

DloHaiti Taps VC Funding as it Brings Haiti Clean Water and Jobs

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By Lora Kolodny



A “for-profit, for-good” startup, [dloHaiti](#), raised \$3.4 million in Series A funding to bring clean, affordable water and new jobs to communities across Haiti, according to the company’s chief executive and founder, Jim Chu.

Investors in dloHaiti’s Series A round included firms that focus on social ventures: [Leopard Capital](#), [IFC InfraVentures](#) (an investment arm of the World Bank Group) and [Netherlands Development Finance \(FMO\)](#), along with [Miyamoto International](#).

Pronounced like the French word for water (“de l’eau”), dloHaiti sets up solar-powered kiosks that purify water on-site. It also hires teams to distribute the water to nearby communities. The kiosks are made from off-the-shelf components, Chu said, and are optimized to treat Haiti’s abundant supply of groundwater.

While Haiti is still rebuilding critical infrastructure after a catastrophic earthquake in 2010, it experienced drastic water poverty, especially in rural areas, many years prior, the CEO said. In Haiti, the lowest price for treated water is 12 cents per gallon, about eighty times higher than the lowest price in the U.S., according to research by dloHaiti.

An investor with IFC InfraVentures, Jean Marc Christian Arbogast, said, “In Haiti... piped water systems [serve] only about a third of Haiti’s urban poor and fewer than a third of its rural poor. The alternatives provided by undercapitalized water-delivery companies, [using diesel trucks, mostly] are unreliable and expensive.”

Besides providing an affordable source of clean water, dloHaiti is expected to “create jobs for hundreds of Haitians outside of Port-Au-Prince... at kiosks and as distributors and delivery agents,” the investor noted.

Chu, a former [Cisco Systems](#) executive and advertising technology entrepreneur, said he decided to start this company not just to do good in Haiti, but to prove that business is a force for both social good and wealth creation.

“Sometimes, and this is unfortunate, the phrase ‘social business’ is used as shorthand for ‘bad business,’” he said. “I want to be able to prove anyone wrong who believes this.”

DloHaiti was a finalist at the water-tech innovation tournament [Imagine H2O](#) in 2012, where it gained attention within the water investment community, Chu said.



According to [Douglas Clayton](#), chief executive of Leopard Capital, investors expect dloHaiti to use its Series A funding to install 40 water kiosks this year, which will supply filtered water to more than 145,000 people, mainly in small towns and rapidly growing peri-urban areas.

He estimates that dloHaiti could meet the drinking water needs of more than a half-million people living in Haiti, an annual market more than \$10 million. He said the company could also distribute other products via its high-traffic kiosks, adding to its income without much additional cost.