



# Solidarity News Notes...

News from the Rich in Mercy Institute – Winter 2024

## Gang Control Expands as Multinational Security Mission Fails to Restore Order

A multinational force, led by police from Kenya and tasked by the UN security council to restore peace and the rule of law in Haiti has thus far proven ineffective against powerful gangs that control more than 80% of Haiti's capital of Port au Prince. Since the first contingent of Kenyans arrived in June, gangs have seized control of Mariani, Gressier, Archaie, Gantier, and Pon Sonde – all towns at increasing distances from the capital.

A new transition government took charge in March under pressure from the international community to hold elections in 2026. Well aware of a long history of failed foreign interventions and election interference in Haiti, most Haitians are sceptical about the possibility of any short-term resolution to the current chaos and insecurity.



## “First Fruits” of a Bold, Food Security Initiative Begin Offsetting Hunger in Rural Fondwa



Continuing gang violence in Port au Prince has caused the internal displacement of more than 700,000 persons to rural communities in Haiti. Disruption of food supply chains and the resulting increase in food prices (56% over the last year), have left more than 1.5 million people chronically hungry and at risk of starvation.

Migration of displaced persons to rural Fondwa motivated the **Sisters of St. Antoine** to launch a **Food Security Initiative**, a bold initiative, supported by **Rich in Mercy**, that is developing 12 acres of farmland and includes wells for irrigation, the processing of grains and use of separate site suitable for rice production. 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.

**University of Fondwa.** The entire enterprise, in addition to increasing food security in the region, will greatly boost and potentially transform the local economy.

The “first fruits” of this long-term initiative are being seen with plentiful harvests of, rice, plantain bananas, sweet potatoes, congo beans, and corn. The food produced has been sufficient to provide one meal a day for more than 60 children in the **Fatima House Orphanage**, the sisters themselves, and vulnerable families who depend on the sisters for food support. Over time the farm is expected to produce enough food to supply three meals a day for these beneficiaries as well as meals for 200 preschool children under the sisters’ care in Kafelompren and Gotiron.



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.

RICH IN MERCY is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit corporation with tax ID #.47-1591567

All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

The official registration and financial information of Partners in Progress may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll-free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

## Agro-Ecology Center Expands Educational Outreach & Receives University Award



The **Operation Hummingbird** agro-ecology and environmental education center develops low-input, innovative strategies for regenerating soil health, resisting drought and floods, and increasing food production. It shares these techniques as widely as possible. In the beginning “worm composting”, “planting pits”, “companion planting” and “green manures” were all regarded with great scepticism. Today, the center director, **Lamothe Lormier**, is frequently invited by university agriculture professors to train student interns in the successful methods he has developed. Most recently representatives of the **Episcopal Church** in the city of Cap Haitian (right) have requested a week long training for members eager to learn from his experience and the successful experiments of the center.



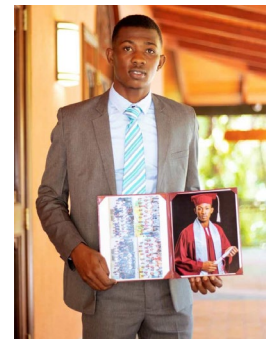
In August the faculties of **Agricultural Sciences** and the **School of Public Health, Tropical Medicine, and Social Work** of the **Public University of the North** in Cap Haitian (UNPDN) participated in seminar on the management and preservation of water resources, funded in part by **Rich in Mercy**. At the conclusion of the seminar, **Lormier** was given a university award (left) by the deans of the the **School of Agronomy** and the **School of Public Health**, in recognition of his long-term commitment and ground-breaking contributions to sustainable agriculture and natural resource preservation.

## Haitian Youth “Defy the Odds” and Inspire Hope by Completing Advanced Studies



Less than 1 percent of Haitian youth receive post-secondary education at the university or professional school level and households with vocational school graduates are about 7%. Gang activity in Port au Prince has further reduced these percentages.

**Staline Musseau** (far left), from the rural community of Torbek, has defied the odds represented by these statistics by receiving a diploma in international law from the **University of Grenoble** (France). Similarly, **Fernando Louisius** (right) from the Solino neighborhood of Port au Prince, has defied the odds by receiving a technical diploma in industrial machine maintenance from the **Collège Canado-Haïtien** in Port au Prince.



Both students received **Rich in Mercy** scholarships based on merit and need to complete their advanced studies.

## Summer Enrichment Program Targets Above Average and Highly Motivated Students

The 2023-2024 academic year was marked by repeated disruptions and school closures due to gang violence and kidnappings. Even the most motivated students are at risk of falling behind in their education.



With **Rich in Mercy** funding, **Fr. Jean Patrick Eugene, C.S.Sp.**, organized summer enrichment programs in urban Port au Prince and rural Ducis aimed at high-achieving and highly motivated students – youth whose talent and commitment offer hope for Haiti’s future. The programs focused on logical reasoning, critical thinking, oral and written communication in French and intensive work in English expression. Students enjoyed a daily light breakfast and a full mid-day meal.

Teachers recruited for the program acted as facilitators and guides to encourage “peer to peer” learning among students and to foster self-confidence and develop leadership skills. Every student received a backpack and was awarded a certificate, while top students were awarded laptop computers.