

ROOTS OF DEVELOPMENT

# JULY 2022

MID-YEAR REPORT



**Development  
without  
Dependency**

Photo: Carline Tranchant, former mayoral candidate  
and Haitian community leader

## THE Problem

**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.

WE PRACTICE

***DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DEPENDENCY***®



## PARTNER UPDATE

# Rasin Devlopman's Work in Haiti



"We are proud of helping to strengthen the foundations of community-led development on La Gonave. **But community-led does not mean community-only.** La Gonave has been marginalized and deprived of needed resources for years – like my own community of Cite Soleil, they are building their futures with what they have. **But they deserve so much more.** This is why Rasin will continue to accompany the people of La Gonave in the spirit of solidarity and sustainability, and we are inviting you to accompany us so we can continue to carry out this work."

- Louino Robillard, Program Director of Rasin Devlopman

## Roots' Accomplishments in Haiti:

LIVES IMPACTED

100k+

GRANTS PROVIDED

\$550k+

HOURS OF TRAININGS

730+

COMMUNITY-LED PROJECTS

70+

## IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, RASIN HAS COMPLETED OR SUPPORTED...

**28 hours of Agents of Change trainings**, reaching 47 people on topics like social entrepreneurship, social change, and community health.

**11 Pase Mayet knowledge transfer workshops**, conducted by the Agents of Change in their communities, reaching 186 people on topics like Development without Dependency, social entrepreneurship, leadership, and more.

**7 Rezo Fanm Djanm workshops**, reaching 176 women about their rights, role in development, and more.

**2 three-month motorcycle training courses, certifying 29 women**, increasing the women's access to transportation and boosting their self-confidence, independence, and access to economic opportunity.

**9 community development projects**, which will impact 18,000 people in total. Projects include: a community reservoir, a soft drink depot, a treated water tank, a gas distribution depot, a shipping wharf, a vegetable garden, solar street lamps. These projects were initiated by local elected officials, Agents of Change, and community organizations.



## RASIN STAFF SPOTLIGHT

# Louino Robillard



**Louino "Robi" Robillard**, program director of Rasin Devlopman, was born in St. Raphael, a rural community in the north of Haiti, but was raised on the edge of Port-au-Prince in a highly urban and densely populated area called Cite Soleil. Cite Soleil is heavily affected by gang and political violence.

"I had to grow up learning to navigate this violence without becoming a part of it, and how to manage the effects of this violence and state neglect in my everyday life. However, Cite Soleil also taught me that Haitians are innovative and resilient - despite the daily shadow of violence and the lack of state services, my community found ways to thrive [...] **My early life taught me that, no matter the challenges, Haitians will always work to find a way to build a life, build community, and build their futures.**"

Robi's primary and secondary education was often interrupted by his family's financial needs, teacher strikes (which he supported through a student organization), and gang violence. Despite this, he earned an associate's degree in Public Administration and a master's in Community Change and Peacebuilding at Future Generations University, completing a thesis on the application of traditional Haitian practice of *konbit* (cooperative communal work) to address modern social problems.

Robi's favorite part of his work with Rasin Devlopman (and Roots) is how the organizations are shifting the power to communities and creating a model for other organizations to follow. "Many international organizations talk about 'working themselves out of a job' or 'shifting the power,' but so few actually put this into practice. [...] **I believe if Roots and Rasin continue on this path, we will be able to build a model for the rest of the country to learn from and, hopefully, follow.**"

**“** *My early life taught me that, no matter the challenges, Haitians will always work to find a way to build a life, build community, and build their futures.* **”**



## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

# Community Leadership & Development Center

We are helping our Haitian partner, Rasin Devlopman, build a Community Leadership & Development Center. The center and the .3 acre of land it sits on will be a permanent resource for La Gonave. It will be owned by our local partner and used by communities and their leaders for years to come as a teaching, meeting, and project implementation space, a symbol of local leadership and change for the island. The project is also a key step in achieving our goal of making La Gonave a hub of successful, community-led development and an example for the world.



## PROJECT TIMELINE

**November 4, 2021**

With your support, we helped our partner organization, Rasin Devlopman, make a deposit on a piece of land for the future center.

**January 25, 2022**

Roots and Rasin begin reviewing proposals from four Haitian architectural firms.

**April 12, 2022**

Members of Moun Studio fly from mainland Haiti to La Gonave to spend two days with the team and visit the site of the future leadership center for the first time.

**July 8, 2022**

Moun studio presents an initial design for the center to Roots and Rasin staff

**December 31, 2021**

Enough money was raised to complete the purchase of the land.

**March 2, 2022**

The architecture firm Moun Studio, led by architect Daniel Élie, is selected to design the community leadership and development center.

**May 8, 2022**

A survey team, accompanied by Rasin staff, travels to the site to formally survey the land.

The Community Leadership & Development Center is Roots' biggest and most ambitious project to date, which will give the people of La Gonave a physical space dedicated to meeting and developing their island.

To donate in support of this project, visit [rootsofdevelopment.org/donate](https://rootsofdevelopment.org/donate)



## INTERNAL UPDATE

# Expanding Roots of Development

## EXPANDING THE STAFF



**Charlie Estes** is our new Communications and Strategic Development Manager. Charlie

is getting her master's in Sustainable International Development from Brandeis University. She has extensive experience in nonprofit management and is passionate about community-led development. She has taken over external communications, including social media and e-newsletters. She is also helping lead the push for the expansion and new direction of the organization.

## EXPANDING THE BOARD



**Luc Castera** is a software engineer, entrepreneur, and business leader who has

founded multiple successful companies, including [job509.com](http://job509.com), [htmlsig.com](http://htmlsig.com), [businesscards.io](http://businesscards.io), and [octopi.co](http://octopi.co). He was born and raised in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, and has degrees in electrical engineering from the University of Virginia and Georgia Institute of Technology. Currently, he is serving as Engineering Manager at [QuickNode](http://QuickNode), a developer platform for blockchain-powered applications. We are so thrilled to have this prominent Haitian American joining our board!



## INTERNAL UPDATE

# Expanding Roots of Development



## EXPANDING OUR NETWORK

Now that Rasin Devlopman is becoming more independent, Roots is looking beyond Haiti for more examples of organizations that are practicing community-led development on the ground. So far, we have...

- Consulted with 7 like-minded organizations about our plans
- Investigated 50+ organizations for mission and vision compatibility
- Created a list of 16+ organizations for us to form initial connections

We are excited about what these new additions to the staff, board, and network mean for Roots' future. With these resources at our disposal, we are beginning to make real moves toward planning and executing a strategy that will allow us to identify and highlight community-led development efforts around the world and inspire a broader movement toward Development without Dependency.





# Development without Dependency

## STAY CONNECTED

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