



FACES *of* AITI



COMMEMORATING THE
TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI

WITH A FOREWORD BY CÉCILE ACCILIE

THE FACES OF HAITI:
RESOLUTE IN REFORM, RESISTANCE,
AND RECOVERY

A REPORT FROM THE
HAITI RESEARCH INITIATIVE

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The Capitol, Port-au-Prince, July 2011

FOREWORD

Sunday January 12, 2020 marks the 10th anniversary of the earthquake in Haiti. Like many other people, particularly Haitians and Haitian-Americans, I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing when I heard the news of the earthquake. I remember the anxiety and fear I felt knowing my parents, aunts and countless other family and friends were in Haiti at that time. Many Haitians who live outside of Haiti generally travel there during that period because January 1st, an important date in Haitian history, commemorates Haiti's independence in 1804.

The earthquake is one of the darkest periods in Haitian history. It is estimated that over 300,000 people were killed, but we do not know for sure. Because of this large number, most people were buried in mass graves. This in and of itself is devastating because burial rituals are important. Remembering the dead and saying goodbye can be helpful and cathartic for the survivors.

Today, a decade later, we need to remember not only those who lost their lives but the survivors whose physical, emotional, psychological and mental hardships are part of their living memory. But they continue to face every day with courage, strength, determination and support from their communities. It is communities like these whether locally or in the diaspora that sustain Haiti. *Anpil men chay pa lou*. [With many hands the load is lighter] *Vwazinaj se fanmi* [Neighbors are family] as the proverbs say.

People have survived not because of the government's support but in spite of it. We must remember the earthquake as a time when Haitians first and foremost reached out heroically to help one another before outsiders arrived. After the earthquake communities worldwide paid attention to Haiti - for a while. But sadly, too many people quickly forgot and moved on to other humanitarian disasters, ignoring what became longstanding humanitarian disasters for Haiti itself. A decade later, women and children live in constant danger of violence, the displacement of people is in the millions, and Haiti continues to suffer the devastating effects of its brain drain. The situation is made more visible by current local and foreign exploitation that follow centuries of colonial and neo-colonial rule, decades of oppressive regimes, and vulnerable climate change. An elite class filled with greed are the parasites sucking the blood of the masses.

Many people feel that Haitians are in a continuous state of earthquake-like conditions brought on by forms of corruption, lack of sustainability, and political and economic instability. As we remember the earthquake, let us also acknowledge that while we may not have control over the earth's shifting crust or volcanic/magmatic activity, we do have control of our efforts to create infrastructures that better sustain buildings and help people. We know, too, a weak government that refuses to enforce building codes and allows the most powerful to prey on the most economically vulnerable will invite earthquakes in various forms.

The acapella group "Sweet Honey and the Rock" issues a challenge in their well-known song "Are My Hands Clean?" We all have to ask ourselves that question and think about how to make them clean. "There's enough for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed," Gandhi reminds us.

In memory of the 300,000 plus who lost their lives that fateful day, may we *all* continue to actively, respectfully, mindfully, and consciously work to create sustainable societies in our communities and throughout the world in an effort to avoid all earthquakes, whether they are nature or human made.

Anpil men chay pa lou!

[With many hands the load is lighter]

Cécile Accilien,
Director, Institute of Haitian Studies
University of Kansas
January 21, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

There are presently more than 9.5 million people in Haiti, a country roughly the size of Maryland. Almost 3 million of them are concentrated in Port-au-Prince,¹ the capital and largest of the country's ten cities. Nineteen months after the worst natural disaster in more than 200 years hit the island, time seems to have stood still for the country and its people. Recovery is far from complete; in fact, it has hardly begun. Indeed, this was the first contradiction that confronted our KU team that traveled to Haiti July 20-29, 2011. We saw little evidence of the \$500 million raised by the American Red Cross, the 1.4 billion donated by the American people or the 11 billion pledged by other countries and corporations around the world.² Haiti is indeed a "disaster of good intentions," as *Rolling Stone* calls it, inviting more questions about ethics, about exploitation, about accountability, about the real meaning of humanitarian aid than about almost anything else. We knew—all of us—that the Haitian people deserve so much better, but what we learned during our journey would not allow us to wallow in sympathy for them. Instead, we learned lessons about the human capacity to survive, to find joy, to love and care for one another, to know and create beauty, to express a sense of dignity and self worth—none of which is dependent on outsiders.

It was not the earthquake alone that generated our interest in a visit to Haiti. KU has been home for the Institute for Haitian Studies since 1992, when it was founded by Bryant Freeman, currently an emeritus professor of French and Italian. While some of our team were more aware of the KU-Haiti connection than others, we were all interested to understand how Haiti had fallen off the media's radar screen, why so little progress was being made in the recovery effort, and, frankly, whether this was going to be a replay of Katrina. However, we are resourceful research scholars and educators, and we don't take things for granted. Fortunately for us, we still had a direct connection to Haiti. Kiran Jayaram, who learned to speak Haitian Creole (Kreyòl) in classes he had from Dr. Freeman, has been a regular visitor to the country for the last fourteen years, during which time he has developed near-expert language skills, which have facilitated the completion of his soon-to-be awarded Ph.D. in applied anthropology focusing on Haitian migrants to the Dominican Republic. KU's **Ermal Garinger Academic Resource Center (EGARC)** had already created a web presence that for "KU Haitian

Creole Resources" [www2.ku.edu/~haitiancreole]. KU could point to a 2007 major exhibit of Haitian art at the Spencer Museum of art and a conference focused on Haitian culture sponsored by various centers and departments around KU. Therefore, when a representative from the International Center for Community and Human Development, an Atlanta-based group, sought our help in thinking through a project in education for Haiti, one that could attract funding, a visit to Haiti became a goal. How else could we assess a current situation we knew far too little about and get a handle on the kinds of research initiatives that were currently in place from other institutions, foundations, and organizations?

Our nine-day visit to Haiti then was the result of a series of inquiries, which simultaneously evoked the language of KU's strategic initiatives campaign. We at KU were all being challenged to consider "the highest priorities for investment in research for the next five years" summed up as follows:

- *Sustaining the Planet, Powering the World*
- *Promoting Well-Being, Finding Cures*
- *Building Communities, Expanding Opportunities*
- *Harnessing Information, Multiplying Knowledge*

What eventually came to be called *The Haiti Research Initiative* is associated precisely with the kind of engaged learning that so many of us believe to be essential to move KU's research forward while fulfilling our desire to expand global awareness, service, and leadership opportunities for our students in a mutually beneficial environment. Between March and May, we made preparations for the trip, identified our core group (see Appendix), several of us made virtual contact with each other, created an initial research agenda, and began to establish connections with a wide range of individuals (see Appendix) in Haiti. We had wise counsel from Haiti experts in the US, read voraciously, and obtained funding to support four people who could go to Haiti under the auspices of the University of Kansas.

The group that came together bonded easily, initially sharing notes on what we knew and how we might work together. The idea of developing strategies for educational development to facilitate social and economic change was daunting enough, but even more so, given Haiti's unique history. We are grateful for the excellent advice and support provided by the Institute for Policy and Social Research, notably Loren Benesch; for the remarkable percep-

tions of Hannah Britton; and for the thorough vetting of several preliminary proposals by Joshua Rosenbloom of the Kansas Center for Research.

We did not have the same itinerary for outbound travel. The time spent in travel alone was helpful for making our arrival more special: we came together for the first time—all of us—in Haiti and, therefore, developed a special bond. The report thus reflects the richness of our individual and collective experiences. What had begun in an effort to define a place to ground KU's research evolved over the course of our visit. We learned to listen more and to talk less, to recognize forms of knowledge that go far beyond the scientific or academic, to deepen our commitment to creating a model for social change and economic development that takes into consideration Haiti's singular strengths and tremendous human capital.

We've called this report *The Faces of Haiti* in part to help counter the stereotyped image of Haiti, "the poorest country in the western hemisphere." There is profound poverty, but poverty does not define their existence. The faces of Haiti represented here are both the country's promise and its wealth. They tell us that the country's future as a nation must be built on a respect for—and knowledge of—its complicated past. Haiti's people are young and old; some may be illiterate but not ignorant; some may be dispossessed but not dispirited; some may be displaced, but not discouraged.

Haiti has at least as much to teach as we have to learn. Even amid the crudeness of their surroundings, Haitians refuse to be what others have made of them, including many within their own country. The hope for recovery lies in the revolutionary spirit of the people, for just as their forebears resisted the architecture of black slavery that had dominated the rest of the Americas, Haitians have always turned inward to find strength and courage to accomplish remarkable things. We saw many examples of this, espe-

cially in the many acts of kindness we received from a wide range of people. In every case, the focus was not on what they did not have, but what they were willing to generously share. It is this "disconcerting paradox," as Haitian scholar and intellectual Jean Price-Mars called it, that offers the potential for transformation. For us, it means that Haiti could become the premier model for twenty-first-century development through mutual, cross-cultural contact. The trip reinforced our belief that KU and Haiti already have a bond on which a solid partnership can be built, a partnership with unlimited potential for understanding the fundamental issues of our time. It is in this spirit that we present this report and look forward to more active dialogue.



Guy Alexandre, former ambassador to the Dominican Republic, Brian Rosenblum, Maryemma Graham, Kiran Jayaram, C.B. Claiborne

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HAITI IN PERSPECTIVE: An Outsider's View

Maryemma Graham



Maryemma Graham

Haiti is an old country, a proud country, and its remarkable heritage is treasured by its citizens. It was “discovered” by Columbus in 1492 and settled by the Spanish in 1496. Two hundred years later, the indigenous people all but eliminated, Spain ceded part of the island to France, which began importing Africans, bound to the land as slaves. In the last years of the eighteenth century,

having become one of the richest colonies in the French empire, a half million enslaved Africans led by one of their own, Toussant L'Ouverture, waged a battle that resulted in their independence and the abolition of slavery. Haiti not only became the first black republic, but also it was the first Latin American country to gain its independence, and only the second independent republic in the Americas.³ France did not give up easily and for a while, two “nations” existed in Haiti. The northern section of the country was consolidated under Henri Christophe. In the mountains overlooking Okap (Cap Haitien) sits the Citadel, an architectural wonder in its design. Its construction took the lives of 15,000 people. The Citadel, together with the palace of Sans Souci at the base of the mountain, represents a history of life and death, a testament to the determination, endurance, creativity, and resilience of the Haitian people.



San Souci Palace, Cap Haitien

³ The financial support was provided to Simon Bolivar's fight for independence, on the condition that those who were enslaved would be set free. The countries involved include Bolivia, Columbia, Venezuela, Argentina, Peru, Equador, and Panama.

Once a leader in sugar cane, coffee, and cocoa production, consumed the world over, Haiti's economic production shows little signs of activity today. Historically, sugar cane was a major product of exchange during the infamous triangular trade, that gave the country its economic edge as a wealth-producing French colony, just as it was the economic factor that lay the seeds for the 1804 revolution. The US investment in Haitian factories supports increased production in huge assembly plants, which on the one hand, provided more employment opportunities. On the other hand, the wages that workers earn are well beneath any decent minimum. Without literacy or opportunity for advancement, little progress can be made. For this reason, a sizeable portion of Haiti's labor force migrates to its neighbor, the Dominican Republic, where work in similar plants brings a higher wage. Outmigration to other countries has all but stripped the country of a stable middle class. The control of the country's wealth lies in the hands of 5 percent of the population, mostly descendants of European and other immigrants, including a distinct mulatto class. The value of Haiti as seen by the rest of the world—the US notwithstanding—is often couched in racial, colonialist discourses that sees Haitians as responsible for their own depressed condition.

The two official languages of Haiti are Kreyòl (Haitian Creole) and French, while the 1987 constitution states that Kreyòl is the language that unites all Haitians. Kreyòl combines various vocabulary and structures of eighteenth century and contemporary French, languages from Western and Central Africa, Spanish, English, and Taino Arawak—the now extinct inhabitants of the island. The language, along with the religion Vodou, enabled communication and effective organization among the enslaved Africans and their descendents.

Our visit was timed so that we might attend a three-day meeting of the Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development (INURED).⁴ This was their fifth invitation-al workshop and the second held since the earthquake. As interest in Haiti has increased, INURED has stepped up its effort to play a think-tank role. We came to the meeting without an agenda, which served to our advantage. We brought openness and thus learned a great deal about how

⁴ The following is a statement from its report: “The Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development (INURED) is a research and higher education establishment based in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. INURED's mission is the development of top quality research and scientific training with the aim of improving the socioeconomic and political conditions of Haiti's people. As a ‘think and do’ tank, INURED's collaborative research and problem-solving model applies powerful data analysis, multidisciplinary research and evaluation techniques, and a policy-driven perspective to address a wide range of issues facing Haiti.”



INURED Conference

easy it is to objectify Haiti, to turn it into a laboratory for one's own individual research needs. Following the meeting, we were even more committed to talk to people who could broaden our perspective.

distance from the hotel. Widely known as a gathering place for "regulars," it had the distinct feel of old Havana, where select couples and families enjoy fine food and dancing. The atmosphere invites talent in excess, with the best Latin Salsa on display. But this is Haiti, and necessary adjustments have been made. This one club must meet the needs of a diverse upper-class clientele. Over the course of the evening, we saw the music shift along with the audience. The

Havana of the 1950s gradually gave way to edgier sounds and different vocalists as a younger crowd drifted in. Still with a Latin beat, the music had begun to absorb the flavor



INURED research planning session



Louis Herns Marcelin, Andre Apaid, Anthony Barbier, Maryemma Graham, Brian Rosenblum, Leopold Berlanger, Jean Vilmond Hilaire, Kiran Jayaram

Our hotel, the Kinam in Petionville, was an hour away from the center of Port-au-Prince. It faces a large tent community that was established in the plaza next to the Cathedral of St. Peter. Candles and flashlights provide visibility at night for those in tents, while guests at the Kinam have the luxury of indoor swimming, fine dining, and a lively bar scene. The nightly power surge, causing a loss of electricity for a short while, reminded us how lucky we were to even have it, as the majority of the country do not. Likewise, the armed gendarme at the hotel entrance put Haiti's years as a occupied nation in sharp relief, even though his presence was anything but hostile. Staying at the Kinam made us eyewitnesses to Haiti's extreme contrasts that characterize the country. For all the poverty one sees in one square mile of Haiti, the counterpoint is a disproportionate amount of wealth and privilege for a precious few. Something as simple as a gate can be the boundary between the two.

We recognized that boundary immediately at our visit to Quartier Latin, a Cuban style restaurant within walking

of a newer, hipper world. What is clear, however, is that the Quartier Latin exists to ensure a separation from the Haitian other. One enters through the tall metal gate that signals "no entry" to most. Once inside, you eat, drink, and dance as if transported to another world.

The Quartier Latin is a reminder that Haiti is, like many countries in the Caribbean, is neither invisible to nor isolated from the rest of the world. Cruise ships hover near the island routinely, their passengers lured by the warm temperatures, beautiful beachfronts and bays at places like Jacmel, a major tourist area. Tourism, which brings its own set of problems, is not a fully regulated or organized industry in Haiti. From the safety net of the cruise ships, however, few penetrate the interior of the islands. Visitors, as we were, are told where to go, what places to avoid, to help insure our safety. Yet, we got the feeling that even the areas that are referred to as the city's worst ghettos, like Cite Solèy, a community on the southern edge of Port-au-Prince, offer a perspective different from what we

might imagine. If young dissidents eager to show their authority live there, it may have as much to do with their desire to resist the constant onslaught of outsiders. City Soleil has developed a reputation for violence, but questions of violence can easily signal “defense” when a country has been invaded and routinely occupied, as is the case with Haiti.

Haitians are nevertheless quite hospitable to tourists, academic or otherwise, who cannot help but notice the endless number of vendors with their paintings for sale, assorted crafts made of wood, iron, steel or stone. All arts are alive and well in Haiti, and it might seem peculiar to some that this part of their culture is so advanced while other parts lag so far behind. Makeshift roadside galleries are ideal exhibit spaces, and the many traffic jams provide a captive audience. Haitian landscapes and assorted landscapes come alive in brightly colored, wall-to-wall canvasses. Haitian art is highly regarded worldwide, and well-established Haitian artists find the source of their inspiration in Vodou.⁵

Haitian art is matched by a Haitian literary tradition that goes back to the country’s independence. Jeremi is called the “city of poets” because of the many poets, historians, and other writers who are associated with the town.⁶ Jean Price-Mars, critic of the US Occupation of Haiti and founder of the *indigenisme* movement, challenged Haitian intellectuals to turn to their own culture—rather than to France—for inspiration and source material. Price-Mars’ ideas later influenced the Negritude movement, which emerged in Paris among Francophone intellectuals during the 1930s. Exchanges between Haitian and American writers during the early decades of the twentieth century were part of a larger trend of black internationalism, as scholars such as Brent Hayes Edwards have pointed out (*The Practice of Diaspora* 2003). The relationship between Lawrence native Langston Hughes and Haitian writer activist Jacques Roumain,⁷ for example, led Hughes to translate Roumain’s most famous novel, *Gouverneurs de la Rosee/ Masters of the Dew* (1944). For most of us, the exposure to



Haitian vendors art display on mountain wall

Roumain comes through courses focusing on the Harlem Renaissance among African American writers, but we rarely place him within the historical context of the resistance to the US occupation of Haiti, between 1915 and 1934.

That this period gave rise to literature as an art of resistance is clear from Marie Vieux-Chauvet, whose highly acclaimed trilogy *Love, Anger, Madness* (1968)⁸ several of us read in preparation for the trip. The novel helps us trace the unraveling of Haiti’s infrastructure, a key factor facilitating the emergence of the Duvalier regime. As Edwidge Danticat reminds us, Vieux-Chauvet, as a member of the “occupation generation,” was among those who witnessed the impact and consequences of the complete takeover by the US that cost the lives of 15,000 Haitians. Roumain and Vieux-Chauvet confirm for us why Haitian writers, who choose to tell the truth through their fiction, do indeed “create dangerously,” the emphasis in Danticat’s personal narrative *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant*

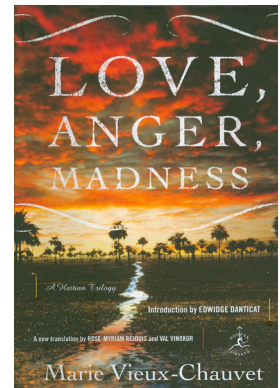


PHOTO: © JIM DANIELS

⁵ “Dreamers: the Painters of Haiti” 2001, Produced by Mette Heide, Directed by Jorgen Leth, 58 minutes.

⁶ Alexandre Dumas (1802-1870), noted French writer, was the son of a Haitian woman and a French resident who was born near Jeremi.

⁷ Jacques Roumain (1907-1944) is a well-known Haitian writer who authored several novels before his untimely death. His literary accomplishments were tied to his political views. Founder of the Haitian Communist Party, Roumain was eventually exiled and spent time in New York during the 1930s.

⁸ Marie Vieux-Chauvet (1916-1973) wrote five novels. The 1968 edition of *Love, Anger, Madness* was suppressed and not released officially until 2005 and as a Modern Library Original in the US in 2009. The dust cover refers to the book as an “underground classic.” Vieux-Chauvet died in New York in 1973.

Writer at Work.⁹ In each of the introductions to her several books on Haiti,¹⁰ Danticat, perhaps Haiti's most famous living writer, reminds us of this legacy, the power of the Haitian artistic imagination. Even W. E. B. DuBois would say, after a visit to Haiti, that for the US to occupy a free country, as it did Haiti, was both illegal and unjust. He saw it as a reign of terror, one in which Southern white naval officers and marines terrified and brutalized the people of Haiti, transmitting many of the same bigotries that had operated in the US South.

Reading Danticat, we can understand why the market women are a major sector of Haiti's informal economy. In every town, there is a central market and many smaller markets that carry food, clothing items, household goods, etc. One might think of the market as a full-service agency—where whatever a consumer wants, or better still, whatever the seller can imagine someone might want—is available for a bargaining price. This kind of business acumen might be deceptive at first glance. The range of items is phenomenal, everything from the finest English wool to freshly grilled corn, a staple in the country. Getting up before daylight, they make their way with heavy loads to the space they will occupy in the scorching sun until late evening. The experience has made them fierce. If you are not going to buy, then move on, their look says to us.

Money is always changing hands in Haiti, since it is a cash economy. As such, exchanging US currency for Haitian gouds is easy, need not be done in the bank, and brings a decent exchange rate. More importantly, such cash exchanges are available at all hours. If one is relying on the bank, on the other hand, there is a maximum available for exchange, and the long lines ensure at least a two-hour wait, even if you get there at 8:30 a.m. There is no other option; the ATM machines aren't configured to dispense foreign currency.

The movement of money parallels the movement of people away from Haiti. American Airlines, the major carrier, has been serving Haiti for forty years, with six regular non-stop flights from Miami, which, together with those from JFK and other US cities, provides a steady flow of traffic between the island and the US. Those who can leave do. Many commute regularly, especially between Haiti and Miami, the city that has absorbed more of those victim-

ized by the earthquake than any other. Today, about one of every three Haitians migrates. The only exception is the moneyed class, who frequently educate their children in France and live comfortably in two worlds.

Most Haitians, especially in the urban areas, do not take time to ponder their plight. They too, are always on the move, not as immigrants, but as a people accustomed to a transient existence. Port-au-Prince is a city that rarely sleeps. There is always work of some kind to be done. Water, a very precious commodity, must be carried in huge vats on the heads of women, girls, and young boys who weave in and out of the traffic never spilling a drop. They start early because they are providing the water necessary for everything: bathing, cooking, drinking.

Cars, battered and bruised, whisk by at breakneck speed competing with motorbikes, and the all-too-familiar tap-tap, Haiti's version of public transportation. They all share the rocky pathways that pass for city streets. Traffic jams are routine, and the only way to avoid them is to begin at 5:00 or 6:00 a.m., if one is going across town. Few traffic signals exist. Drivers appear to have an intuitive sense about it all, but the streets of Port-au-Prince are no place for a novice.



Tent life in Haiti has indeed created smaller cities inside bigger ones, making poverty more real and apparent. Eighteen months after the earthquake, tents occupy all the open space where parks once were. Open markets blend into the canvas walls that keep families—sometimes as many as six or eight people—together. Those who live within have learned to make do, to adapt their routine functions, organizing their lives around known limitations. In short, they have created community: carrying for themselves and others, providing a place to get hair and nails done, a passport

⁹ Edwidge Danticat, *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Writer at Work* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010).

¹⁰ Of her ten books, Danticat has published three since the earthquake, *Create Dangerously*; *Haiti Noir* (New York: Akashic Books, 2010), an anthology from the Haitian diaspora; and *Tent Life: Haiti* (Brooklyn, NY: Umbrage Editions Books, 2010), a photo essay (photographs by Wyatt Gallery).



Street Sweepers Port-au-Prince



photo taken, or local entertainment. Meals are the easiest to manage, since the portable, handmade charcoal grills are highly efficient for producing a feast. Tent life may be a result of the earthquake, but it is also a demonstration of a people's resolute faith, self-sufficiency, and unusual inventiveness. There is no sense of defeat here, only the open and closed spaces for lively dialogue, sharing, and exchange.

Knowing Haiti's glorious past, one can easily question the meaning of freedom in contemporary Haiti. In Port-au-Prince, we saw houses in various stages of completion or disrepair and wondered if this is pre- or post-earthquake. But far too many of the city's residents, like those in the rural areas, don't have even have the bare necessities. Without running water or electricity, most people in the mountainous countryside still use transistor radios as a major means of contact with a world beyond. It is easy to see why Haiti has almost become synonymous with Port-au-Prince, for once there, it is unlikely that you will get home often. Even if one has a car or more typically a motorbike, a road trip beyond Port-au-Prince is hazardous. Moving around within the city isn't much better.

Haiti's urban landscape is more than challenging for the outsider. There is something to be said about the skill and dexterity of Haitian drivers. In the first few days, we held our breath as Salomond, our driver, sped through the streets to get us to scheduled meetings. By day 2, we greeted him gleefully in the early morning, as six of us (the four of us, a translator and Salomond) packed sardine-like in the tiny car, proceeded as if we were in a high-speed chase. He would drive calculatingly slow around the deep potholes, only to speed up afterwards with matchless precision. Among the few Kreyòl words we learned was *dousman* (slowly), but we found ourselves using it less and less.

We learned Salomond was probably driving no faster than most and had had very few accidents. He was confident in his abilities to keep us safe and get us we needed to go, a confidence he easily transmitted to us. We saw no accidents but remained curious about the accident rate. By day 3, our flinching had stopped. We had learned to trust him, and each day without fail, we relinquished ourselves to his care. We even dubbed him *Wa Salomond* (King Solomon), secretly hoping that this might give us additional protection.

Although most of our time was spent in Port au Price, where we had arranged meetings and visits to key individuals, we did travel to other parts of the country. One Sunday afternoon, we accepted an invitation from one of the leaders of the INURED conference, whose family had been forced into exile when she was a child. Today she is a regular visitor to Haiti, coming "home" to refuel as often as she can. An hour and a half south of Port-au-Prince, is Akaye. In July, one of Akaye's small fishing villages, is Fruits de Mer (Fruits of the Sea), a restaurant we dubbed the Haitian Red Lobster. Too small to be an eat-in restaurant, it sits in the center of the village,



surrounded by clusters of tiny homes. The residents are mostly children, young mothers, several older women, and a handful of men and adolescent boys. The restaurant's regular clientele know to stop by and purchase fresh or grilled fish on their way home. Although there is a single restaurant owner, all labor is shared. Men and boys make the fishing boats that they use to catch fish; women prepare all the ingredients and side dishes while the children are at play. An elected official lives in the village, in a larger well-built home. A landscaped yard and decorative wall enclose the house, which is slightly elevated and set back from the water. He was not there the day we visited but had sent a message ahead of us that our group was to be treated "royally."

We thus entered Akaye as special guests with a full community to welcome us. A downpour came just as we arrived, but it did not delay the activities. We watched attentively as young boys and older men went out to catch a net full of lobsters, bringing them back to be cleaned and cooked on several larger sized charcoal grills. Then, like clockwork, several women began appearing to grind the seasoning and prepare a salad. Shortly, a board appeared that quickly transformed into a table, soon to be covered by a table cloth, forks, and painted serving bowls. We assembled in chairs under the shade of a tree, as the younger boys rolled out several coolers of assorted local drinks and beers. Within minutes the lobsters were hoisted into the bowls and dinner was served. Haitian music beamed in from a nearby house, drawing all of us, including the women who were preparing the meal, into its sway. Still reeling from the intensity of a three-day conference, we were easily mesmerized by the community's loving embrace, their generosity of spirit, and their willingness to have us disrupt their lives for several hours. They gave us a private beach

party of the highest order: it was truly a lobster feast. Several of us even plunged into the warm, glistening water, feeling the soothing waves rock us gently. From the shore, we could see far into the distance, as the blue water became one with the sky. In an instant the thought occurred to us that life in Haiti for many has a decided advantage. When one can see beyond a mundane troubled existence, a hope-filled future seems bright. Living in and with nature in this way brings constant renewal. More importantly perhaps is that people have adapted to a subsistence living, which driven by a strong sense of community, allows no one to suffer any more than another. The owner of Fruits de Mer was also a dreamer. After dinner, we toured his processing site and asked questions about his desire to become a distributor. Currently, he sells only to one man and is blocked from further expansion. This story brought us back to the reality of Haiti.

A second journey away from Port-au-Prince took us north to Okap, the most historic part of the country. While the trip was scheduled before leaving the US, it was not until we arrived that we understood what might be involved. We elected to fly a local airline after comparing a half-hour plane ride to a possible two days by car. From the plane we saw little that might constitute a path through the mountains that could accommodate ground travel, confirming how easily one could get stuck during one of Haiti's spontaneous downpours. The experience on a domestic air carrier in Haiti is worth noting, however. In this land where money is a precious commodity that few can afford, those who have it gain access. Reservations matter not; credit card payments online do not guarantee a seat. The process is simple. One walks up, pays cash, and boards the prop plane. This continues until the twenty seats or so are filled. If you are lucky, and there are seats left, those



Photograph © C. B. Claiborne 2011

Morning light, Cap Haitien

remaining who have reservations or have paid in advance might board—usually after you’ve been waiting for hours. We arrived at 5:30 a.m. on the day of our flight, waiting for the ticket counter to open at 6:30 and were among the fortunate ones to take the second flight to Okap at 8:15. Admittedly we had some help. Our escort for the trip north was Dr. Jean Louis Franco, a Haitian surgeon, who spends much of his time engaging public health issues in



the country. Franco has had a significant impact through *Generations of Hope*, an orphanage/school for many of Haiti’s homeless youth who are given an opportunity

to learn skills for earning a living. We were especially grateful for his guidance because on the day we made the trip north, a large religious group flooded the small waiting room at the airport, headed to the town where they would complete a service mission.

We arrived at Okap, where Jacquelyn, a local tour guide, greeted us. Not knowing what was in store, we listened intently as he recounted Haiti’s history, focusing on the building of Okap and the reign of Henri Christophe. Most of us hear and talk about Toussaint L’Ouverture, but it was Christophe who envisioned Haiti as a consolidated country and built this massive fort at the highest peak in the country. People who live along the mountain road eke out a living the best they can. With no access to education or health care, they fall prey to childhood pregnancy—infants and toddlers are abundant—and diseases that have all but disappeared in more developed countries. Although their faith is tested time and time again, it rarely fails them. Even when we were determined not to buy any of the trinkets for sale by the multitude of women at the entrance to the Citadel, we could not resist their enthusiasm. Suzy, a



The Citadel from the upper level



The Citadel from the road up

shrewd saleswoman, stood out. When we wanted to make a donation only, she would not accept it. She lowered the price that made it impossible to refuse her and then threw in extra items to show her appreciation. She had made very little money from the sale, but she had established a relationship with us during that brief encounter that earned our highest respect.

The steep climb to the Citadel was arduous. Each step we took evoked the memories of all those who had given their lives constructing the fort. But something even more remarkable happened along the way. Exhausted, with all our water gone, we took a break halfway up. There we encountered three young boys, perhaps brothers. They stood, as if preparing for a concert, each holding his own handmade bamboo instrument, called a *vaksin*, each designed to play in a different register. We were quickly restored by this experience, which caused us to reflect on the creation and production of art as a central feature of all human communities, no matter the condition of a people’s existence. We also wondered if what we see as “excellence” in our post-modern world has somehow been thoroughly distorted.

The municipalities surrounding Okap, Limonad, and Labadi, in particular, are less dense in population, and while



Okap young musicians with vaksins, hand-carved instruments

certainly urban, there is much less traffic. The community only felt the tremors of the earthquake, so the area has not had to undergo massive reconstruction. Here the markets seemed even bigger, more central to the economy. They are spread over main streets and small village roads. Given our interest in education, we ate dinner with a young pastor and his wife, who have built an Apostolic school that serves the lower and upper grades. They are missionaries in Limonad, and they are committed to the work of education and religion, for the two go hand in hand for them.



A new church school in Limonad

Many groups have committed projects in these smaller towns in the North. Some of our conference colleagues had made the journey a few days earlier. It is open season in Haiti, because there is so much to be done, so many people in need. And yet it also makes us cautious knowing that Haiti is an easy target for well-meaning scholars, students desirous of a service opportunity, and overly zealous missionaries. It means not wanting to be identified with such groups while taking our lead from the people we met, the Haitians themselves.

HAITI TODAY

What did we learn from our visit to Haiti? Haiti is, without a doubt, the best example of a country with multiple, untapped resources, the density of its population a huge potential asset, but whose capacity for growth and development has been stunted. The following statistics are frequently quoted:

1. 70 percent illiteracy
2. 55 of 1000 infants die in infancy.
3. Expected life span 60 years
4. 50 percent of school-age children attend school, getting a substandard education that is only required up to the sixth grade.

Such figures are difficult to comprehend in the twenty-first century when so many of us are engaged in discussions about the post-Cold War politics, a post-industrial economy, and post-modern culture. How can the same people who achieved that stunning victory over France, birthing the first black republic in the world, and free for most of their history— have such profound oppression? We had come to face bits and pieces of that history: successive rounds of notorious governmental regimes that rarely had the masses' interest at heart, a steady pace of human rights abuses, an economic elite that failed to properly invest in the country's well-being over the past four decades, unequal relations with global powers from the colonial age to the present (including Christian institutions and other nonstate providers), international policy that privileged capital accumulation over human dignity, shifting multinational loan agendas, and social structures that discourage marginalized Haitians from striving to change their collective condition. This history has led to international migration by those with moderate means. Thus, the virtual absence of a middle class in Haiti gives rise to an even wider gap between the haves and have-nots.

In 1991, Aristide became the first president in the country's history to come to power through uncontested, universal, and internationally accepted elections. Seven months later, he was deposed by a military coup d'état. While Aristide was not the candidate backed by the United States, President Bush (41) advocated for his immediate reinstatement. President Clinton eventually assumed this position (after initially backtracking from his campaign position on the matter). An embargo was put in

place, intending to show the world that the US supported democracy, but the majority of those who suffered under the UN sanctions were the poor, rather than the intended targets of the military regime and its wealthy Haitian elite supporters. US companies were allowed to export materials to Haiti for assembly, which was still one of Haiti's largest forms of production. During this time, rampant human rights abuses occurred by the de facto government. This poorly-implemented embargo led Dr. Paul Farmer to explain these complicated dealings in his book *The Uses of Haiti* (1994). Aristide eventually was returned to power with US and UN support, but only after he was forced to sign economic concessions. After a democratic transition of power occurred in 1996, Aristide was elected President again in 2000. He was again removed under threat of a second military coup in 2004, which was followed by perhaps the most violent period's of the country's history since the Revolution. Days after the coup, the UN intervened again (as what came to be called MINUSTAH). After several unconstitutional moves, elections were established, and Prèval again came to office in 2006. Then came the horrible year 2010: the earthquake and cholera.

Aid in the form of commodities, currency, and people came to Haiti after January 12, 2010. Many Haitians ask, "Where is this money going?" They, like many of the people who gave directly or indirectly, are clueless. Some people have put hope in President Martelly a.k.a. "Sweet Mickey", a popular musician who had mass appeal. However, there were major flaws in the electoral process, and five months after taking office, he has yet to install a government.

The US legacy in Haiti is nevertheless real, even if our memories are short. There is a Haitian proverb that says "bay kout bliye, pote mak sonje, or "the one that gives the blow forgets, while the one that receives it remembers." The US Occupation of 1915-1934 established the military and solidified racial and class-based tensions which indirectly contributed to dictatorships and subsequent abusive military regimes. Also, US economic policies have often been counter-intuitive, giving to autocrats while denying democratic leaders. On the other hand, people in the US do penance in moments of crisis, as they did after the earthquake of January 2010. At that moment, many people throughout the US had Haiti on their minds.

A critical assessment of the US influence in Haiti should not minimize the impact of national political instability as a key cause in Haiti's vulnerabilities. It is, after all, the government who is responsible for a country's infrastruc-

ture. It is the government that builds bridges and roads, provides electricity, keeps its people safe, and sees that its youth are educated, but in Haiti's case, this has simply not happened to any significant degree. Young boys run river taxis from one shore to another. Not a single footbridge is in place to connect some small towns divided by tributaries. The Delmas Road and the Road to Williamston are exceptions. The isolation due to poor transportation provides a kind of natural division that exacerbates differences between the North and South, the city and the countryside, the public and the private schools. None of this can be blamed on the January 2010 earthquake.

Today the majority of US economic assistance to Haiti is channeled through Non governmental organizations (NGOs), which are overly abundant. More than one person told us that every NGO in existence has a presence in Haiti. Not surprisingly, when knowledgeable Haitians are asked what they consider a suitable subject for research, they quickly say, the impact of NGOs or lack thereof.

The end of our visit to Haiti came too soon. Nine days were hardly enough to make us feel comfortable discussing constructive work we might do. Our agenda had called for us to meet and talk with key people, in the university, in government, in activist organizations, in the libraries and cultural centers. We had met and talked with Haitians living in America but working in Haiti. Yet it seemed that we had only begun, leaving with more questions than answers. How do those Haitians who consider themselves artist-activist-intellectuals comprehend all of this? We knew our work would continue. And yet our visit was a success.

There is no single Haiti. We had seen some of its faces, but knew that with time, we might become partners in a process of political, economic, and cultural rebuilding that will contribute to brigher faces in Haiti.



MAKING KU CONNECTIONS

Kiran Jayaram



Kiran Jayaram

Twice during the trip, at the beginning and at the end, team members met with **Guy Alexandre**. He currently serves as Special Counsel to the International Organization for Migration, but is perhaps better known as the former ambassador of Haiti to the Dominican Republic during the 1990s. He has also taught at post-secondary institutions in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, usually on insular relations. Due to these

governmental and educational roles, he acted as a perfect bookend of ideas for the trip.

His contributions included providing names and contact information for relevant stakeholders, excellent insight into structural deficiencies that existed before and were aggravated after the January 2010 earthquake, and suggestions about potential errors to avoid when seeking to collaborate with local institutions. The contacts spanned the breadth of his knowledge, including people at the National Archive, the National Library, the State University of Haiti, and other intellectuals working in various capacities. Though we had already reached out to some of these, hearing them from Mr. Alexandre confirmed the validity of our course of action.

In addressing structural problems that a KU collaborative project might address, he pointed to the need for more people trained in proper administration, both because of the lack of opportunities in the country and because many of the people who had such knowledge were killed in the earthquake. Such administrative training would be beneficial for both government workers as well as those in the various universities throughout the country. Further, few options exist for earning advanced degrees in Haiti, which demands additional training for university professors. Mr. Alexandre also noted the need for K-12 teacher training. Addressing issues of library science, he spoke of potential

collaborations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic that provided important regional support but had failed to complete its goals.

As words of caution, Mr. Alexandre warned us that any collaboration KU undertakes should be done with a cross-section of universities. He pointed to the contradiction between the constitutional design of the State University, and the subsequent hierarchical tensions among post-secondary institutions. In other words, members of the State University of Haiti have acted as if they were arbiters of all curriculum and training for the country, which is not accurate according to the constitution. To remedy this, he recommended undertaking a project, with all major universities: State University, Quisqueya, Notre Dame, and Centre de Technique de Planification.

Later that week, we met with **Dr. Suzy Castor**, director of the Centre de la Recherche et de Formation Economique et Sociale pour la Developpement (CRES-FED). She had been living in exile in Mexico with her now deceased husband, Gerard Pierre Charles, due to the



Dr. Suzy Castor

Duvalier dictatorship. Since the 1970s they had become known as stalwart advocates for democratic rule as well as solid social scientists. In 1988, they founded CRESFED to focus on the transition to democracy. Today, CRESFED employs 3 Ph.D. s, 2 M.A.s, and others with B.A.s. The organization works on training, decentralization and political participation, research, and the distribution and communication of knowledge. The organization has been associated with Oxfam US, Boston University, Harvard, the University of Paris, and the Fondation Gerard Pierre Charles. For the past decade, CRESFED has provided training for local government officials on the value of decentralization and civic duties.

Dr. Castor shared two general considerations regarding potential KU projects in Haiti. The first regards the overwhelming amount of aid that entered into Haiti in the form of people, money, and commodities after the earthquake. She commented that it was completely unregulated and unorganized, a type of activity that pertains to the Ministry of Planning on a national level and to the mayor's office on a local level. She stated that prior to the disaster, certain nonstate providers were more powerful than some



government ministries based on organizational capacity and available funds. After the earthquake, there was no organization of the work among nonstate providers, thus making it difficult to determine whether they were giving urgent aid or engaged in development. Her second consideration concerned collaborations with universities. Because of the bureaucracy of the State University of Haiti, she suggested, partners may prefer to work with the smaller, private, and more efficiently run Quisqueya University. She finds this situation to be counterproductive to long-term development in Haiti. The overall message of the comments was clear: coordinate with the Haitian state structures, and be clear of the nature, duration, and function of the project undertaken.

One of the last group meetings was with **Camille Chalmers**, director of the *Plateforme Haïtienne de Plaidoyer pour un Développement Alternatif* (PAPDA). The organization was created in 1995 through a merger of several civil society organizations that seek to expose negative biases



Camille Chalmers

in public policy and propose alternatives. The timing of this organization is not insignificant. Before restoring the first democratically elected president in Haitian history (Jean-Bertrand Aristide) to power in 1995 after a military coup in 1991, Aristide was forced to agree to a restructuring of Haiti's political economy. These organizations, representing populations historically

marginalized in political discussions in Haiti, came together to address past grievances and prevent future injustices.

PAPDA's work is focused on three areas: food sovereignty, alternative development and integration, and participatory democracy. According to Chalmers, Haiti was self-sufficient in food (i.e., food sovereign) until 1972. Structural changes begun at that time altered the balance in favor of foreign imports. Today, the Ministry of Agriculture receives 5 percent of the budget, but 50 percent of the population is linked directly to agricultural production. Chalmers points to a need to develop the "savoir-faire" of farmers to increase production, improve capacity of getting products to market, and consider how to support local production for national consumption, as in the case of blended flour. The organization is also committed to alternate forms of development and integration within the country and regionally. While Chalmers notes that organizations like the World Trade Organization and free-trade associations advocate a *de facto* antidevelopment position, he points to other ways of collaborating, like the Association de Peuple Caribbean (APC), which met in 2003 in Haiti. Like CRESFED, Chalmers and PAPDA promote participatory democracy and training of public officials (in the local mayor's office or regional representatives). He explains how illiteracy, particularly among women, and the lack of post-primary education subverts the political process by preventing active participation.¹

Regarding collaborations, Chalmers emphasized the importance of participatory research and that collaboration between foreign partners, PAPDA and its grassroots organizations, and the State University of Haiti would be the most productive.

After a handful of days and several meetings under our collective belt, we met with Dr. Fritz Deshommes, Vice-Rector and Director of Research at the State University of Haiti (UEH) and well-known Haitian economist. Prior to the earthquake, he had written on such issues as minimum wage in Haiti, alternatives to neoliberalist development, decentralization and property holdings, and the general political economy. Additionally, he has written on the relationship between UEH and the government of Haiti in light of the 1987 Constitution. He consistently advocated for several ideas that are relevant to a future collaboration with UEH and KU.

First, Dr. Deshommes advocated for different ways of addressing the reconstruction period, calling for the utilization of scientific research in the context of disasters. In his opinion, had this been available after the earthquake,

¹ Echoing a comment by Guy Alexandre and Jean-Marie Theodat, he also noted how the university system in Haiti graduates perhaps 60,000 students per year from high school, yet the country only has places for 10,000.

many more lives might have been saved. Second, in a book released in 2011, entitled *Et si la Constitution de 1987 était porteuse de Refondation?*, he made the very controversial point that rather than the Plan D'Action pour le Relèvement et le Développement Nationale d'Haïti (PARDN) as a way to consider development, people should consider the Haitian Constitution as a good guide for what to do. He has been very concerned about the unregulated role of non-state providers operating without oversight in Haiti. We also came to share his concern, suggesting this as a point of potential joint research.



Dr. Fritz Deshommes, Vice Rector
State University of Haiti

Second, Dr. Deshommes informed us about the October Colloquium at the UEH on Kreyòl Academy. After explaining to him the accomplishments of the KU Institute of Haitian Studies, we all agreed this would definitely be an important event to attend, not only to see how Haitians are organizing to address important problems regarding language, but also to make sure that the KU's Kreyòl language programs are in accordance with the official standards of the language.

Third, the Vice-Rector had identified the need for additional training, not just for students, but also for professors and administrators. He informed us that many of the specialists in geology and seismology were killed in the earthquake, leaving a large void. Together, we identified the importance of an academic exchange between UEH and KU. This could include not only courses for training, but also collaboration with research projects by Haitian and non-Haitian scholars and their students.

Finally, Dr. Deshommes advocated for "institutional memory," a repository for research and publications related to reconstruction and research in general, which would allow informed policy and action to take place. It would also serve as a sustainable archive for the several thousand UEH theses that have been produced over time. Finally, he spoke of the urgent need for greater scholarly access to academic databases, something that a KU Libraries partnership could easily facilitate.

Towards the end of the trip we contacted the organization *Li, Li, Li*, founded in February 2010 by Michele Karshan, in response to the need to provide basic literacy for children in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps after the earthquake. This not-for-profit organization includes Edwidge Danticat among other notable people on the advisory board. It works in twenty-five camps and reaches more than 3,000 children per month throughout various areas of the Western Department of Haiti. The on-the-ground coordinator is Joceyln a.k.a. DJ. We have had extensive conversations with Michele Karshan since returning to the United States.

The project has reading to children as its cornerstone, but has other activities embedded within. Readers for the project are local Haitians who often times are not significantly distinct socioeconomically from the people they are serving. However, they receive training before they read before a group. Their sessions are monitored to ensure success and continuity. While readers recite and interact only in Haitian Creole, the tests themselves may have been written in other languages. A review process vets donated books in other languages to rule out culturally inappropriate content, they are then translated into Haitian Creole. At other times, the organization combines the reading with critical services to camps or integrates important information into the sessions, for example, how to prevent the spread of cholera.

In discussing collaborations, Ms. Karshan mentioned two major needs. First, the organization is in pressing need of money to continue to pay the readers. Everyone else in the organization works on a volunteer basis, but the readers receive a monthly stipend. To this end, an effort has been made to coordinate fund-raising in the Lawrence and Kansas City area by reaching out to student groups and community organizations. Secondly, Ms Karshan inquired about the possibility of an assessment/evaluation of the program in hopes of improving its quality of service. This is essentially an applied anthropology project.

The meetings with Alexandre, Castor, Chalmers, and Deshommes provided great insight. On a personal level, they demonstrated that though I have had many, varied experiences in Haiti, there is always more to learn . . . always more connections to make. For the Haiti Research Initiative, these meetings marked distinct points of contact for beginning dialogues about future collaborations.

A HAITIAN BUSINESSMAN SPEAKS

C.B. Claiborne

Since the early 1970s, assembly and light manufacturing has been touted as a pillar of economic development in Haiti. From the 1970s until 1990, all baseballs used in the Major Leagues in the United States were sewn in Haiti. Multilateral development loans and international finance experts have consistently advocated for such work in Haiti for about



C.B. Claiborne

four decades. In the past ten years, the United States government has developed policy regarding Haiti to encourage such projects. The Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Acts (HOPE I in 2006 and HOPE II in 2008), and the Haitian Economic Lift Program (HELP) in May 2010 were intended to provide jobs to Haitians while providing inexpensive goods to US consumers. This latest policy was inspired by one of the priorities of the Plan D'Action pour le Relèvement et le Développement Nationale d'Haiti (PARDN), a document published by the Haitian government which outlines priorities for rebuilding after the earthquake. According to the *CIA World Factbook* (2011), "the apparel sector accounts for three-quarters of Haitian exports and nearly one-tenth of [the] GDP".

Prior to the earthquake Haiti, like other countries around the world, was experiencing a period of economic slowdown. Haitian exports had grown at a rate of nine percent from 2004 to 2008. Export growth slowed to three percent between 2008 and 2010. Even with growing exports, Haiti had a balance of trade deficit of more than 1.5 billion dollars. The biggest imports were cotton and electronics due in large part to the textile and cellular phone industries. Cotton fabric is imported from the Dominican Republic and manufactured in Haiti via cut and sewing operations. We met with Clifford Apaid, Chief Operating Officer of AGA, one of the largest manufacturers in Haiti, to discuss his perspective of the current business climate.

AGA Corp. was established in 1968 and employs over 9,000 workers in Port-au-Prince. It ships manufactured

goods to the US, Canada, and other countries. We met with Mr. Apaid at one of AGA's manufacturing facilities in a business park that had served as an emergency shelter immediately after the earthquake. Mr. Apaid studied in the US and took over the business from his father, Andrew Apaid, who ran for President of Haiti in the last election. We discussed business conditions in Haiti before and after the earthquake.

While AGA has been successful in basic manufacturing, Mr. Apaid's vision for the company is connected to the development of a more skilled work force and advancement to higher levels of manufacturing. Haiti's current capabilities can be compared to China's ten-fifteen years ago. He envisions a twenty-year business cycle during which the capabilities of the work force would go from unskilled to skilled. He also spoke of current efforts at AGA to improve worker's literacy in addition to technical skills. Even as one of the largest manufacturers, AGA sees its future connected to political, social, and cultural developments in Haiti.

Government and private sector capacity building was addressed by a Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) roundtable in 2005. A clear vision of the role of the private sector emerged in that meeting, which was described



Clifford Apaid

as "growth with equity." The private sector has to be a significant player in Haiti's development without replacing government or the donor community. For example, the cur-

rent model in which 80 percent of schools are privatized is not sustainable. There is a role for government in providing public services. More appropriately, business donor collaborations such as Sogebank Foundation efforts to prevent AIDS and the DigiCel Foundation efforts to help Haiti recover after the earthquake are thought to represent a way to build Haiti in the future.

Examples of government/private sector collaborations could become valuable teaching tools. Therefore, we propose a series of functional case studies of organizations like the AGA, DigiCel, and the Nationale Bibliotheque. The case studies, collected and published by HRI, would be based on primary research and focus on current key decisions centered at the functional or operational level rather than the strategic level.

THE LIBRARIES OF HAITI: Creating a knowledge society

Brian Rosenblum

“In Haiti, every book is a rare book.” - (Francoise Beaulieu-Thybulle, Director, National Library of Haiti)



Brian Rosenblum

It may seem odd to focus on libraries in a country where there is so much urgent need for basic elements of survival—shelter, clean water, health care, jobs. But libraries (along with archives, museums, and other cultural and “memory” organizations) have an important role to play

in Haiti’s long-term development and emergence from its condition of dependency and exploitation. Many of Haiti’s critical strategic issues, such as improving literacy and public education, are directly related to the missions of libraries and cultural organizations. Other issues (reforestation, public health, housing, globalization, land use) require the kind of research-support infrastructure that libraries and information professionals need to provide—building capacity for the gathering, management, and transmission of data in order to increase knowledge, strengthen governing and educational institutions, inform public policy decisions, and improve the quality of lives in Haiti.



Reader at a book vender on the street in downtown Port-au-Prince

During our visit we heard variations on one common refrain: Haiti suffers from a lack of knowledge at various levels. There is a lack of scientific knowledge about the country; a lack of knowledge among Haitians about their own history and culture; a lack of knowledge about Haiti on the part of the outside world. There is a lack of access to knowledge and little capacity for the production of new knowledge. Without knowledge there is no self-understanding, and without self-understanding, no ability to make informed decisions about the social and economic issues that the country faces.

There is clearly a strong need for investment in libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions that provide access to knowledge and space for public discourse. In the digital age, these organizations play an important role in all stages of the lifecycle of scholarly research, helping not just to collect, preserve, and provide access to knowledge, but also taking an active role in the creation of research and knowledge. Libraries also bring values such as openness, and goals of long-term public access and transparency that, as we heard, are important values to bring to Haiti’s development initiatives. By enabling scholarly conversation, libraries, archives, and other knowledge organizations provide a crucial part of the foundation on which to build a knowledge-based society.

Haitians recognize this need. Throughout our interviews, people expressed the importance of increasing capacity of governmental and educational institutions to manage and provide access to information. In Haiti, like every other culture where access to information and education is neither easy nor taken for granted, there is a hunger for information, for education, and for connection with the wider world. This was evident in the libraries we visited. While few and far between, and small and quite rudimentary compared to our idea of a research or public library, these libraries were well used, filled with a steady flow of people reading at the tables, browsing the bookshelves, or using the computers.

There are a number of roles for libraries and heritage institutions in Haiti, some of which are listed below:

Increase access. One issue, of course, is simply access. Haitian libraries need more printed materials and better access to digital resources, both material produced in Haiti and material produced elsewhere. Public libraries are small and their collections are haphazard. Heavily dependent on donations, their materials are often out of date, in poor condition, or simply not relevant to the needs of the local

public or research communities. Research libraries have inadequate holdings to enable students to conduct research. Textbooks are too expensive for many students to purchase or even make copies. A great deal of Haitian material is not even located in the country. Census records from the 1950s on, for example, are housed in US libraries and are not available in digital format and thus not available to the citizens of Haiti.

Capture research data. Data underpins all scientific research. When there is no data, or when it is incomplete, it hinders research, and prevents governments, state institutions, and individuals from making informed decisions. Over and over we heard that there is no data in Haiti. INURED is sponsoring a large-scale longitudinal project intended to create baseline data needed to measure trends and developments in areas such as public health. One way libraries can help is to develop research repositories in which to collect and make openly accessible research and data.



Dr. Jean-Marie Theodat

Preserve cultural heritage.

“In Africa, when an old man dies, it is a whole library burning” (African proverb quoted by Jean-Marie Theodat). Lack of knowledge is not just about scientific data. As Jean-

Marie Theodat pointed out, data gathering, especially as conducted by foreign researchers working in Haiti without much knowledge of the country, often misses the creativity and culture of the people. Theodat called for development of repositories, not just for scientific data, but also to hold the country’s collective memory—the literature, arts, the music and oral culture of the people. In the digital age, we now have the technology to capture such heritage and distribute it to libraries and people around the country.

Promote global integration. Haitians have a hunger for knowledge and connection to the outside world, which we heard evidence of throughout our visit. Camille Chalmers advocated the idea of an “alternative integration” which goes beyond basic economic integration with the Caribbean and develops real exchange and links between people, not just businesses. Jean-Marie Theodat told us of

the fascination Haitians had for American television and culture. The organizers of the ARAKA community library were passionate about wanting the world to better understand Haiti; they are striving to promote an image of Haiti abroad that is more varied, more generous, and more accurate than the stereotypical images of destruction, chaos, and violence that dominate mainstream portrayals of the country. Cultural institutions can facilitate this linking by exposing worldwide culture to Haitians and exposing Haitian culture to the rest of the world.

Support new knowledge creation. Through digital initiatives and collaborative research support, libraries and cultural institutions can enable the creation of new knowledge. Technology provides new ways of codifying, collecting, and delivering information that were not available to us before. For example, it is now possible to capture and disseminate oral histories and the visual and musical heritage of the country—such an important part of Haitian society—on a scale that would have been impossible in a previous era.

Library education. While the role of libraries was widely recognized by the people we spoke with, libraries also suffer from the same obstacles as other institutions in Haiti, including a lack of resources, infrastructure, and expertise. There is no library or information science program in the country, and only the top-level administrators have had any formal library education training, usually in the US or France, where the programs do not adequately prepare students to build a library from scratch or to run libraries in poor or undeveloping countries. As Suzy Castor said: “there is an infinity we can do in the areas of libraries and librarianship,” but any library development initiatives undertaken by KU other institutions need to focus on needs specific to Haiti.



Readers at a book vender on the street in downtown Port-au-Prince



NATIONAL LIBRARY OF HAITI

We spent a morning with Françoise Beaulieu-Thybulle, director of the National Library of Haiti (BNH), established in 1940. Located in downtown Port-au-Prince, the BNH provides a public reading room with wireless Internet access, computers, and collections of books, manuscripts, and current and historical newspapers. The Library serves about 100 users daily, and it was full on the day we visited. Through a legal deposit mandate, the BNH receives five copies of every book and newspaper published in Haiti. About 400 books are published each year in the country, the vast majority in French; only about 3 percent of the BNH collections are in the Kreyòl language. The BNH also purchases books at the annual Haitian book fair and collects worldwide material related to Haiti. However, their budget, and thus selection scope, is very limited; collection development is often done via exchange agreements with foreign libraries.



Reading room at the National Library of Haiti

The BNH also provides leadership and coordination to about twenty municipal libraries across the country (including the Mirbale library, described below). These libraries are small with irregular (and often dated) collections of books, mostly in French, which they have received from various sources, including donations. These municipal libraries also serve as community centers, organizing cultural events, workshops, and educational programs for children. The BNH hopes to open another 100 such branches over the next ten years.

The BNH building itself suffered only minor damage in the 2010 earthquake, but there was significant internal and material damage to the library's collections, technical equipment, and furniture. The BNH does not have adequate facilities for repair, conservation or the long term, climate-controlled physical storage of material. The Smithsonian Institution is currently providing assistance and training to the BNH and other heritage collections through a Cultural Recovery Center (CRC) established after the earthquake.

The BNH has several current international collaborations, in particular with the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, which is scanning and making digital versions of its Haitian materials available. The library is also participating in a distance-learning program for librarians with the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Association of French Librarians, and libraries in Martinique and Guadeloupe.



Haiti's National Library was founded in 1940



Francoise Beaulieu-Thybulle, Director of the National Library

They have also formed partnerships with other libraries in the Caribbean region, some of which provided internships for BNH staff after the earthquake. The BNH is hosting the Caribbean Libraries Association annual conference in 2012.

Francoise Beaulieu-Thybulle has been the Director of the BNH for 30 years. She will be stepping down from the position soon, in order to devote her time to fundraising, education, and library building. She cited a need for further training and educational opportunities for her staff, including in the area of digitization, preferably on-site. They had a visiting librarian in residence for six months, which she indicated was a valuable experience for the BNH.



Reading room at the National Library of Haiti

FOUNDATION FOR KNOWLEDGE AND LIBERTY (FOKAL)

FOKAL's three-story cultural center in downtown Port-au-Prince provides a much-needed space in the city for "debate, leisure, and discovery." The building includes an



FOKAL cultural center

Internet café with free wireless access, a garden for hosting events and classes, a 140-seat auditorium with a regular schedule of films, plays and lectures, meeting and exhibit spaces, a video and sound studio, and the Monique Calixte Library, a public library with magazines, newspapers, books for adults and children. The library also houses an "American Corner"—an information space sponsored by the U.S. Embassy to provide information resources about the United States. On the afternoon that I visited, about 25 people were attending a showing of the PBS mini-series "John Adams" and public lecture in the auditorium, and the library was busy with patrons reading magazines, checking out books, and using the public computers.



Monique Calixte Library at FOKAL



FOKAL cultural center



Monique Calixte Library at FOKAL

Created in 1995, FOKAL is an independent foundation in Port-au-Prince supported by George Soros's Open Society Foundations, the European Union, and other sources of funding. A well-recognized national organization in Haiti, FOKAL is active in a range of educational, cultural, and development activities in local communities. FOKAL's three strategic areas of activity are: reconstruction/environment, youth arts and education, and—of particular interest to library initiatives—access to information. In addition, FOKAL provides grant funding to specific initiatives from civil society, the artistic community, and the agricultural sector.

Because of FOKAL's activities in the area of Access to Information, headed by Elizabeth Pierre-Louis, they will be a key partner or play a crucial coordinating role in international and local library development efforts. FOKAL supports thirty-five community libraries throughout the country, assisting and coordinating purchasing of materials and equipment, on-site and online training programs, and contributions of financial resources. FOKAL has close ties to the American Library Association, the Mortensen Center for International Librarianship at the University of Illinois, IFLA/FAIFE, and other international efforts. Next

year they will focus on developing network connectivity and explore use of cell phones for delivering information.

MIRBALE MUNICIPAL LIBRARY

Mirbale is located in the Central Plateau region of Haiti, about an hour's drive northeast of Port-au-Prince. Although this area did not suffer direct damage from the earthquake, it is nevertheless one of the poorest areas of the country, with little infrastructure, few schools, and public resources, and, since 2008, no hospital service for the 140,000 local residents. However, because of its central location in the country, and because of recent initiatives to bring power generators and water plants providing 24/7 electricity and water, the region has become a hub of NGO and foreign activity. Many NGOs have set up headquarters in Mirebalais, and a UN base (recently identified as the likely source of the cholera epidemic spreading throughout the country) is located nearby.

A number of projects are underway in and around Mirbale, including the Mirbale Hospital, a state-of-the-art



Mirbale Municipal Library

teaching facility being built by Partners in Health and Zanmi Lasante. Scheduled to open in late 2011, the hospital will house 320 beds, serve an estimated 500 patients a day, and help to train Haiti's next generation of doctors, nurses and medical workers. L'Ecole de Choix (the School of Choice), a private English language K-12 school, is also under construction just outside of the center of the city. The school was founded by FATEM, a foundation funded in large part by Mirbale expatriates living in the Diaspora. When I visited, the school site was under construction and scheduled to open this fall, although they, like so many other schools, are still in need of qualified teachers.

The Mirbale Municipal Library was recently renovated and expanded with support from Japanese organizations, FATEM, and the National Library. One of the branch libraries working under the coordination of the National Library, the new library reopened in a two-story lime-green building in the center of Mirbale. Like other community libraries in Haiti, in addition to housing a book collection, it also serves as a central community space and sponsors neighborhood and cultural events. The ground floor of the library is lined with three wide rows of books and study tables. The collection, like those of other libraries, is primarily in French and is heavily dependent on donations. Thus it is somewhat haphazard and not necessarily aligned with the needs of the user community. The second floor of the building contains a spacious computer lab with twenty public computers, high-speed Internet access, and a projector screen. It is well equipped for training programs and presentations. However, on the day I visited I was told the computer lab was closed due to a lack of trained staff to manage and maintain the equipment.

ARAKA

ARAKA (Apwi pou Rechèch ak Animasyon Kiltirèl Ayisyen in Haitian Creole) is a neighborhood social and cultural organization founded in August 1988 to promote civic activities and youth programs. It has evolved to become a small public community library and cultural center. In addition to supporting social and political groups focused on civic issues, the center, located in a small house in downtown Port-au-Prince, has a theater group, hosts music performances, offers music instruction and theater workshops for children, art exhibits, weekly literary events, and other cultural activities.

The library consists of several bookshelves with a collection of about 300 books total, including reference



ARAKA library and cultural center

works, novels, and basic science books. These materials are primarily in French and were obtained largely from donations and other sources, including FOKAL. Located in an area hit hard by the earthquake, the building and library materials suffered significant damage, including all computer equipment. They are in need of building repairs,

book acquisitions, furniture, and computers. In addition to receiving receiving donations of books and equipment, the organizers of ARAKA are interested in learning about how services and outreach activities are implemented in US public libraries. They want to teach people “to believe in books,” to learn how to treat books, and to get more people in the community to make use of their library collection and other programs. They are also very concerned about the skewed image of Haiti abroad and are interested in partnering with libraries and other civic organizations internationally in order to make “true” Haitian culture more visible to the rest of the world.

OTHER LIBRARY INITIATIVES

Libraries without Borders - Haiti

Libraries Without Borders (LWB) is a nonprofit organization devoted to facilitating the growth of libraries in the developing world. LWB has been active in Haiti since 2008 and has been involved with several pre- and post-earthquake initiatives to help support access to information in Haiti, such as the creation of mobile libraries to provide books to residents of displaced persons camps, and the facilitation of donations of materials to libraries throughout the country, including public, school, and prison libraries. I visited the Haiti offices of LWB and spoke with Vincent Jumeaux, who is coordinating LWB’s “University Library Project” in cooperation with the State University. This project involves creating a centralized digital library to provide access to licensed resources for Haitian students and scholars.

Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC)

Administered by Florida International University with several Caribbean area partners, dLOC provides users free access to Caribbean cultural, historical, and research materials held in archives, libraries, and private collections. Their documents include items such as newspapers, archives of Caribbean leaders and governments, documentation and numeric data for ecosystems, scientific scholarship, historic and contemporary maps, oral and popular histories, travel accounts, literature, and poetry. The National Archives of Haiti is one of the founding institutions of dLOC. In addition to their online Caribbean collections, dLOC is very active in Haiti. Their Protecting Haitian Patrimony

initiative (PHP) serves as an coordinating body for library and heritage related efforts in Haiti, with an emphasis on transparency and partnerships with local institutions. The PHP documentation provide an excellent overview of the major collecting organizations in Haiti, their current needs, and how they were impacted by the earthquake. Because of dLOC’s central coordinating role, regional expertise and contacts, it will be an important organization to coordinate with on any future library-related initiatives. dLOC director Brooke Wooldridge was instrumental in putting our team in contact with the National Library of Haiti, FOKAL, Libraries without Borders, and other contacts in Haiti and the United States. We have had follow-up conversations with her, and she welcomes KU as a partner in their efforts and has invited us to participate in a training program with the National Archives in Port-au-Prince in October 2011.

Opportunities for KU Libraries

KU Libraries has resources and expertise in several areas that would provide fruitful collaborations and partnerships with Haitian institutions.

* **Electronic publishing and open access.** Many of the organizations we visited (including PAPDA, CRESFED, and the State University) publish printed scholarly material such as monographs, research reports, and journals. As higher education moves increasingly towards online and open access models of scholarly publishing, Haitian organizations can explore these options to give their publications more visibility and impact. KU Libraries’ strong experience in open-access initiatives, administering digital repositories, and supporting electronic publishing efforts make these these promising areas for future collaboration.

* **Haitian Creole and Haiti-related collections.** KU Libraries has been collecting Haitian material since the Haitian studies program began at KU, and we have one of the strongest collections of Haitian-related material in the United States. Our collection includes popular materials in the Kreyòl language such as pamphlets, Bible stories, and translations (collected to provide non-textbook examples of Kreyòl) as well as materials about Haiti, including Haitian journals and newspapers. Under the guidance of Jana Krentz, KU Libraries had exchange programs in place with Haitian institutions for many years. Those exchange programs have ceased since the earthquake, resulting in a lack of availability of content from Haitian institutions.



Maryemma Graham, Kiran Jayaram, Brian Rosenblum with Francoise Beaulieru-Thybulle, BNH director, a student translator and Dr. Jean-Louis Franco

Nevertheless, KU's strong holdings in this area can be built upon. Our exchange programs (which are also very beneficial to Haitian libraries) can be relaunched through renewed contact with Haitian libraries, and we can explore the opportunities for digitizing our holdings and making them more accessible to researchers and students in Haiti and worldwide.

* **KU Haitian Publications.** KU's Institute for Haitian Studies has published more than thirty titles related to Haiti and the Kreyòl language, many authored by the Institute's founder, Bryan Freeman. Six of these titles, including an English-Haitian medical dictionary, are freely available online on the KU website, and are valuable resources for researchers, aid workers, and travelers to Haiti. With Professor Bryant's permission, the remaining titles can be scanned and made available online and physical copies of all titles distributed to Haitian libraries. Electronic copies can be deposited in KU ScholarWorks, giving them greater visibility and allowing usage to be tracked; print copies can be donated to Haitian regional libraries. Through KU Bookstore's print on demand service, and with coordination by a local organization such as FOKAL, providing print copies to Haitian libraries could be accomplished at a modest cost.

New digital initiatives and knowledge creation. KU Libraries, through the Center for Digital Scholarship and the Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities, is

well positioned to partner with researchers to help create new online digital resources. Activities here could include helping develop or support a repository to preserve and make available Haitian-related research; digitizing the Haitian resources held at KU Libraries and the Institute for Haitian studies; and partnering with other institutions involved with digital initiatives in the region. (For example, a "Humanities and Technology" conference is being planned for the Caribbean region, to be held in Trinidad in Fall 2012. KU Libraries has been invited to help plan that event.)

Links to Haitian library-related initiatives

Libraries without Borders—Haiti

<http://www.librarieswithoutborders.org/?cat=32>

Digital Library of the Caribbean

<http://www.dloc.com>

DLOC - Protecting Haitian Patrimony Initiative

<http://www.dloc.com/UF00098694>

FOKAL

<http://fokal.org/en>

Haiti Soleil

<http://haitisoleil.org>

Smithsonian Haiti Cultural Recovery Project

<http://haiti.si.edu>

Duke Haiti Lab

<http://fhi.duke.edu/labs/haiti-lab>

Remember Haiti Exhibit— John Carter Brown Library – Brown University

http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/John_Carter_Brown_Library/remember_haiti/index.php

KU Haitian Creole Resources

<http://www2.ku.edu/~haitiancreole>

Best Practices for Reconstruction: Technology-enhanced and open education in Haitian universities (MIT Symposium)

<http://haiti.mit.edu/symposium>



Art market

CONCLUSION

KU AND HAITI: THE WAY FORWARD

KU's longstanding relationship with Haiti cannot be overlooked as we conclude this report. A distinguished KU graduate serves as head of the Albert Schweitzer American Hospital; Chancellor Emeritus Robert Hemenway's visit to Haiti early in his tenure resulted in increased enrollment of Haitian students; and the thirty publications from KU's Institute for Haitian Studies, including those by Bryant Freeman, show a major commitment to advancing knowledge about Haiti. More recently, a KUMC relief program, coordinated by Doug Girod, MD, continues to provide much-needed services through a team of medical professionals during routine visits to the country. KU, in short, is already a "known quantity" in Haiti.

The Haiti Research Initiative has, therefore, grown its roots in the fertile soil of KU. One of the first confirmations, aside from our own preliminary investigations, came at the INURED gathering, which included over one hundred people from forty different universities and organizations, most of them outside of Haiti. A key conference document "Interdisciplinary Longitudinal Key Indicators Project (LKIP), notes, "Prior to the January 12, 2010 earthquake, Haiti had no solid structures for pursuing empirically-based social policy: most . . . result from one-off projects by international agencies." The concept of research as we know it in the academy—and certainly at KU—though visible, is fragmented at best, difficult to track. We listened carefully to discussions of ongoing projects from New York University (mental health), Columbia (literacy training), Boston University (urban planning) and more applied projects from Barry and Nova Southeastern universities, as well as the University of Miami, which continue to absorb many Haitian immigrants. To address this fragmentation, INURED has proposed a united effort to provide "quality data necessary . . . designed and managed to best respond to actual needs and publicly stated priorities." The call for accountability in research and action for Haiti is well underway.

Our initial ideas about how to conduct research now have the greater benefit of clarity around the goals and objectives of the government, the views expressed by scholars and activists with whom we met, and our own experiential

knowledge. Not only does this suggest a revision of KU's Institute for Haitian Studies, but it also identifies directions for our research practice. Many of us are already engaged in follow-up projects. We agreed to work in collaboration with INURED to centralize information and access and to organize seminars and educational programs in the areas of research and administrator training. We will attend the invitational meeting of North Americans for the Advancement of Haitians (NOAH) September 21-23, in Washington, DC, with other universities and prospective public and private funders of higher education research in Haiti. A second meeting of the Digital Library of the Caribbean people to be held in Haiti in October is on our agenda as well. It corresponds with an academic conference that seeks to "develop what could be called scientific and cultural community to promote Kreyòl" (Potomitan 2011) with the support of the Komite Inisyativ pou Monte Akademi (KIMA, Committee for Establishing of the Kreyòl Academy).¹ That meeting will focus on the creation of a Kreyòl Academy, which seeks to formally standardize the language that unites all Haitians in the same way that the Real Academia Española does for Spanish and the Académie Française does for French. Beyond being a presence and a willing partner for Haitian organizations, Kiran Jayaram will be presenting a paper on dynamics of Haitian Creole at the colloquium based on his research. The importance of Kreyòl was a key focus in our discussions with Fritz Deshommes and Jean-Marie Theodat of the State University of Haiti, both of whom see tremendous value in a KU partnership on this and other issues.

We will submit a number of grant applications. All place KU's Strategic Initiative Themes (SIT) at the center. An initial proposal, planned at the outset of the HRI, to the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), was forwarded on August 29, 2011. If approved, we will submit a fully developed plan for *The Haitian Area Instructional Training Initiative* (The Haiti Project). The project will implement, following a one-year development phase, a Haiti Teacher Corps Core Curriculum (TC-3), training 500 college sophomores at UEH, to become professional educators in an accelerated two-year program. The goal is to create and test a sustainable, innovative, replicable model for higher education that delivers excellence, creates jobs and provides services. Such a project meets several SIT goals, including: (a) educational excellence and diversity; (b) engaging global communities for public impact; (b) pushing the boundaries of knowledge and making it acces-

¹ Kòlòk entènasyonal 2011. Potomitan—kòlòk entènasyonal. Electronic document. <http://www.potomitan.info/colloques/akademi.php> Accessed August 14, 2011.

sible to a broader society. The project might appear to be similar to “Teachers without Borders” or “Teach for America” but is far more ambitious, grounded in anthropology of education, cognitive psychology, and the use of new technologies. Based on the data we collect, we will be able to show quantifiable results and qualitative impact. Direct involvement with core fields within the humanities will be necessary as well as a strong working relationship with the KU Schools of Education and Engineering, KU Med Center, the Institute for Policy and Social Research, and KU Libraries. Impact areas include urban planning, human and community development and innovation, information and digital technologies, global culture studies, pharmacy and public health.

Other projects relate to research and research-based training, agricultural production and training, and teacher training. There has been at least one conversation with Scott Freeman (grad student at Teachers College; employee of Earth Institute) that began at the INURED meeting about the possibility of a consortium of schools, including Columbia University and KU, to develop a combined research methods camp and field school to train both US and Haitian students and professors in Haiti. From a conversation with a senior scholar in anthropology, it appears that National Science Foundation monies may be available to support this endeavor.

Another step after this initial trip involves links to other area universities. Given PAPDA’s interest in food issues, there may be interest in partnering with Kansas State University to develop a project related to agricultural sciences. Also, Emporia State University (with an existing link to teacher training at Johnson County Community College), would be a strong collaborator for any teacher-training initiatives.

From our collective reading, research, and work experiences, and trip to Haiti, we see certain key research questions, a few of which are outlined below. Within the humanities, we are interested in:

1. What is the role of art in rebuilding and sustaining after disasters? How does “dangerous writing” (to borrow Danticat’s term) manifest itself in Haiti? How might we make a distinction between a genuine politically engaged art and other manifestations of political art, particularly in authoritarian and fascist regimes elsewhere in the world in?

2. Has Haiti produced its own “cross cultural poetics” (a term associated with Martinican writer/critic Edouard Glissant)? Do Haitian literary, musical, and visual artists (vernacular and professionally trained) use their work as a “site for the articulation of the collective” (Dash, *Caribbean Discourses*: xiii), that is, to question the relationship between the individual and the collective in Haitian thought and imaginative discourse? How is memory to be used as an instrument for shaping, conceptualizing, living, and perhaps writing “future history”? Are these “new histories” acts of nation and culture building when they construct and deploy a collective Haitian identity rather focusing more on revealing and understanding an individual self?
3. What might we make of Edward Kamau Brathwaite’s term “auto-anthropologies,” or the literature that creates the self-in-community, with an emphasis on roots, heritage, and the syncretic fusion of African, indigenous, and European cultures, rather than the more familiar notions of alienation? Is this exclusive to the vast number of Haitian writers and artists in exile?
4. What do we make of Haitian’s own experience with modernity: so many of its artists and intellectuals have been part of global modernisms (Haitian art, Negritude, etc)? How might we redefine notions of modernity/post-modernity, conventionally seen as a preoccupation with individual remaking in the context of rapidly changing systems of meaning and value? If one is deeply attached to a cultural heritage, as Haitians seem to be, what are the possibilities and cultural currency for art that is derived from Creole culture and language that incorporate popular cultural forms such as the folktale and folk musics, the oral tradition of poetry, and storytelling. According to Jean-Marie Theodat, this is precisely the aspect of cultural reconstruction and preservation that needs urgent attention.

The Social Sciences offer the following research directions:

1. **HOLISM:** What is the relationship between social and cultural practices (religion, political organization, family structure) and technological practices (farming, land tenure, work) in Haiti, and how might these be drawn on to celebrate and protect diversity in the context of post-disaster reconstruction?

2. **IMPACT OF NSP:** How does the entry of major nonstate providers in a post-disaster area impact people's understandings of money, work, property, and ethics? What understandings of these concepts do development and charity projects (governmental or otherwise) integrate into their operations? What are the different understandings of these topics among Haitians, and how do these differ according to class, geographic location, etc.? What strategies do Haitians implement to harmonize any differences between these understandings?

3. **RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS:** What type of social change do religious institutions effect in Haiti, and how have these dynamics changed after the earthquake? What has happened to liberation theology in Haiti after the rise and fall of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide? How do different religious institutions (Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, etc.) operate in Haiti, and what impact are they having on their adherents and the communities they serve?

4. **CUSTOMARY PRACTICES:** How do collective work units (for example, *konbit*), land tenure, client-vendor relationships, market systems, credit associations, work arrangements, and other customary practices operate, and how has the earthquake affected them? Given the exploitative history of foreign intervention in Haiti and the number of organizations seeking to draw on pre-existing models for profit, how feasible is it to draw upon these while maintaining dignity for Haitians and respect for their way of life?

5. **LANGUAGE:** While both Kreyòl and French are recognized as official languages, how do people use each of these languages, and what variables index differences in usage? What role does Kreyòl play for Haitians living in contemporary Haiti? What differences are there according to class, geographic area, gender, age, etc.?

6. **SCHOOLING:** How do the roles of Kreyòl and French in Haitian school

system impact students' learning? How do socio-economic class and school choice as a child impact a person's ability to maintain a family as an adult? What is the relationship between the job market in Haiti, institutions of post-secondary education, and students' designs for higher learning?

7. **FACTORIES:** What is life like for factory workers? Do they earn a living wage? What are the profits made at each step of the commodity chain? What differences do Haitians make among the various companies regarding workplace compensation, safety and dignity, workplace relations, and overall quality of employment? To what extent do Haitians view factories as beneficial versus the extent to which they believe they have little other choice but to work there? Who in a family seeks employment at assembly plants? What role do unions play in the workplace?

8. **AGRICULTURE:** Similarly, what is life like, what are the wages and profits for an agricultural worker? What are the various types of technologies being used and innovations being introduced into the production process, and what type of social relations do these usher in (on a local, national, and international context)?

9. **HEALTH:** What types of medical pluralism exist in Haiti, and how do they relate to the available resources (both autochthonous and imported)? How



Dr. Guy Noel, Louis Herns Marcelin, Kiran Jayaram, Régine René (US Cultural Attaché to Haiti), Maryemma Graham, and Brian Rosenblum.

do Haitians identify pathologies and access treatment options, and how does this vary according to class, geographic location, gender, age, religion, etc.?

10. MIGRATION: What political, social, economic, and ecological factors contribute to or hinder internal or international migration? How do people mitigate these forces?

These questions now need to be more fully fleshed out to become concrete plans for research and action. We hope to do this in the spirit of collaboration and community building that can facilitate new research and cultural practices on our own campus and nurture an environment for mutual, reciprocal and cross-cultural work in the twenty-first century.

APPENDICES

THE HAITI RESEARCH INITIATIVE

TEAM BIOS

Maryemma Graham, professor of English, University of Kansas, founder, director Project on the History of Black Writing; PhD in English, Cornell; specializations in African American Literature, and transnational studies. She has sixteen years experience in professional development, curriculum design and instruction for secondary and post-secondary education. A frequent recipient of grants, including the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Ford Foundation; and fellowships from the National Research Center, American Council of Learned Societies, and the Stanford Humanities Center. Graham has published nine books and more than thirty articles. In 2003, while president of the Toni Morrison Society, she founded Language Matters, an international initiative focusing on reading and teaching literature and translation studies.

Kiran Jayaram, PhD candidate in applied anthropology at Columbia University, Teachers College; MA in Latin American studies at the University of Kansas, with a focus on Haiti, and his MPhil in applied anthropology at Teachers College, Columbia University. Throughout his graduate studies, he has written and presented on social dynamics of literacy in Haiti, worked on a teacher-training program on the Haitian-Dominican border, examined some schooling issues relating to a living wage for free-trade zone workers at an assembly

factory on the Haitian-Dominican border, and researched and volunteered in literacy programs in northern Haiti. His dissertation research covers livelihood strategies of Haitian migrants to the Dominican Republic. He taught Haitian Creole at the University of Kansas (2000-2003) and the University of Florida (2003-2004), and he taught a course on cultural politics in Haiti at the University of Kansas (2002).

Brian Rosenblum, associate librarian for digital scholarship, KU Libraries, and co-director, Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities. Rosenblum has administrative, production, and outreach responsibilities in support of a variety of digital initiatives and electronic publishing services. Prior to joining KU Libraries' digital initiatives program in 2005, he worked at the Scholarly Publishing Office at the University Library, University of Michigan, where he helped develop numerous electronic journals and digital scholarly projects. In 2003-04 he was a Fulbright Scholar in the Czech Republic. He was a Keeler Family Intra-University Professor at the Spencer Museum of Art during the fall 2010 semester.

C.B. Claiborne, professor of marketing, Texas Southern University; PhD marketing, Virginia Tech; development specialist and photographer, with nineteen years experience teaching and consulting in areas of business development. He has led the development of three distance-learning business programs, organized international managerial-training workshops and participated in business assessment activities in Malawi and Tanzania. In 2008, Dr. Claiborne edited a collection of working papers focused on doing business in the emerging East African economy. He has, for over twenty years, used photographs and photo elicitation methods to help explore and understand cultural meaning.

Across the United States, many universities have active connections to Haiti and Haitian studies. Several have medical programs linked to work in Haiti (Harvard, Notre Dame, University of Florida, Cornell, and Loma Linda). Several universities offer courses in Haitian Creole and Haitian culture (University of Kansas, University of Indiana, University of Florida, Brown University, Columbia University, Goshon College) and two have summer programs (Florida International University, University of Massachusetts at Boston). Ohio State University is involved in teacher training, and Teachers College at Columbia University has worked on secondary teacher training and increasing reading in the classroom. Columbia Brown, Duke, Georgetown, and a collection of state-funded California universities have projects related to Haitian studies across disciplines. Perhaps the most developed area of Haitian studies is the work being done through library information and access [see Brian Rosenblum summary, pages 20- 27)]

The Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development (INURED or the Institute) is a research and higher education establishment based in Haiti. INURED's mission is to contribute to the development of high-level research and scientific training in Haiti with the goal of improving the educational, socioeconomic and political conditions of Haiti's people. INURED conducts higher education research and training, as well as production, centralization and diffusion of knowledge; and community intervention. INURED is a collective initiative set up by a group of Haitian and foreign researchers with the support of local and international partners and forms part of an international network of universities and research centers that collaborate actively in the implementation and development of its program of activities.

The University of the West Indies has coordinated with CARICOM and four Haitian universities in a needs assessment. UWI has also offered scholarships to many Haitians

at its several campuses. The Vice-Chancellor of UWI, E. Nigel Harris, is the President of Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutions (UNICA), and in May 2010, UNICA agreed to work with INURED to create a data base of resources to rebuild tertiary education.

The Dominican Republic, under leadership of President Leonel Fernandez, has begun construction of a campus for the State University of Haiti (UEH) in Limonad, Haiti, near Cape Haïtien. Initial plans indicate that it will be started under Dominican leadership, to subsequently be handed over to Haitian administrators.

Independent organizations are playing an active role in expanding educational opportunities in Haiti. An example is the boarding school under construction by the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CME) south of Port-au-Prince. It will enroll nonpaying (including homeless) and paying students. An experiment in educational access and opportunity, it plans to offer college preparatory and advanced technical education as well as professional development and teacher-training courses for qualified adults. The school provides various types of education while simultaneously building infrastructure. Its graduates can remain and gain employment in the country, impact the shortage of Haitian educators, and battle illiteracy. The need to resist the "brain drain" and, by implication, contribute to Haiti's social, cultural and economic development is a priority.

It is not clear what contributions are coming from elsewhere in the Caribbean or the rest of Latin America, India, or China. Many African nations offered support to Haitians after the earthquake, but it is unclear what actual support has been given or is available. This is especially true, as noted earlier, regarding the distribution of combined funds earmarked for Haiti recovery through USAID and IHRC.



Mosaic in the garden of the Bibliotheque Nationale