



Montè Pou Chanjman



Roots of Development  
**2019**  
Annual Report



“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 | FY2019

ANNUAL REPORT

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# WHAT A YEAR.

To Our Friends and Supporters,

The situation in Haiti in 2019 was very difficult. There were back-to-back protests against the current government which shut down the streets of Port-au-Prince and made it very difficult to get around. Businesses were closed and many basic goods and services were unavailable or very expensive.

Residents of La Gonâve were greatly impacted because goods and services that were not available

on the mainland, became even less available on the island. When prices went up in Port-au-Prince, they became even higher on the island. That is why our approach to development - of using local resources and strengthening local leadership - is so important and so effective.

The social, political, and economic challenges of 2019 made it more difficult than usual for our local staff to travel back and forth from La Gonâve and to communicate with our partners on the island. Costs of everything went up and the risks associat-

ed with moving around Port-au-Prince or back and forth from the island dramatically increased. In spite of all these huge, ongoing challenges in Haiti, we had one of our most impactful years yet. We installed another set of solar street lamps on the island and helped La Gonâve open its first recycling (plastic collection) center. We began the process of helping the mayor of Anse-a-Galets develop a communal development plan for the commune. And in addition to that, we launched our largest leadership and capacity-building program yet - a multi-year project that involves supporting several exciting,

community-led development initiatives and the training of a group of community leaders and public officials that represent every communal section on the island.

Thank you for allowing us to have such an incredibly successful year. We are grateful and look forward to another amazing year powered by you.

Sincerely,

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



## In many parts of the world there are communities living in 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 left ill-equipped to strengthen the skills needed to lead and manage their own development, which jeopardizes the sustainability of these 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 and has worked almost exclusively in Haiti, on the island of La Gonâve.**

# WHERE WE WORK

For over a decade, Roots of Development has focused its efforts almost exclusively on La Gonâve, Haiti's largest island. In fact, La Gonâve is the largest of Hispaniola's satellite islands. It is located to the west-northwest of Port-au-Prince, in the Gulf of Gonâve, 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 Gonâve 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 2019

## Investing in the Capacity of Local Leaders

In 2019, we launched our largest leadership and capacity-building program yet – a multi-year project that involves the training of a group of young community leaders who we call our “Agents of Change” and supporting several exciting, community-led development initiatives across the island. These Agents of Change represent every communal section on the island and are responsible for bringing the leadership concepts back to their communities and sharing them with their colleagues (other community leaders).

The program aims to strengthen the leadership skills and organizational management capacity of local leaders and locally elected officials on the island of La Gonâve in order to help them have greater control over their development, improve quality of life on the island, and turn La Gonâve into a hub of community-driven development.

Our Agents of Change have already trained another 217 leaders from seven of the eleven communal sections that make up the island.



“When we are together it provides another aspect, it gives us strength, it gives us force.”

**Wendy Noël, Agent of Change**



# ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019

IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

## A Recycling Center for Plastics

With the help of a Haitian company, ECSSA (a partner of the international organization 4Ocean), the mayor of Anse-a-Galets, and residents of La Gonâve, we opened a plastics recycling center in April. Plastic trash is purchased from residents and then transported to Port-au-Prince for recycling. To date 2,162 pounds of plastic trash have been collected and removed from La Gonâve.



# Solar Street Lighting

In partnership once again with lighting designer and New School professor Chad Groshart, Roots worked with a group of community leaders on the island of La Gonâve to install another set of solar street lamps.

We invited three of the strongest and most committed community groups we work with to submit a proposal for installing solar lamps in their community/s. In doing so, the groups got a chance to practice the skills they had been developing in our workshops and trainings together: how to bring residents together to make community decisions, proposal and budget writing, and identifying and leveraging local resources.

The communal section of Petit Anse had the strongest proposal and was able to bring sustainable lighting to their community this year. It was a community affair that brought together both the theoretical and practical components of our work, of our community-driven, capacity-building approach to development.



# An Official Development Plan for the Commune

We partnered with the Pan American Development Foundation to support the mayor of Anse-a-Galets and various leaders from around the commune in writing the first-ever development plan for the commune.

The effort to develop the plan involved mobilizing the local population, helping them identify and map out resources that exist in the commune, researching the history of development on the island, and organizing the population's priorities into a single roadmap for all to focus on. With the development plan, it will be easier for island leaders to manage their own development and attract investment.



# Expanding our Roots with Rasin

Several years ago we started the process of incorporating (creating) a Haitian version of Roots of Development. We called it Rasin Developman. Rasin Developman is its own legal entity that shares the same philosophy for development and commitment to La Gonâve as Roots of Development - and is run entirely by a Haitian staff. We created Rasin to make Roots' work more local and more effective, and therefore more sustainable.

In 2019, we hired a Chief Operating Officer to lead the Rasin team. Her name is Faradhia Moise. With Ms. Moise's involvement and hard work, our impact on La Gonâve has increased significantly and allowed both organizations - Rasin and Roots - to grow stronger.



## SOME OF OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERS



**HARVARD  
Kennedy  
School**

With the support and guidance of Board Member Rudy Brioché, we teamed up with a graduate student from Harvard's Kennedy School, Miles Roman, to evaluate our work and learn more about community-driven development (CDD) practices around the world.

Mr. Roman took a deep dive into Roots of Development's approach and compared it to the efforts of other organizations doing CDD work in Haiti and elsewhere around the globe. He engaged with representatives from local and national governments, international organizations, and local community groups across La Gonâve and Port-au-Prince.

At its conclusion, Mr. Roman provided Roots with a final report that included an analysis of our work, a comparison to best practices around the world, and recommendations for making our organization stronger.

# MEETING OUR NEXT CHALLENGES

“I am really fighting with myself. I MUST change and improve my community with everything I’ve got.”

- Dunoizard Jean Louis, Agent of Change

Through our leadership and local capacity-building workshops, we plan on working with our **Agents of Change** to expand and scale the program.

## This will include:

- Continued local trainings by the Agents of Change in their own communities (sharing the concepts)
- Teaching project management skills
- A more comprehensive focus on gender equality (women’s leadership and inclusion)
- Introducing additional marginalized portions of society into the program (i.e. the disabled and others)
- Continued support for locally elected officials

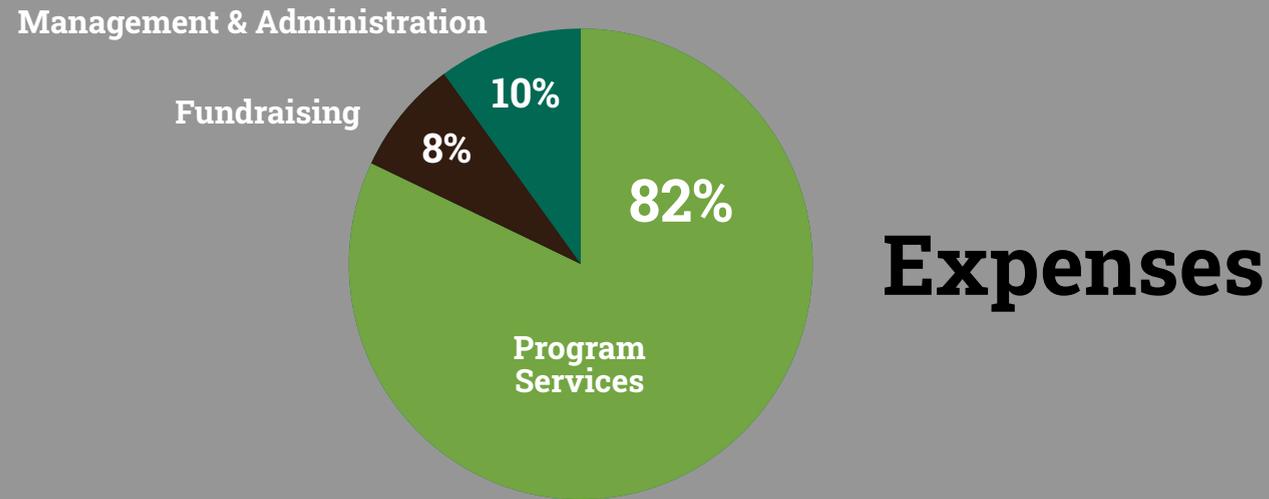
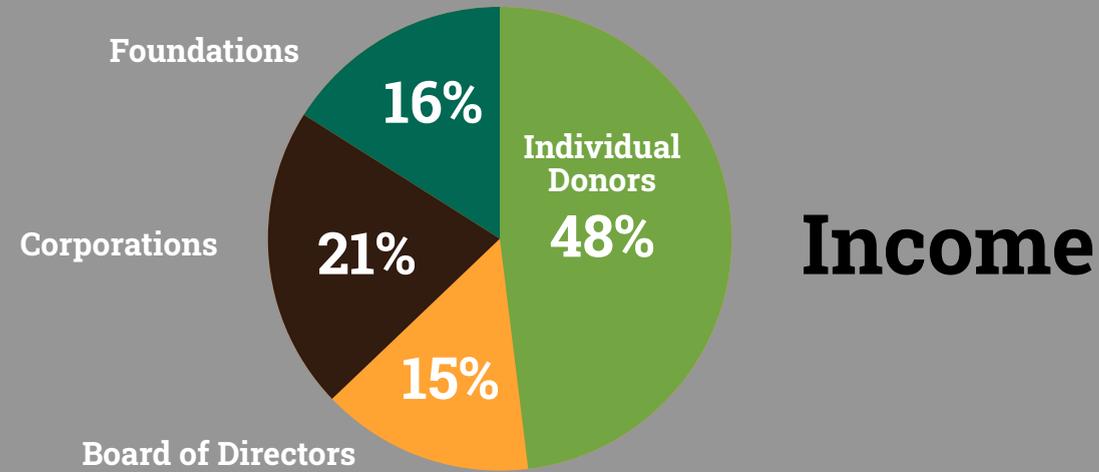
We will also be supporting more community led projects such as a road-paving project in Titans and the rehabilitation of a rainwater collection system in Nan Riske.

To learn more about and support these projects, visit:

[www.mightycause.com/story/Roots2019](http://www.mightycause.com/story/Roots2019)

# FY2019 FINANCIALS

Donations increased by 29% in 2019.



## Total Budget: \$247,319



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

We are committed to carrying out every project with accountability and transparency that includes obtaining the proper authorization and legal documentation from the local authorities where we work.



“When we became aware of the roots of despair in Haiti we looked for a way to help the Haitian people. On discovering Chad W. Bissonnette’s work on La Gonâve we found a caring and highly effective way to enable rural communities to lift themselves out of poverty and on to a path of sustainability. The organization Roots of Development truly propounds and exemplifies a philosophy of Development without Dependency. Roots is a development model for Haiti and impoverished communities around the world.✕

**James Martin & Doris Gordon,**  
Washington, D.C.

## CURRENT AND FORMER SPONSORS

The Debley Foundation

SIPCO

 Seven Hills  
Global Outreach

 FONDATION SOGEBANK

THE NEW SCHOOL

WHOLE FOODS MARKET

 MAISON HENRI DESCHAMPS

“I really, really have no words to thank all of you formally. My fellow countrymen, never forget that we are now engaged! We are committed to one another. And remember the impact that our efforts can have on the development of our communities and our country.✕

Evingsts ✕ Richard ✕ Jean-Francois, volunteer with Rasin Devlopman



## MEET OUR EXECUTIVE TEAM

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

Chad W. Bissonnette began traveling to Haiti in 2005 and co-founded Roots of Development in 2007. He currently serves as its Executive Director and is responsible for overseeing the organization's fundraising activities, communications, and ensuring that the organization maintains its community-led approach to development. Mr. Bissonnette 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. He currently lives in Washington D.C.

## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Jessica Desvarieux



Christopher Wells  
(Chairperson)



Rudolphe Brioché



Ernest Voyard



Magalie Pradel



Jacopo Namari

“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



## THE STAFF OF RASIN DEVLOPMAN

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, Evings (“Richard”) Jean-Francois, and Faradhia Moise (Rasin’s Chief Operating Officer).

“I want the world to recognize the potential in our community, and I want our young people to recognize the potential in themselves. ☒

-Louino Robillard, Program Facilitator with Rasin Devlopman.

**Merci. Mèsi.**  
**Thank you for**  
**your support!**

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**Development**  
**without**  
**Dependency**