

ROOTS OF DEVELOPMENT

2021



ANNUAL REPORT



“I am seeing a change in the mentality of the people. There are actions that people are beginning to take in their communities. They are beginning to understand... that it is up to them to bring about change.”

- Dinozard Jean Louis,
2021 Twa Woch Dife Program Participant, 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

Roots of Development | FY2021

ANNUAL REPORT

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JOINT LETTER

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

“I am seeing a change in the mentality of the people. There are actions that people are beginning to take for their communities. They are beginning to understand ... that it is up to them to bring about change.”

With these words, Dinozard Jean Louis, a participant in the community-led programs Roots of Development supports on the Haitian island of La Gonave, summarizes the impact of the work outlined in Roots’ 2021 Annual Report.

Guided by our vision of a world in which the very communities living in poverty are the ones leading the fight against it, Roots and its supporters have helped inspire residents on La Gonave with a sense of optimism that has kept them engaged in developing the island despite the challenges of a global pandemic, an earthquake, and the assassination of the Haitian president.

Encouraged by the support of Roots’ global network, community leaders have proposed, organized, and executed more than 50 development initiatives that have touched the lives of more than 100,000 people. Their programs have permanently strengthened the community’s collective capacity,

increased opportunities for women, and bolstered the island’s infrastructure. And this is only the beginning.

As outlined in this report, Roots’ partner organization in Haiti, Fondation Rasin Devlopman, has developed a bold plan to further expand its programmatic footprint by building a Leadership and Community Development Center that will serve as a permanent resource, a beacon of hope, and a symbol of a new era of “development without dependency.”

We hope you will contribute to Roots in 2022 as we continue to support and spotlight Rasin’s work in Haiti and widen the global reach of our mission.



Christopher Wells
Christopher J. Wells
Chair of the Board



Chad W. Bissonnette
Chad W. Bissonnette
Executive Director



Christopher Wells
Chairperson



Rudy Brioché
Vice-chairperson



Jenna Willits
Treasurer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Magalie Pradel
Secretary



Jean Francois Bauer
Member



Ernest Voyard
Member



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.



OUR MISSION

Roots of Development's 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.



OUR VISION

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.

THE RESULTS



The establishment of an effective and trusted Community-Based Organization (CBO) that supports local leaders and stimulates local development



Stronger, more effective community leaders and elected officials leading local development projects



Women's groups and women leaders fully and equally engaged in the development of their communities



A larger, broader network of actors and partners engaging with communities to foster and support sustainable development



Projects that have built new infrastructure and are providing new services that have improved quality of life

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

100K+

Lives Impacted

\$400K+

In Grants Provided

230+

Hours of Trainings

50+

Community-Led Projects



Our Presence: Highlight on Haiti

Where We Work

Island of La Gonave

Partner Organization

Fondation Rasin Devlopman



ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021



A STRONGER, MORE INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION

Today, the community-based organization (CBO) we helped establish in Haiti to take over and manage the program there, is stronger and more independent.

In 2021, Rasin Devlopman...

- Oversaw a 34% increase in overall revenue from the previous year (2020)
- Independently raised \$16,121 from donors and partners in Haiti, including \$3,446 from the short-term rental of rooms and workspace in its current headquarters
- Managed to raise and retain enough funds to cover 100% of its office space rent for 2022

In 2021, for the first time since its founding, Rasin Devlopman developed a work plan and budget for the year, which resulted in an expansion of its effort and activities on the island last year. Rasin achieved nearly all of its programmatic goals in 2021 and even added two new projects: "Reyaji" and a course for young women on how to ride a motorcycle.

- Completed 92% of its 2021 work plan
- Added two (2) new projects
- Led a 20% increase in direct project spending

In 2021, we helped Rasin Devlopman design and launch its own website and social media platforms, which it now independently manages. These tools help facilitate communication and learning. They help the organization connect and interact with members of the local community and diaspora, and reach new supporters and partners. They are helping it communicate its approach and have increased the organization's visibility.

- 1227 followers on Facebook and 235 followers on Instagram
- 75% of website traffic are new visitors

With your support, we have funded an initiative with the Haitian consulting firm *Triangle Management Solutions* to help Rasin Devlopman establish a MEL system to monitor progress and better measure the impact of its work on the island.

- 1 Theory of Change, 5 strategic objectives, 16 key indicators and more.
- 5 staff trained

Rasin Devlopman has maintained a team of 6 staff (100% Haitian) and 5 board members (80% Haitian).

Rasin Devlopman is an independent Haitian organization founded in 2017.



EFFECTIVE LOCAL LEADERS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

We are developing a network of leaders on the island capable of planning and implementing diverse development projects that are improving quality of life on La Gonave.

In 2021, we provided over 60 hours of leadership trainings and capacity-building workshops to more than 100 community leaders and elected officials.

- 60 community leaders, called our “Agents of Change (Volonte Pou Chanjman)”, participated in 48 hours of workshops spread out over the year.
- The leaders represent 7 of La Gonave’s 11 communal sections and the topics covered in the workshops include civic engagement, sustainable development, and collective leadership.
- 34% of the “Agents of Change” shared the knowledge learned with other leaders in their communities, reaching an additional 250 people

In partnership with the *Pan American Development Foundation (PADF)*, we helped local authorities and members of civil society on the island write La Gonave’s first **Communal Development Plan (CDP)**.

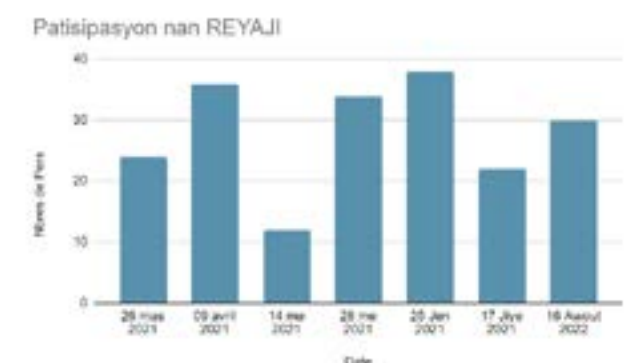
The plan was formally approved in May of 2021 and will make it easier for officials to attract investment, carry out development, and improve quality of life on the island.

- Approximately 20 hours of consultation and capacity-building programming with 16 elected officials from 7 of the 11 communal sections.

In addition to providing workshops and trainings to our “Agents of Change” and supporting La Gonave’s elected officials, we also fund programs for youth on the island.

In 2021, we began offering motorcycle courses to young women, to help them achieve greater independence and access new economic opportunities. We also helped launch “Reyaji”, a monthly gathering where young residents engage, hear from guest speakers, and discuss solutions to challenges facing their communities.

- 52 hours of training for 30 young women on how to ride a motorcycle
- 7 “Reyaji” sessions in 2021, with an average of 30 participants per session



At the end of 2021, we helped purchase a 13,000 square feet plot of land for a future Leadership & Community Development Center on La Gonave.



EMPOWERED AND ENGAGED WOMEN LEADERS

With our support in 2021, more women and women's groups are engaging in and leading development efforts in their communities today.

In early 2021, we identified and invited 25 influential women leaders from La Gonave together to highlight and honor their work and to facilitate greater communication and information sharing between them.

- Honorees included 1 mayor, 13 other elected officials, 3 entrepreneurs, 1 nurse, 1 community health worker, 2 teachers, and 4 of our *Volunteers for Change*

Out of the gathering, came a stronger network of women able to encourage and share best practices with one another, and increase development opportunities for women on the island, including a new project that was launched by Rasin in 2021...

Motorcycle courses for young women on La Gonave:

- 30 young women participated in 2021 with a passing rate of 83%
- 96% reported an increase in self-confidence and self-esteem
- 4 women have reliable access to a motorcycle and 3 have reported a new source of income





PROJECTS THAT IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE IN COMMUNITIES

In 2021, we helped facilitate and fund 11 new development projects in seven out of La Gonave's eleven communal sections, impacting the lives of approximately 65,000 residents.

The projects were all community-led, chosen by residents and local leaders as top development priorities, and initiated with local resources. They were diverse in nature and included the following:

- 3.5 kilometers of newly paved roads
- 1 potable water facility repaired
- 5,000 fruit & vegetable seedlings planted by 180 families
- 2 solar energy (power) systems provided to a rural clinic on the island and a school with 150 students
- The installation of 10 new solar streetlamps
- 1,000 bricks produced and laid for a new community library
- The construction of a 300 sq meter public square

All the projects we support are based on the use of local materials and local labor and leaders must demonstrate they can mobilize the population to support the project.





MEETING OUR NEXT CHALLENGES

1

Help our partner organization in Haiti, Rasin Devlopman, design, fundraise, and build a Leadership & Community Development Center on the island of La Gonave. The facility will include office space, meeting rooms and training space, and a guesthouse for staff and partners.

2

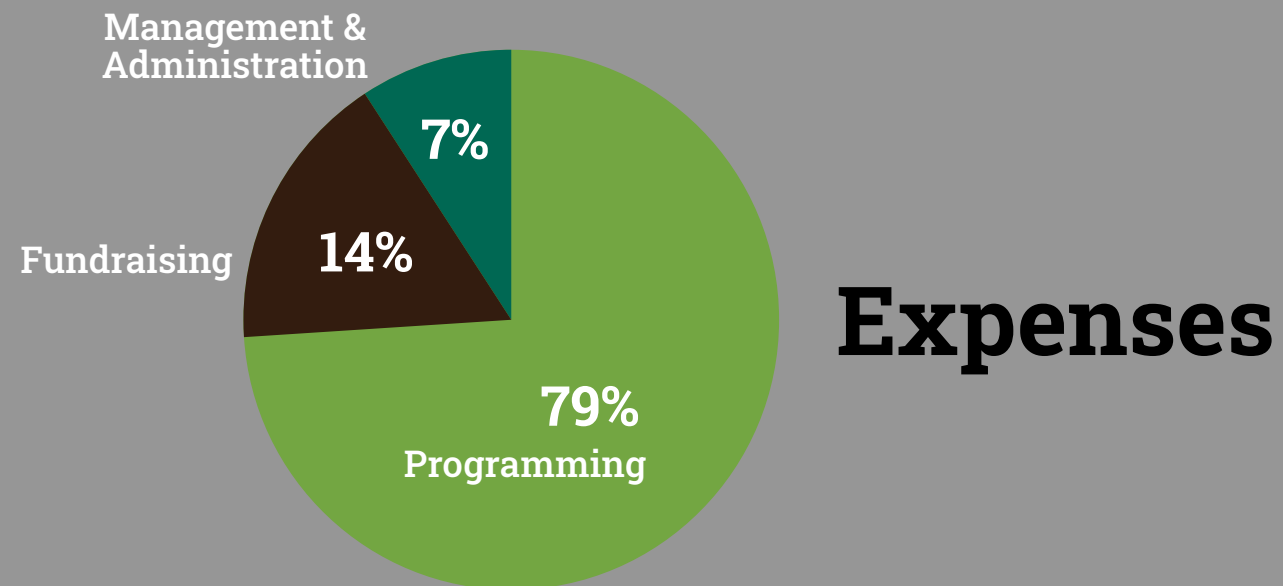
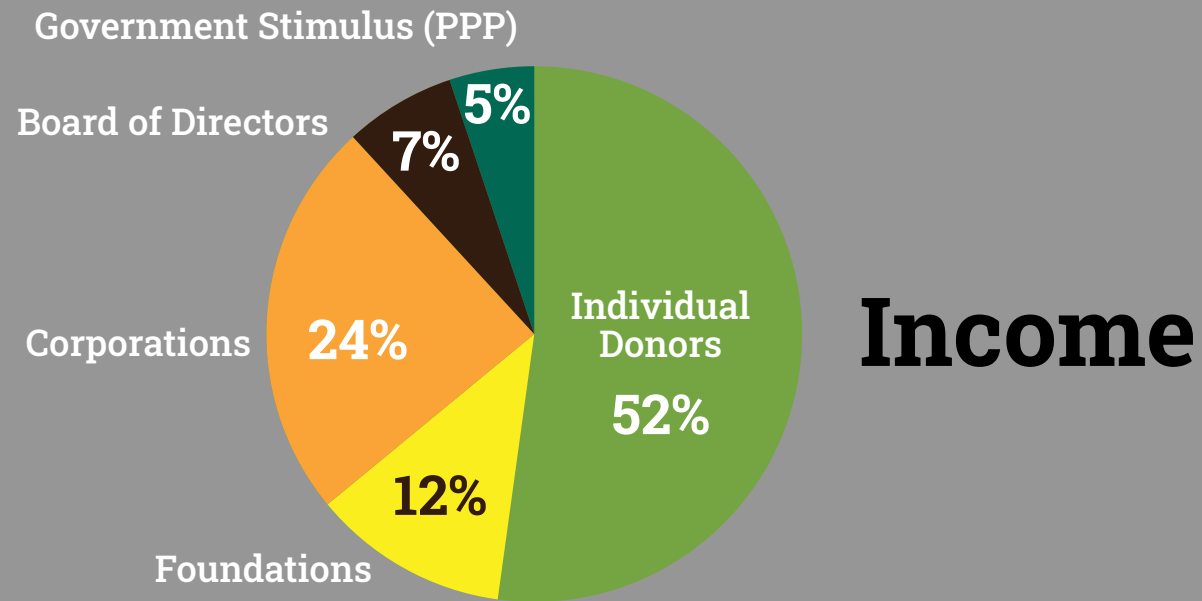
Expand of our reach by establishing and/or partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs) elsewhere in the world that share our approach to development. These partnerships allow us to support and document community-led achievements that inspire a broader movement toward development without dependency and further transform the international development landscape.

3

Leverage the networks of more individuals, companies, and foundations within the Roots network to help us increase our fundraising efforts and scale our efforts.

FY2021 FINANCIALS

Total Revenue: \$331,014



We led a 30% growth (increase in revenue) in 2021.

Our Top 2021 Corporate Sponsors



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



“We love Roots of Development’s approach to community development: ‘By the community’. As the famous saying goes, ‘give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime’. Roots of Development embodies this philosophy. Their approach to development feels more effective, but also more human and empathetic. By asking ‘How can I help you help yourself?’, rather than saying ‘Here is how I’m going to help you.’, Roots of Development helps build more resilient, sustainable, and accountable communities that can feel proud and accomplished. Over the years, we have appreciated the Roots team’s commitment to Haiti and La Gonave. Roots was there before everyone showed up for the earthquake and remains in Haiti years after everyone left. By focusing on strengthening local capacity, Roots will remain there for years to come through the people they have influenced.”

- Alejandra & Luc Castera, Founder of *businesscards.io*
and members of *Roots of Development’s Executive Funder’s Circle*

Thank you for your support.

We are forever grateful for the support of all those who contribute to Roots of Development. We would like to particularly recognize those that support our work at the highest levels. These are our *Benefactors* (one-time donors) and the members of our *Executive Funder’s Circle* (recurring donors), who bring great stability and sustainability to our work.

2021 Top Benefactors

Victorio and Diane Hoskins
Karl A. Racine and Family

The Sandler Family
Kathryn A. Zachem

2021 Executive Funder’s Circle

Jean Francois and Marie-Jose Bauer
Korey and Anouk Bissonnette
Rudy and Shawna Brioche
Tom and Sharon Callahan
Luc and Alejandra Castera
Aglae Charlot
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Ben and Rebecca Knowlton
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Sak Pollert
Ana Maria Saiz
Jessica Tava
Ernest Voyard and Tanya Axenson
Chris and Nicole Wells
Jenna and Michael Willits

To join Roots of Development’s Executive Funder’s Circle, visit: www.rootsofdevelopment.org.

Legacy Donors

We are honored by the legacy several 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.



Development without Dependency.

Tap or Click to Donate



Roots of Development's 13th Annual Event

Thursday, November 11, 2021

Every year, diverse and influential guests, business and political leaders, gather in Washington D.C., or virtually, to support Roots of Development. The annual event is our most important fundraiser of the year, helping us raise a significant portion of the funds we use to carry out our mission every year. During our 2021 event, we honored D.C.'s Attorney General Karl Racine and raised funds to purchase a piece of land for a future leadership center in Haiti.

Davis Polk



Davis Wright
Tremaine LLP

VENABLE LLP



"The record is clear. When you give a dollar to Roots of Development, that dollar is going to rotate around for years!"

"Thank you [Roots of Development] for recognizing that Haitians, who at the end of the day do need our support, must guide the way!"

- Karl A. Racine,
Attorney General of the District of Columbia
2021 Roots Annual Event Honoree





Development without Dependency

Roots of Development

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