

ROOTS OF DEVELOPMENT
2020
ANNUAL REPORT





Our 2020 annual report is dedicated to Faradhia Moise.

On Sunday, January 24, 2021, our friend and colleague Faradhia Moise passed away unexpectedly from complications due to diabetes. Faradhia was Rasin Developman's* Chief Operating Officer. She was smart, positive, honest, funny, and kind. She was a serious professional and deeply committed to her country of Haiti.

Faradhia had many traits that made her a special person, but it was her personal story of strength and survival that made her different, unique, and inspiring to all of us. In 2010, Faradhia spent two nights trapped in the dark, under rubble, after a supermarket collapsed on her during the earthquake that year. Despite the odds and without food or drink or the ability to take her insulin, Faradhia survived and was pulled out of the rubble three days later by an Icelandic rescue crew. Faradhia was a survivor. That is what we knew her to be. That is what makes her death so confusing and so painful.

We are so lucky to have known Faradhia and to have worked by her side. She made Rasin Developman a stronger and more effective organization, for Haiti and for (with) the people of La Gonave.

We will miss you greatly Faradhia. Thank you for your leadership, your sacrifices, and for the time we got to spend with you.
Rest in peace.

*Rasin Developman is Roots of Development's sister organization in Haiti.





“We are not a typical charity. We do not believe in handouts. We are not even a traditional development organization; we are a leadership and community investment organization.”

– Chad W. Bissonnette, *Co-Founder and Executive Director*

#DEVELOPMENTWITHOUTDEPENDENCY



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The Roots of Our Resilience

To Our Friends and Supporters,

I want to start off by saying thank you. Thank you for being there for us during an unprecedented and extremely challenging year. The challenges we faced in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, arose quickly and were diverse in scope and size. They were financial, programmatic, and administrative and tested us in ways we had not been tested before. In the end though, with your support and with the skill and commitment of Roots of Development's board and staff, we not only overcame the challenges, but proved extremely

resilient and emerged a stronger organization.

In 2020, we grew our network of local partners, expanded the team in Haiti, and increased development on the island. We helped prevent the spread of Coronavirus on La Gonave and helped local authorities complete a draft of the island's first Communal Development Plan (CDP). Our ability to quickly mobilize resources, craft and deliver solutions to unprecedented problems, and at the same time scale the organization, represents a significant milestone for the organization.

Roots of Development is entering an inspiring new phase of its evolution from a grassroots charitable organization to a mature nonprofit institution with the potential to transform the international development landscape. We are emerging as a pioneer of a promising new era in international development that empowers those who are living in poverty to lead the fight against it. In the coming years, our challenge is to document continued success and share it with the world in ways that will inspire a broader movement toward development without

dependency. If we are successful along these lines, there is no limit to what Roots of Development can achieve.

Thank you for helping us accomplish so much during such a difficult year. We are grateful and look forward to another year of inspiring achievements powered by you.

Sincerely,
Chad W. Bissonnette
Executive Director



In many parts of the world there are communities struggling to escape extreme poverty.

These communities often have little to no assistance from the government and a weak private sector. Traditionally, NGOs have stepped in to provide aid. While helpful at times, far too often this aid leaves populations dependent on outside directives and leadership. This dynamic of dependency fails to foster local ownership over development efforts. Communities are unable to strengthen their own capacity and left ill-equipped to manage and maintain the efforts, jeopardizing the very sustainability of those efforts.



MISSION

Our mission is to support and promote a community-driven approach to development—an approach that is based on strengthening local capacity in order to improve the quality of life in marginalized communities.

We help communities acquire the skills and financial resources needed to manage their own development. The communities we work with choose, build, manage and maintain their own projects.

How we view the fight against poverty.

Our vision is of a world in which the very communities living in poverty are the ones leading the fight against it; a world in which impoverished communities decide their own future and manage their own development.

Roots of Development was founded in 2007.

WHERE WE WORK

Where it started...

For over a decade, Roots of Development has practiced and strengthened its approach to development almost exclusively on the island of La Gonave, Haiti. It is located to the west-northwest of Port-au-Prince, in the Gulf of Gonave, and is part of Haiti's Ouest Department. Its population is larger than the majority of the territories and nations that make up the Caribbean. But the island faces huge challenges, a major lack of infrastructure, a weak private sector, and very little attention from the national government. Its strategic location, picturesque coastline, and acres of farmland offer huge potential. La Gonave represents a large, untapped market for goods and services, and is home to a group of strong local elected officials and an active civil society.





ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020

Emergency Response to COVID-19

On March 27, 2020, Roots of Development launched an emergency campaign to help La Gonave prepare for COVID-19 on the island. The first phase involved a Coronavirus awareness campaign on the island to quickly disseminate information about the virus and how to prevent its spreads. Our local partners, our Volunteers for Change, who already live in the communities where the campaigns were taking place, were the first to respond. We equipped them with necessary information and protective gear to go out and distribute the information within their communities using megaphones.



90 HANDWASHING STATIONS

With indoor plumbing basically non-existent in most homes on La Gonave, we adjusted our 2020 program budget and quickly freed up funding to purchase bleach, hand soap, plastic buckets, and more, to install 90 handwashing stations throughout seven communal sections on the island.



2,000 REUSABLE MASKS

We provided the mayor's office with 1,000 reusable masks for distribution on the island and a grant to a local women's sewing cooperative to produce and distribute an additional 1,000 masks. A total distribution of 2,000 reusable masks.

9 COVID MURALS

To confront stigmas that were taking hold on the island about COVID-19 and to continue promoting practices that prevent the spread of the virus, Roots of Development brought a group of artists from mainland Haiti to paint nine COVID-themed murals in highly trafficked parts of town. Three graffiti artists from the city of Cite Soleil were invited to La Gonave to paint colorful, attention-grabbing murals that reminded residents to socially distance, wear masks, wash their hands regularly, and to treat neighbors who had fallen ill and medical personnel with compassion instead of fear. The paintings are still visible today, adding color to the city and reminding folks to be safe.



1 COVID CENTER

La Gonave only has one full-service hospital, the Wesleyan Hospital in Anse-a-Galets. In early April, when we began having meetings with hospital staff about COVID-19, they informed us that the hospital was equipped with only 40 beds. Administrators of the hospital shared that they were in possession of sufficient masks and gloves but lacked other key materials and the staff needed to deal with such an emergency. The hospital had only enough oxygen for about 3 or 4 patients and no ventilators. Roots of Development fundraised and provided the hospital with a financial contribution that helped it open, equip, and staff a COVID medical facility on the island.



A Paved Road for La Gonave

In early 2020, we provided a grant to the community leaders of the 6th communal section of La Gonave, Petite-Anse, to help them pave 3.1 kilometers of road connecting the center of town to a port used for transporting goods. The community has already raised over \$33,000 and paved over 2.7 kilometers of the road.

The story of this community-led road paving project is inspiring. One day the community's leaders realized they could no longer wait for the government or an NGO to come and pave the road for them, so they took the project on themselves. They worked three years to save taxes, and collect donations from community members, local churches, Haitians living abroad, the local mayor's office, and a couple of government ministries. In a few instances, they even navigated the tricky situation of asking that donations designated for less sustainable activities in the community be used instead on the road. Residents volunteer their time collecting water and carrying rocks and local construction workers work on the road for a fraction of what they usually would be paid.

It is an incredible community-led project, and a real example of what residents are capable of doing when they come together.

Local Leadership & Organizational Capacity

Sustainable development starts with local leaders, and the stronger and more skilled those leaders are, the better the development, the larger the impact.

In 2020, despite significant disruptions from COVID, we provided local leaders on La Gonave with an additional 32 hours of leadership and capacity-building workshops. The workshops and trainings were carried out mostly with our “Volunteers for Change”, who are all part of the Twa Woch Dife program that we started in 2019. A portion of the workshops were provided in partnership with Le Centre Haitien du Leadership et de L’Excellence (CLE), a like-minded Haitian leadership and capacity-building organization we introduced to La Gonave three years ago.

The goal of the workshops was to build local capacity, bring leaders from around the island together to learn from one another and collaborate, and inspire more development projects that improve quality of life on the island. There were presentations on leadership, the importance of diversity and women’s participation, and the role of local authorities in development. The trainings allowed participants to develop skills in project design and learn the best practices of project management.

In addition to encouraging more development on the island, the workshops we provide build trust amongst local leaders and provide them with a platform to communicate, influence, encourage, and support one another. The leaders share their experiences and help one another find solutions to the challenges that most often prevent them and their communities from achieving their goals.

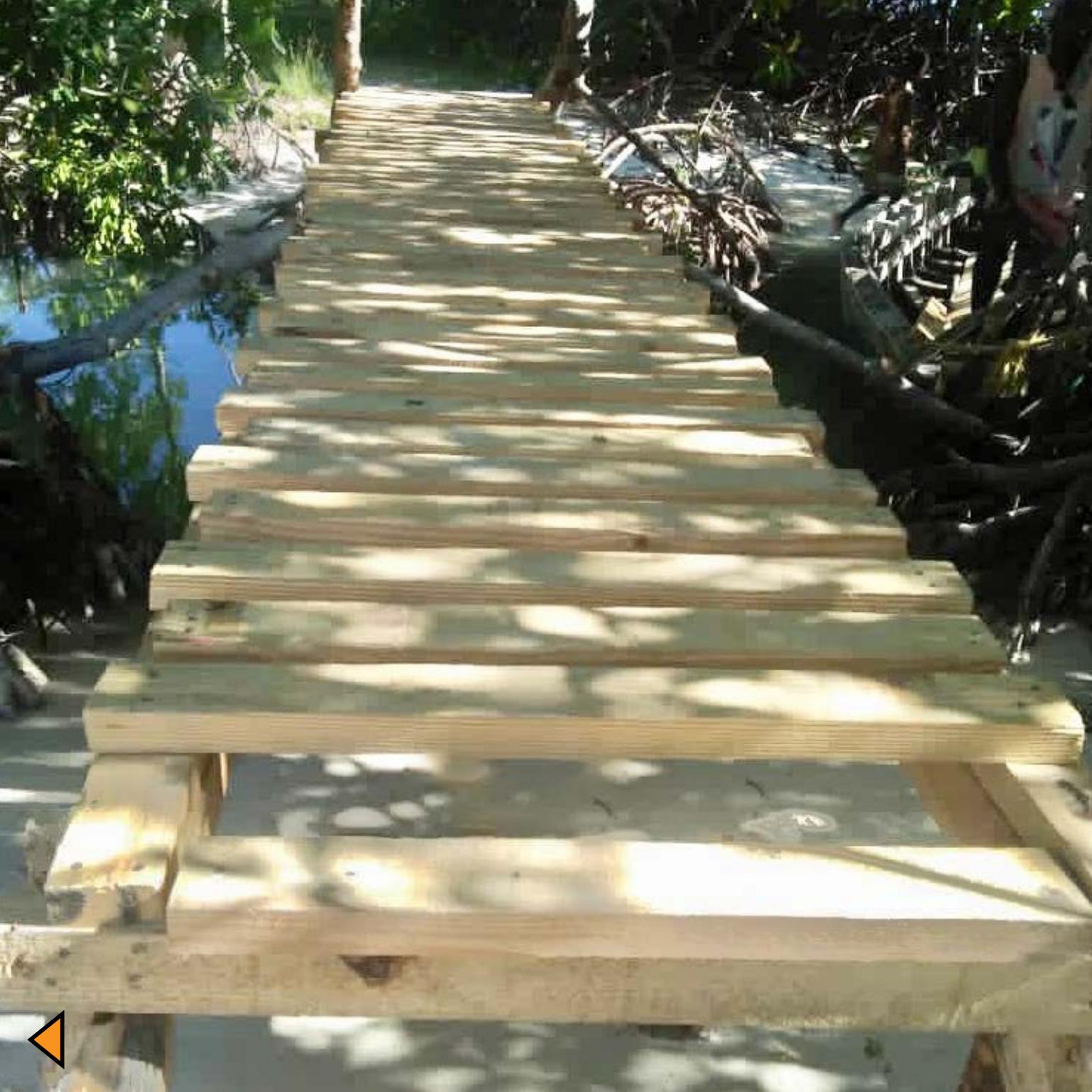
At the end of the year, several of these “Volunteers for Change” designed and implemented their own community projects. We financially supported several of them and highlight them here in this report.



**Mwen se yon Volontè pou Chanjman.
Si mwen pa ka chanje Ayiti,
map patisipe nan kreye baz pou chanje l.**

**I am a Volunteer for Change.
If I can't change Haiti,
I'm going to help create a platform that will.**





A New Footbridge

In September 2020, our field team decided it was important to transition out of emergency aid and relief and focus again on our development goals. We met with our local partners and launched a community development grant program. By December, we had presented three communities, in three different communal sections, with impact grants to support community-led projects on the island.

For decades, residents of La Gonave's 5th communal section have had to walk across a small river to reach other parts of the island. In 2020, with Roots of Development's support, community leaders decided it was time to improve conditions. They organized a work plan and budget and applied for a grant from Roots of Development. They collected resources and rounded up volunteers to complete construction of a pedestrian bridge at the end of last year.

Because the project was initiated and led by the community, it is more likely the bridge will be maintained and last longer. The bridge already serves hundreds of residents and is likely to encourage other communities to take similar initiatives.



Community Gardens and Seed Distribution

Food security was an issue on La Gonave before COVID-19. Then a couple of hurricanes hit Haiti in the fall and things got even tougher for residents. Leaders of the 3rd communal section of La Gonave recognized the real threat of hunger and decided to get families in the community access to seeds and help them produce more food. The focus was on crops that were resistant and could grow relatively quickly like beans, lettuce, peppers, and eggplant.

With funding from Roots of Development, the leaders of the 3rd communal section are helping 50 families avoid hunger this year. Not only did they help these families access seeds and grow more of their own food, but they also helped them plot their gardens and shared useful growing practices.





Protecting the Environment on La Gonave

A group of young community leaders from Anse-a-Galets were concerned about the environmental damage being done to La Gonave's coastline and beaches. They were concerned the population did not understand the impact of not investing in and protecting their environment, so they came up with a series of activities to begin tackling the issue themselves.

The leaders designed a plan, developed a budget, and applied to Roots of Development for financial support. With the grant they received, the group provided residents with a series of workshops about protecting the environment. They rented a three-wheel motorcycle with trailer and spent a day cleaning up trash along the coastline. After the clean-up, residents of Anse-a-Galets joined them to plant 40 young almond trees at three different locations along the beach.

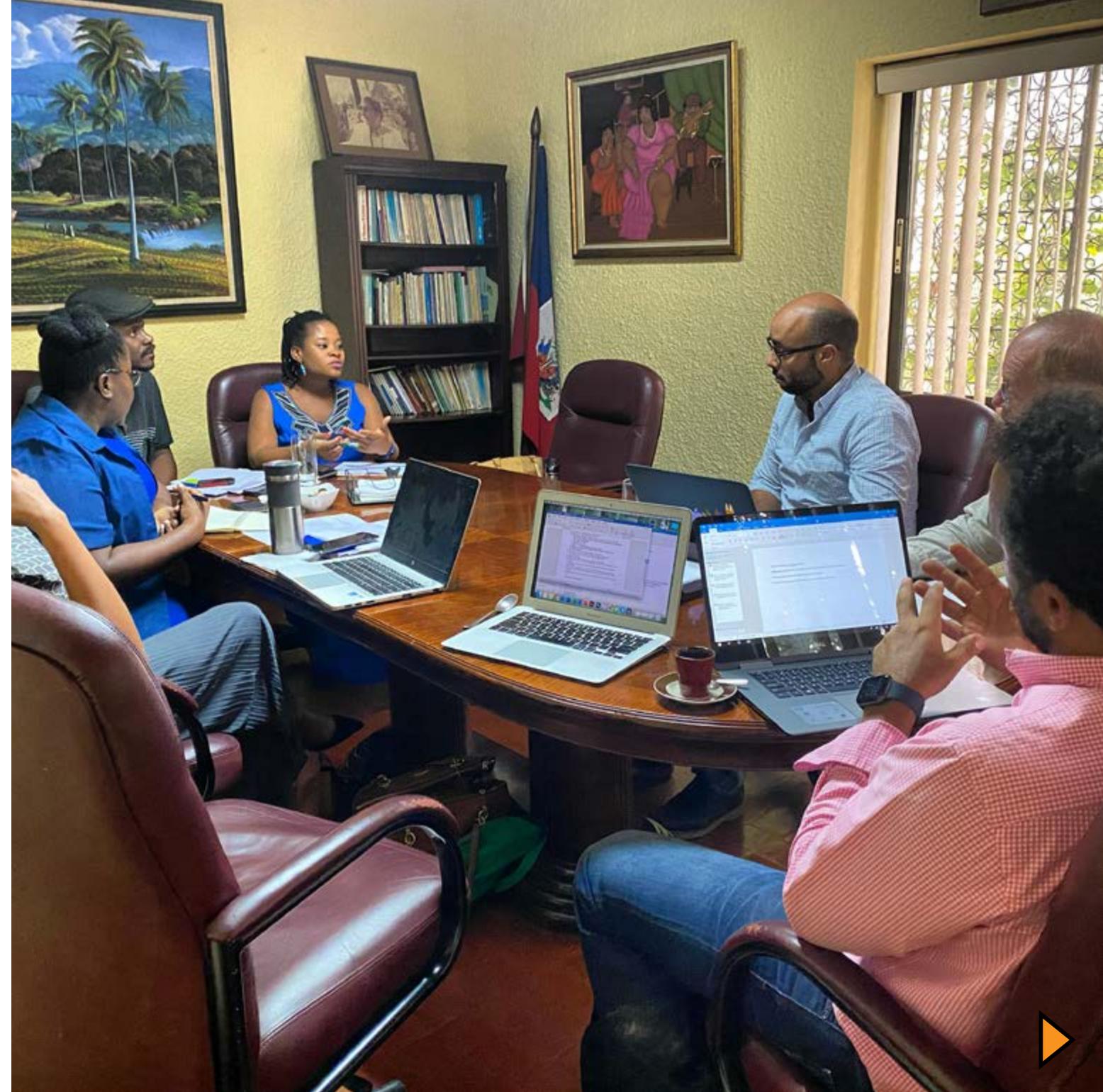
The initiative, organized by these young community leaders, will increase awareness amongst residents, strengthen La Gonave's environment, and hopefully inspire others to do the same.

A Stronger and More Independent *Rasin Devlopman*

In 2017, to make our work even more sustainable and to be able to both implement community-led development locally and promote it globally, we founded an independent organization in Haiti called Fondation Rasin Devlopman.

On January 23, 2020, Rasin Devlopman held its first official board meeting with four initial board members. Also in 2020, with Roots of Development's support, Rasin Devlopman expanded the size of its staff to seven members, all of whom are Haitian, and Louino Robillard, formerly a consultant, officially became Rasin Devlopman's Program Director.

Under the leadership of Faradhia Moise, the organization's Chief Operating Officer, Rasin Devlopman independently raised \$11,599 in funding, directly in Haiti, in 2020.





In 2018, Roots of Development invited the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) to visit La Gonave, to get to know the island better and explore ways in which our organizations could work together to support the island and its leaders even further. In 2019, we formally partnered with them on a USAID-funded project to help the mayor of Anse-a-Galets develop a communal development plan (CDP).

Anse-a-Galets is one of the two communes that make up the island of La Gonave. Neither of La Gonave's communes have ever had an official communal development plan before and in some cases a CDP is required of a commune in Haiti before it can receive support or carry out a development project.

In 2020, a draft of the communal development plan for Anse-a-Galets was completed. All that remains to do now is a final meeting between all the stakeholders, to carry out one last review and formally approve the plan.

Writing the communal development plan for Anse-a-Galets involved mobilizing diverse leaders, researching the history of development on the island, identifying and mapping needs and resources, and organizing the population's priorities into a single roadmap. With the existence of a development plan, it will be easier for the island's leaders to attract investment and carry out more development, to improve quality of life on the island.

SOME OF OUR OTHER STRATEGIC PARTNERS





MEETING OUR NEXT CHALLENGES

1

Following the passing of Rasin Devlopman's Chief Operating Officer, Faradhia Moise, it is important we do everything in our power this year to help keep the organization operating at its fullest capacity.

2

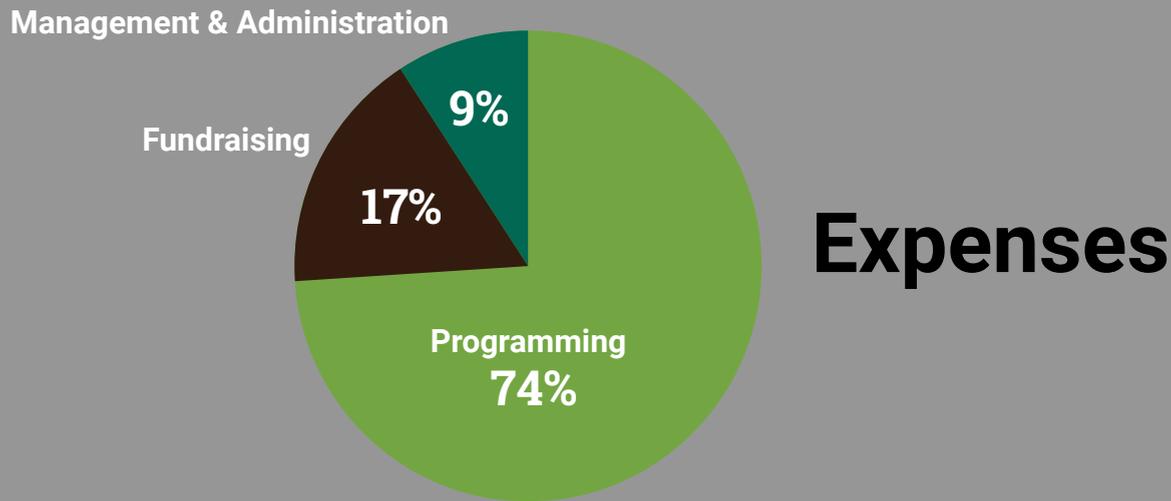
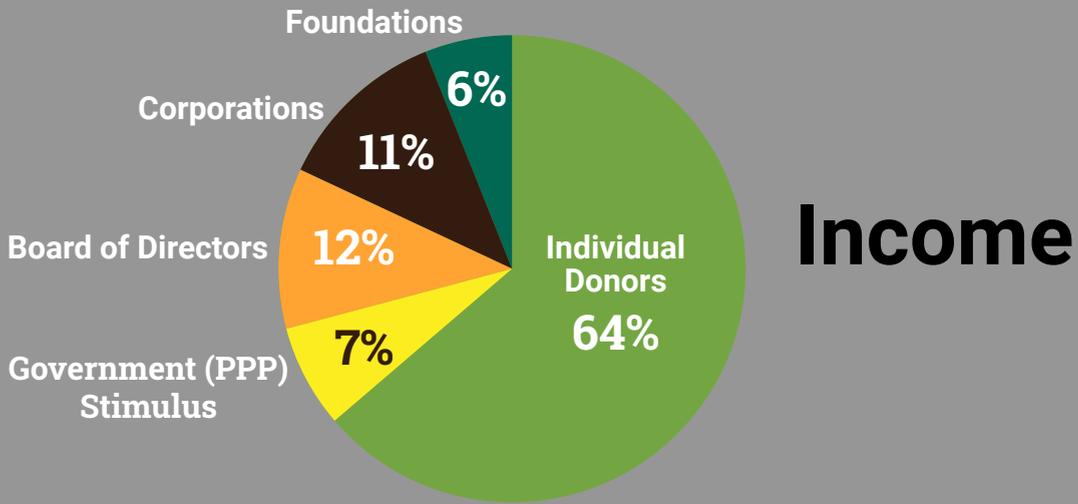
Rasin Devlopman's extraordinary impact in 2020 presents new opportunities for us to document and share its work with broader audiences through the development of key performance metrics.

3

Doing so will put Roots of Development on track to become an even more influential advocate for community-led development and development without dependency, within the larger field of development.

FY2020 FINANCIALS

Total Budget: \$246,898



8% increase in revenue in 2020.

We are forever grateful for the support of all those who contribute to Roots of Development. We would like to particularly recognize those that give monthly at the highest levels. These are the donors who bring the greatest stability and sustainability to our work. These individuals, coupled with the support of our large, one-time donors and corporate partners, ensure that our work is possible. Thank you.

EXECUTIVE FUNDER'S CIRCLE

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
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To join the Executive Funder's Circle by starting a recurring donation, visit rootsofdevelopment.org.

LEGACY DONORS

We are honored by the legacy generous visionaries have left behind by including Roots of Development in their estate plans. Should you wish to give in memory of a loved one, or inform us of a decision to include us in your will, please contact us at info@rootsofdevelopment.org.



Roots of Development is a 501(c)(3) organization that is audited annually by an independent CPA.

“Roots of Development is an organization with a mission and a structure that all such organizations should follow. It is not about doing something FOR or TO the community, but truly about doing something WITH them. This incredible force has found the secret of sustainability and actively engages with its mission of empowering the local community to improve their own quality of life.

It has been inspiring to see and hear the stories of local Haitians become involved with Roots for Development, become empowered to grow as an individual and as a leader, and take ownership of making their home a place of continuous improvement. They have planted a seed, and that seed continues to grow. This is how movements are started; through education, through collaboration, and through a shared passion of an important mission.”

– Meghan West and family
President and CEO, MASTERCAM



CURRENT AND FORMER SPONSORS





OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chad W. Bissonnette co-founded Roots of Development in 2007. He currently serves as its Executive Director and is responsible for ensuring that the organization maintains its community-led approach to development. He oversees the organization's fundraising and communications activities.

Chad holds a bachelor's degree in International Relations from American University and was awarded the School of International Service's alumnus of the year award in 2014.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Christopher Wells
(Chairperson)



Jenna Willits
(Treasurer)



Rodolphe Brioché
(Vice-chairperson)



Ernest Voyard



Magalie Pradel
(Secretary)



Jean Francois Bauer

“The need for effective, sustainable development in Haiti has never been greater. Roots of Development’s approach to development has sustainably improved the lives of tens of thousands of Haitians and has set a high bar for other organizations. That is why I support Roots and encourage you to do the same.”

-Rudy Brioché, Board Member



2020 STAFF OF RASIN DEVELOPMAN

Rasin’s team members and volunteers captured in this photo are (clockwise from top left corner): Lineda Paul, Louino (‘Robi’) Robillard, Lineda St. Vil, Marclidens (‘Bousthing’) St. Vil, Monica St. Juste, Evingts (‘Richard’) Jean-Francois, and Faradhia Moise (Rasin’s Chief Operating Officer).

Merci. Mèsi.
Thank you for
your support!

Roots of Development

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**Development
without
Dependency**

