



Solidarity News Notes...

News from the Rich in Mercy Institute – Summer 2024

Kenyan Police Leave Haitians Frustrated at Lack of Action and Plan to Take on Gangs

After months of delay a contingent of 400 Kenyan police officers arrived in Haiti. The Kenyans are part of a multinational force tasked by the UN security council to restore peace and the rule of law so that a new national government can be elected. At maximum strength the force will consist of some 2500 police and military.

Well aware of a long history of failed foreign military interventions in Haiti, many Haitians express scepticism regarding the lack of action and a plan to take on then gangs. Haiti is reaching a breaking point. Some 600,000 people have migrated from gang controlled metropolitan Port au Prince to rural communities. More than 5 million face severe food insecurity and 1.6 million are facing starvation.



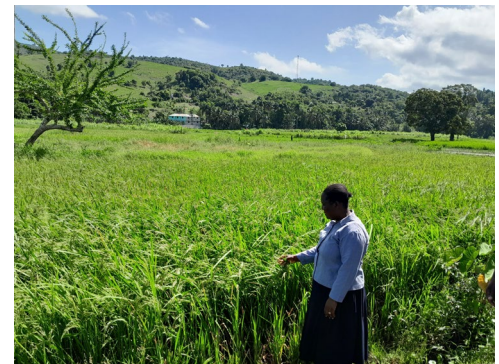
Sisters of St. Antoine Launch Bold, Long-Term Food Security Initiative in Rural Fondwa



In light of migration to rural Fondwa and continuing increases in food prices combined with growing food shortages, the **Sisters of St. Antoine of Fondwa**, have launched a bold initiative to increase food security in the region. With financial support from **Rich in Mercy**, the sisters are developing 12 acres of land to provide food for 60+ children at the **Fatima House Orphanage**, and more than 200 preschool students in two locations, while providing food for themselves and for the many vulnerable families who repeatedly reach out for help. Already the land is producing modest amounts of bananas, manioc, lamb veritab, congo beans and corn. A separate plot is being developed to produce rice which is a staple of the Haitian diet.

In addition to food production, the **Food Security Initiative** will provide jobs for under-employed and landless farm workers and offer internships to agronomy students from the **University of Fondwa**. Several wells will provide clean water for irrigation and additional safe drinking water in the region. The entire enterprise, in addition to increasing food security in the region, will greatly boost and potentially transform the local economy.

The **Sisters of St. Antoine of Fondwa** are all Haitian women of the Catholic community founded in 1994 with the purpose of serving the rural poor of Haiti. Although numbering only 20 some members, the sisters minister in five locations and are a powerful engine to motivate women to assume responsibilities in the community and launch small businesses such as coffee production, animal husbandry, and food processing. They operate the **Fatima House Orphanage**, the **St. Antoine Elementary and Secondary schools**, a vocational training school, and two preschools in the remote, rural communities of **Kafelompren** and **Gotiron**. They operate a guest house for volunteers and visitors and a clinic that serves the region.



The sisters share responsibility for managing the many ministries of the community under the supervision of community superior **Sr. Claudette Prevot**, Sr. Claudette holds a degree in business management from St. Marys College in Leavenworth, KS.

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Environmental Center Expands to Meet Growing Interest and Satisfy Increased Demand

The **Operation Hummingbird Environmental Center** located in rural Dubre was launched to explore and develop low-input, innovative strategies to regenerate soil health, and increase food production and to share these



techniques and strategies as widely in Haiti as possible. In the beginning techniques such as “worm composting”, “planting pits”, “companion planting” and “green manures” were regarded with scepticism and often ridiculed by local farmers steeped in traditional modes of farming in Haiti.

Over time, however, the productivity results spoke for themselves. Today the center draws attention from many regions across Haiti and demand for training keeps growing. The nearby **Universite de Notre Dame d’Haiti** and the **Universite Publique du Nord** regularly send agronomy student interns to learn first-hand the innovative strategies developed by center founder **Lamoth Lormier**. More distant universities including **School of Agronomy in Port de Paix** and the

Universite Episcopale des Gonaives have entered into agreements for similar internship programs, requiring the center to provide short term overnight accommodations for a growing number of students and volunteers. **Rich in Mercy**, is funding the expansion of the physical structure to provide housing for visitors, volunteers, and student interns.

House Repairs and Reconstructions Target Highly Vulnerable Villagers in Ducis



In July 2021 a series of earthquakes devastated the southern peninsula of Haiti including the village of Ducis. **Rich in Mercy** and the **Sisters of Charity (NJ)** collaborated to repair and rebuild houses for a targeted population of women and single mothers. Additional funding has made possible the extension of this effort to meet the needs of several additional, vulnerable persons and families.

Shown in the “before” and “after” photos is the home of Mr.Charlot Charles, whose family lived in a tent since 2021. Although

employed as a teacher, his salary was inadequate to fund the restoration of his home.

A similar reconstructions were undertaken for Mme.Yeyen, a 90+ year old widow who supports herself selling “fritay” (fritters and other fried foods).



Agritultural Training Center Offers Youth Opporunities in Datcha Village, Togo (Africa)



In Togo (W. Africa) youth unemployment poses a serious threat to social cohesion. **Rich in Mercy** provided fiscal sponsorship, **Kimberly Baker, PhD** raised the necessary funds, and **Fr. Odilon Kofi, SMA** supplied the vision and financial accountability for launching a **Farming Resource Training Center** in the community of Amoussoukopé, that includes Datcha Village.

The center marks the culmination of several years of successful collaboration and is creating self-employment opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness for disadvantaged youth – particularly young women – allowing them to benefit from a government strategic plan to strengthen the agricultural sector.

The completed center includes space for student housing, classrooms, a truck and additional equipment as well as construction of a sheep pen, a pig pen, and a chicken coop which houses 1000 laying hens. Solar panels, breeding materials, and irrigation materials enable cutting edge agricultural training for cohorts of 25-50 students.