B'nai B'rith in Haiti

Alan Schneider Undertakes Assessment Mission to Haiti...

Nine months after the devastating Haiti earthquake, B’nai B’rith World Center Director Alan Schneider visited the country this week to assess the progress of development projects funded by B’nai B’rith International and B’nai B’rith Europe.

This was Schneider’s second trip to Haiti since one of the worst natural disasters in history struck this Caribbean country—the first beginning just four days after the quake when he arrived with a small Israeli emergency civilian medical team that provided primary care to some 2,000 injured Haitians. The emergency medical team and the ongoing development projects are coordinated by BBI’s strategic partner in international humanitarian work—IsraAID—the Israel Forum for International Humanitarian Aid.

The current projects are implemented in Haiti by two other IsraAID member organizations—Tevel B’Tzedek (“The Earth-In Justice”) and NISPED— the Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development. The projects are located in the capital Port-au-Prince, in Leogand, a city which is southwest of the capital, and in the southern costal city of Jacmel.

In Port-au-Prince, the assessment team, which included IsraAID Executive Director Shachar Zahavi, Chair Meira Abulafia, and Board Member Mully Dor, visited a school and met with the IsraAID partners who developed the motivational program “Dream Team” on the former Petionville golf course that now houses more than 50,000 internally displaced persons.

At the camp, the team also met with some of the Israel Police contingent serving in the U.N. force in Haiti. The IsraAID team also held separate meetings with J/P Haitian Relief Organization head Sean Penn, who has assumed overall responsibility for the squalid camp, Operation Blessing Director of International Disaster Relief and Special Projects David Darg, and with current and former local partners.

Operation Blessing provided essential assistance to the early IsraAID/F.I.R.S.T. emergency medical missions. From Haiti, Schneider will travel to New Orleans to participate in the General Assembly of North American Jewish Federations, where IsraAID will stage a photo and video exhibit on its work in Haiti.