal of the lesson is to instill into each student that one voice, one person can make monumental changes in the lives of many. Tell us how you "Became a Defender"!

### THE CRITERIA FOR THE CONTEST ARE:

- A one-page summary of the advocacy activity
- Digitized copies of materials that can be sent electronically
- Photos of the activity (please include parental consent form)
- A one-page summary of how the activity made a change in the lives of one person or many

### THE PRIZES INCLUDE:

- A week long "virtual" internship at RFK Center
- An opportunity to meet the defender through a SKYPE visit,
- A visit from Kerry Kennedy or a defender to your school
- A poster of a *Speak Truth to Power* Human Rights Defender
- A donation of a signed copy of *Speak Truth to Power* for the school library

The application and instructions for entry can be downloaded [here](#) (link for materials)

The deadline for all applications is the third week in November.

The winning student and teacher will be notified by the last week of January.

### Water for All

<http://www.water4all.org/>

Water for All is a network of organizations that work at a local level to help increase access to safe potable drinking water.

### Water.org

<http://water.org/learn-about-the-water-crisis/facts/>

Water.org is a non-profit organization that works in Africa, South Asia and Central America to provide people in those areas with access to safe water.

### ZANMI LASANTE SITE BACKGROUND:

#### Partners in Health

<http://www.pih.org/pages/haiti-background>

An in-depth explanation of the various issues facing Haiti and how they all affect the health of the Haitian people.

### Global Economic Symposium (GES)

<http://www.global-economic-symposium.org/about-the-ges>

Financing health care for the poor; the GES aims to provide a new collaborative setting to analyze the world's most important economic problems, create shared visions of the future and formulate innovative strategies to achieve these visions.