



HUMANITARIAN CRISES IN HAITI



Photo: Haitians here in Port au Prince took to the streets in July 2018 to protest fuel hikes, rising costs of living and lack of basic services.

2018 and 2019 were tough years for Haiti. The socio-economic situation worsened when Venezuela's Petrocaribe program was suspended, ending favorable financing terms on 60,000 barrels a day of oil, 70% of Haiti's fuel need. The Moïse administration in Haiti attempted to raise fuel prices by 50%. Mass demonstrations ensued, continuing over the past year in response to an economy in freefall. Warring, armed gangs arose, and a massacre ensued in Port au Prince. The government became increasingly dysfunctional so that there was no approved 2019 budget and no aid disbursements, notably a \$229 million IMF loan.

Failings of the international community, particularly the US, continued to exacerbate Haiti's fragility —

- The US Executive's diminished budget, down 25%, shuttered USAID's Kore Lavi, a highly effective cash transfer program that fought rural malnutrition while bolstering local food production and economically empowering women.
- The cholera epidemic claimed nearly 10,000 lives after its introduction by UN forces.

The economic crisis hit while the country was on the heels of a two-year drought. Haiti was still recovering from the devastating 2010 earthquake and 2016's Hurricane Matthew. The value of the Haitian Gourde plummeted by 19.7 % vs the US Dollar in 2019. Prices skyrocketed and more and more families struggled to put food on the table. According to a recent UN report, Haiti now has the highest rate of undernourishment (49.3%) in the Latin America/Caribbean region.

During all the violence and economic and transportation slowdown, Haiti went into "Pays Lock", a countrywide lockdown that greatly impacted Pazapa's children's lives. Schools throughout the country, including Pazapa, closed at the beginning of the fall 2019 semester.



Impact for Pazapa

Children living with disabilities like Pazapa’s children are often the most vulnerable and the first to feel the impact of any crisis. Pazapa witnessed children behind those malnourishment statistics during recent clinics, seeing a record caseload and unprecedented prevalence of hunger. According to Pazapa’s director Marika MacRae (September 2019): *“All are being affected by cost of living increases, esp. in food which has tripled and in energy. The current situation is that there is no gasoline, and no electricity for 6 days now. As of today. I have seen many new faces looking for services.”*

Organizations like Pazapa had to do more with less — to develop reciprocal partnerships, to train Haitians, to build local capacities...all while serving an ever-expanding community of families in need.

HOPE THROUGH PAZAPA

Hope for Christian, a Child Reached by Pazapa

Christian a shy, kind, bright boy who hailed from a rural area outside of Jacmel. Because he lived with epilepsy, Christian was denied access to his local school, and because his family lives in poverty, making the trip into town for school at Pazapa every day was impossible. But his father brought him to a clinic in 2018, and maintained the medication regime prescribed by local pediatrician (and Pazapa’s in-Haiti board president), Dr Frantzo Nelson, in consultation with visiting pediatric neurologist, Dr Chris Miller.

In spring 2019 Christian was one of over 100 patients who came from remote villages despite the unrest. His dad proudly informed us that because Christian is now seizure-free, he’ll be able to attend school for the first time this month! Meanwhile, Pazapa’s rural outreach monitors continue to advocate school directors and teachers to include and accommodate for children with disabilities like Christian.



Christian undergoing evaluation for his epileptic condition



Hope Brought at Christmas



Christmas Festivities 2019

Regardless of hardships, Christmas has long been Pazapa's opportunity to reunite with parents and celebrate the children. With the help of Pazapa staff and a DJ, the kids sang and danced the day away. The celebration ended with a special meal and presents around a Christmas tree. Our British friends at Pazapa Church Stretton donated \$2,000 to fund the party and give the children an unforgettable day.

Hope by Food Distribution

Pazapa staff conducted home surveys looking for ways to support the families of children with disabilities. During the "Pays Lock" lockdown families had little access to food due to the sudden, extreme cost-of-living increase. Parents were desperate. Many Pazapa children were handed off to relatives or to acquaintances in rural Jacmel. The solution for Pazapa was to provide food support for the suffering families, and 42 families were selected for 2 dry food distributions. Food costs of approximately \$4,000 were covered by Pazapa's partner CASS (Canadian Association Step by Step). Several additional food distributions are planned for 2020.



Food and Hygiene Kits for Distribution



PAZAPA PROGRAM UPDATES

Education, Health, Family Support, Outreach, & Advocacy

Education



School for the Deaf Reopens, Fall 2019

- a) **At the beginning of the Jan. 2019 school year the Special Education School had 109 students enrolled and there were had 41 Deaf School students.** 36 children received speech therapy. The cost of educating each student is approximately \$300/student.
- b) Schools throughout Haiti were suspended due to “Pays Lock” in the fall, but after meeting with parents at the end of November, Pazapa reopened. On November 26, the School for the Deaf and the mainstream and early intervention Special Education classes resumed. **At the end of the year the Special Education School had 116 students, and there were 31 Deaf School students.**

Health



Early intervention Ponseti Clubfoot Casting supervised by Pazapa Expert Toni Antoine

- a) With the support of CURE and its employees, Pazapa has regular clubfoot follow up clinics and counselling for parents. There was a total of **15 clubfeet patients receiving care** in early intervention Ponseti Clubfoot Casting.
- b) For this reporting period, an average of **78 children with orthopedic needs have been to Pazapa for care and follow up** through the visiting team led by Dr. Fred McGlynn.
- c) **The total number of children on seizure medications is 95**, following diagnoses by visiting pediatric neurologist Dr. Chris Miller. This number includes both those in Jacmel and in the Pazapa Outreach areas.



Family Support

a) **Ti-Commerce microloans** were distributed on July 25th to a total of **69 participants**. All families received 10,000 gde loans (~\$100 USD) to be paid with an interest rate of 2%. The total amount distributed was 690000 gdes and the total amount recovered by the end of December was 677000 gdes. 10 participants were unable to fully repay their loan due to the obvious economic struggles caused by the “Pays Lock” movement.



Mireille, sewing handbags for PazapArts

b) **20 young women with disabilities participated in Pazapa’s sewing class**, which supported recent graduates (including Mireille, a talented seamstress who is deaf) in selling their wares locally and online.

c) **The Pazapa culinary program at Pazapa trained 36 senior students**, and the summer’s graduates launched a line of peanut butter and preserves being sold locally.



d) **PazapaArts held a four-day painting workshop for 12 Deaf Pazapa children** from May 27th to the 30th. Two internationally known artists representing “Quinzaine Handicap et Culture” (A Fortnight of International Handicap Culture)

came to the Center and taught basics of painting. At the end of the workshop, an artistic opening was held at Pazapa and at the Centre D’Art in Port-au-Prince.

Rural Outreach



Monitor Denise Bernard at her rural classroom

Pazapa’s rural Outreach Program reaches approximately 160 children living with disabilities who cannot easily travel to Jacmel. Outreach extends to five rural villages: Cayes Jacmel, La Montagne Bellevue, La Montagne LaCroix, LaVoute, and Lafond.

a) **Outreach Monitors** are essential for Pazapa’s communication to rural areas. Two dedicated, paid Monitors per village (total of ten Monitors) organize schools, facilitate workshops for CWDs and their parents, set up rural clinics for visiting doctors, facilitate Ti Commerce microloans, and report monthly to Pazapa headquarters. Monitor Denise Barnard of LaVoute is shown here in the LaVoute classroom that she has run for 7-10 children with disabilities over the last two years.



- b) **Pazapa's Outreach Coordinator, Pierre-Paul Exilus personally visited 71 families** for this reporting period to assess progress and needs.
- c) **10 community meetings** were held to address inclusion and accessibility and to educate the communities, especially the youth, on issues of violence against women and young girls living with disabilities. The meetings were assisted by Beyond Borders, a partnering NGO that specializes in changing attitudes toward gender-based violence and exploitation.
- d) **A total of 35 children were mainstreamed** into local schools in the 5 Outreach communities. Many are children whose epileptic conditions are controlled through medication procured by Pazapa. Pazapa continues to pay their school fees and purchase their textbooks

Disability Advocacy

- a) **Th Pazapa celebrated Dec 3rd, International Day for Person with Disabilities**". Starting on Dec 1st, Pazapa and members of National Association Network for the Integration of People with Disabilities went to Lafond (Outreach) for an open discussion with roughly 60 participants on social participation by persons with disabilities. On Dec 3rd Pazapa's Administrator Jean Joseph Forgeas held a press conference on the various ways in Haiti that the rights of persons with disabilities are not respected. It was most certainly noted that these persons have deeply suffered the effects of the "Pays Lock" lockdown in Haiti.



Administrator Forgeas Leads Conference, Dec. 3 International Day for Persons with Disabilities.

- b) Pazapa's Administrator Jean Joseph Forgeas hosted throughout the year regular radio shows called **Ti Koze Pazapa** (A Little Conversation with Pazapa). The topics discussed for this reporting period included: Living with a physical disability, the role and impact of family on persons living with disabilities, and Haitian celebrities living with a disability. Forgeas ended the Dec. 3 conference with a two-hour awareness radio program on the rights of persons living with disabilities.

This is Why Pazapa Matters

Children with disabilities, even those served by Pazapa, are always the hardest hit during humanitarian crises. Their families are statistically speaking the poorest and have disproportionately less access to the already scant resources available. When a family must choose which children receive resources, a child with a disability will always be back-burnered versus siblings without disabilities — the cold calculus of investing in progeny deemed most likely to financially contribute to the family's future.

Because of Pazapa and despite present crises, those children access special education and critical medical care, and they live in a community that values and includes them.