

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

HAITI REFORESTATION HAITI REFORESTATION

INSIDE HAITI: CRISIS AND A SPARK OF HOPE

BILL HATHAWAY, BOARD CHAIR

As we reflect on 2023 we keep checking ourselves. How is it that amidst headliner floods, conflict, violence, and inflation, our precious effort at reforestation program actually hit milestones?

- ❖ **The Comprehensive Development Project, CODEP, still stands!** It is one of three remaining NGOs in Leogane! (Post-2010 earthquake there were dozens!)
- ❖ **Young people stepped into leadership!** CODEP has done the unusual and is handing the reins over to young people. See the stories below about Benou, Kingzer, and Faude.
- ❖ **Financial support returned to levels not seen since 2016!** We raised \$242,804 against a goal of \$250,000. This also allows for a small reserve for emergencies, of which there can be many.
- ❖ **HRP's network holds firm!** Despite the inability for groups to visit Haiti, experience the work, and build relationships, we are thriving.

Oh, and CODEP planted 373,318 seedlings. Precise numbers. Actual effort. Astonishing!

As Board Chair, I have appreciated the broadening of our Board membership beyond people from the Eastern seaboard to include members in Texas and California. Much can happen when we have participation across the country.

In addition, we forced ourselves through that horror of horrors: changing out our online donor and communications system. Working now with the Bloomerang program, we can see, assess, and share our data and story much more easily. One example is this second Annual Report. It is a pleasure - and now an easier task -- to share our news with all of you.

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MICHAEL ANELLO



2023 was tough to live through. Haiti has effectively been locked down in the face of gang violence and political upheaval. I, myself, have had real challenges getting in and out to the States, as it is dangerous traveling between Leogane and the Port au Prince airport. Food is expensive and scarce. I literally brought back 20 pounds of pasta with me from the US last month so that I would have enough on the kitchen shelf. Our presence in Leogane is actually extraordinary. After the earthquake of 2010, there were dozens and dozens of Americans in the town. Now, I'm the only remaining white person here in Leogane.

Nevertheless, we have a lot to report. In the grand scheme of things, CODEP is doing something that often taxes organizations: managing succession. In our case, it is only making things better as the new generation of leaders begins to take the reins.

The secret has been priming the pump. The reforestation mentorship program that we began over two years ago has helped us identify young talent and begin their training. As older Animators have retired or passed, it has been such a boost to have younger energy around, and everyone has been delighted to encourage the proteges along.

Many of you have followed Barbarah Cenart, one of the stars of that first class. She is acing it with high honors in her first year in agronomy at the University of Fondwa. Another, Faude Paraison, has joined CODEP as a young Animator, and is featured below. Two more current mentorship young people (also stars) are interested in the same program at Fondwa starting later in 2024. To continue the pipeline of young talent, we accepted 16 young people from Declo's neighboring communities to be the next mentorship class.

We have also hired two additional young people (also featured below) with particular skills that have meshed with two important organizational priorities:

- ❖ In 2023 we laid the groundwork to properly inventory the trees with an eye to future support avenues through carbon offsets. Kingzer Cenart who has a technology degree will be the point man for shaping the system to count and assess the tree population.
- ❖ My own time in Haiti is necessarily shifting. I need to split my time with more focus on being in the US. And, our long term goal has always been for CODEP to be Haitian led. Thus, we have brought Benou on board. He is shouldering the important work of our mentoring program.

Despite the rough times and the rough edges, CODEP is a model organization: solid local leadership, steady funding, long term sustainability, proven techniques, and, of course, the trees.

A TRUCK STORY

For years, many of us have followed the saga of The Truck. It has now definitely seen better days and has been running up costs. Mercifully, we "retired" it in December, and Michael has had to scramble for safe transportation. Motos don't really cut it.

The First Presbyterian Church of Annapolis, Maryland offered a \$17,500 challenge grant to fund a new truck. Board member David Fishman stepped up to the mat, ran a quiet campaign in his California locale, and raised another \$14,000. We should all thank both First Pres and David for both raising the money so handily AND preventing a flood of pleading emails for help.

We were determined this time to buy a local vehicle in Port-au-Prince rather than ship in one from the US with all the extra trappings. As it happened, there was too much violence in the streets to negotiate with the PAP dealership so Michael will purchase a used vehicle in Leogane.

COMMUNICATION CHANGES

BILL PIATT, BOARD MEMBER

The Haiti Reforestation Partnership (HRP) is a largely virtual organization in the US that is coping with the barriers -- physical and technical -- to reach our CODEP partners in Haiti. We rely heavily on systems to connect us and track our information and records.

You can imagine the challenges, therefore, when we were forced this year to migrate to a new Donor Management platform following the corporate cessation of support from our previous provider. It was worth it, however. We are thrilled with the capabilities and ease of use the new "Bloomerang" platform provides us.

A better technical interface will allow you as supporters to have closer contact and connection with the 750 Haitian families (3,000 people) who make up CODEP. That connection is also extremely important in the reverse. As Haiti has become more isolated and stressed this last year, the more valuable it is for CODEP to know about its circle of support.

NEW LEADERS POINT TO THE FUTURE

➔ **Meet FAUDE PARAISSON, a Ball of Energy.** A graduate of the CODEP secondary school, Faude has the energy of five. He was part of the first CODEP mentorship class but doesn't let grass grow under his feet. He was so inspired by what he was learning that he began to tell his neighbors. One thing led to another and, sure enough, he convinced them to organize and petition CODEP to start a Zone for planting.



Each Animator on the CODEP team has a Zone for which they are responsible. Faude's organizing effort naturally led to his appointment as the newest and youngest Animator responsible for the new Zone. You can imagine how delighted the existing leadership is with their new member.

Thus, Faude is now developing a new tract of land "from scratch." He's built a team of 26 people working hard to create nurseries, construct composting tanks, organize people to stuff bags, plant seeds, care for new sprouts and eventually transplant seedlings around the Zone. They are birthing a forest! Go Faude!

➔ **Meet KINGZER WISTERELEY CERANT, a Shy Brilliant Child of CODEP.**

In late 2023 when the Board approved the new position of Forest Inventory Specialist, Michael already had a candidate in mind. He had known Kingzer Wisterley Cerant for a dozen years and had watched him mature into a quiet and thoughtful young man. Kingzer was spot on for the position because of his technical information skills from his college degree at Fondwa University.

The offer was made and Kingzer was delighted to accept. One small problem. Kingzer was in PAP doing a security job because jobs in his major weren't forthcoming in the midst of the current political upheaval. How to get him from PAP back to Leogane?



It took over a month to figure it out. Michael was delayed in returning to Haiti from his winter trip to the States. Holding a ticket into PAP Airport, he was finally able to use it. From PAP he organized a small plane to fly himself *and Kingzer* over the mountains to Jacmel and drive to Leogane from there.

Kingzer had never been in an airplane before, much less a "puddle-jumper." But, he was game. Let's just say it was a bumpy flight. But, they made it. Now Kingzer can settle into improving our data systems and the process for documenting plantings and tree growth and survival. Our work with Duke and NASA in 2022 has helped us shape and improve our methods. But, they will be turbocharged with a full time, skilled, and committed person. Welcome, Kingzer!

➔ **Meet BENOUE SEJOUR, Our Very Own Johnny Appleseed.** Benou is an agronomy graduate of the University of Fondwa. Michael spotted him in no small part because he is a dedicated environmentalist -- his Facebook page brimming with green links and articles!



We have assigned Benou the mentorship program. He is working with Guito, an Animator who has also supported Michael with the program. Bringing Benou into the mix solves so many problems as Michael, who had pioneered and largely taught the program, needs to be in the States more. We needed to be sure the program continues to soar. It's made such a difference already.

Benou is also going to document the curriculum of the course so that it settles into a set program of skills and experiences. Such effort sends the additional message that we are determined to make the program rigorous and ongoing. Keep it happening, Benou!

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

The year was strong in terms of the financial status. Here are the numbers:

2023 INCOME: Budget \$250,000 Actual: \$242,804

- 65% of income was from individuals; 35%, from congregations.
- This included \$31,625 designated for a new vehicle in Haiti.

2023 EXPENSES: Budget \$252,600 Actual \$208,345

- Actual expenses break down: 66% grants to CODEP; 23% for Executive Director (administration, planning, program development); 11% administrative (accountant, payroll taxes, web/information technology, etc.) Expenses for travel, administration and currency exchange were less than anticipated; the surplus allows us to hold a reserve for emergencies.



COLLEAGUES ON THE GROUND: 790 workers, 45 chef equips (and nurseries), 13 Animators

DOCUMENTING TREES

HUNTER BOWMAN, ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER

In February, HRP will begin the systematic inventory of its planting efforts over the past decades. As featured above, HRP has retained Kingzer Wisterley Cerant, a data entry specialist by training, to spearhead our data collection efforts.

Kingzer will begin by recording the geographic footprint of recent plantings. He will sample these areas by collecting individual tree data at randomly generated points. This information will be used to inform future planting operations.

When he completes the sampling of recent plantings, Kingzer will begin to collect data on older plantings, measuring tree density and size on randomly generated points across the CODEP landscape. The collection of this information will be invaluable to the long-term management and survival of the forests we have planted. This long-awaited project has been delayed by the political situation in Haiti, but will proceed into the foreseeable future. We look forward to sharing our learnings as Kingzer begins to transmit the data.

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VISION + MISSION STATEMENTS

VISION: A sustainable CODEP organization contributing to the reforestation of Haiti.

MISSION: Providing resources, education, and expertise in support of reforestation and agroforestry in Haiti with local community partners.