



Haitian Education & Leadership Program

Quarterly Report  
Fall 2018

## Fostering Growth in the Student Affairs Department

Encompassing admissions, advising and thesis support, HELP’s Student Affairs Department encourages students to adopt and advance HELP’s standards, laying the foundation for their success at university and beyond.

### Spotlight on Staff: Smyrne Saintil (Law ’07) Student Affairs Director

Smyrne’s HELP career began as an incoming freshman in 2003. After graduation she worked at a small law firm for a year before coming back to HELP in 2008 for a temporary assignment that turned permanent when she realized that HELP could offer her the career path she had been looking for.

Now married with a 3-year-old daughter, Smyrne has stayed because of the dynamic environment. “There is a constant evolution at HELP, which forces the employees to be creative and grow professionally. Freshmen come looking for a scholarship. Our job is to get them thinking about changing more than themselves, to give them the skills and tools to carry out HELP’s mission”.

“Over the years you can see the impact your work has on the lives of hundreds of young people. It’s often challenging but never routine.” Country

Director Garry Delice says, “When I think of Smyrne I think of her flexibility, rigor, passion and firmness. It is difficult to see the future of HELP without Smyrne’s contribution.”



Smyrne Saintil

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Only 1% of age eligible Haitians enroll in university and less than half of those graduate.

At HELP, our graduation rate is above

**90%**

# Jupille Facile (Civil Engineering '19): Creating Infrastructure from Agriculture

Jupille Facile is Founder and CEO of the new bamboo company, Bambou Facile. After HELP recommended Jupille for a 2015 Architecture Association seminar in Haiti on bamboo construction, he became enthralled by the possibilities bamboo held for Haiti, where only 30 of the 1,200 bamboo varieties have been introduced. Bambou Facile has three goals: Promote



bamboo as a renewable resource, use bamboo for local manufacturing and construction, and develop bamboo plantations to serve the local market. In 2017 they opened their first furniture production workshop in Gonaives. The company's name is a play on words as facile means "easy" in French. Success has been swift, if not always easy. Demand was so great for their furniture that they have since opened two other workshops, hired 10 full time employees and still cannot keep up with incoming orders!

Jupille's early success earned him a spot on the US State Department's 2018 Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLAI). He recently returned from a six-week tour of the U.S. with stops in Washington DC, Detroit and Seattle, designed to introduce

entrepreneurs to mentors and resources to successfully develop their businesses. Jupille is eager to credit HELP's role in his success. "HELP trained me for this," he says. "I'm just proud to put their teaching on using local

resources to solve local problems into action."



# 2018 Freshmen Continue the HELP-Walk Tradition



It is impossible to imagine that Isemonde made this route twice a day on foot, under this nagging sun.

fostered by Conor's patience, grew their passions from the personal efforts of two people into a model education program serving hundreds.

Freshman Astania Auguste (Communications '22) said, "I'd been sick the night before and my feet hurt but when I thought about stopping, I thought about Isemonde. In the end, this walk represented resistance to physical constraints. It's a reminder of the rigor, humility and courage we need to reach our goals."

In 2016 HELP celebrated its 20th anniversary with a five-mile walk which followed the path HELP's first student, Isemonde Joseph, would take to class every morning from her home in Cité Soleil to her university in the Pacot neighborhood. The following year the walk was added to our freshmen orientation process to introduce incoming students to HELP's humble roots.

This year's theme of "humility and recognition" emphasized the roles Isemonde and Executive Director Conor Bohan played in HELP's creation. Isemonde's courage and determination



Garry Delice talking to freshmen at the starting point.

HELP is one of only a few organizations in the world that fulfills the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #4:  
**substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries.**

# Student Focus:

## Nikenson Romage (Finance '18)

After the death of his father when he was just three years old, Nikenson was raised by his mother in and around Port-au-Prince. Unable to afford rent in the city, they moved frequently and ended up in a distant suburb.

Nikenson's mother often couldn't pay his tuition at a reputable Episcopal school downtown, so after a long morning commute he would sometimes be turned away at the school gate. Growing up with so much uncertainty, Nikenson decided he did not want to have to rely on anyone else, "it was up to me to change our lives for the better." So he was determined to make the most of the opportunities he did have. On days he was turned away from school he would sit outside the classroom and listen through the window. At the end of the school day he would ask classmates to fill in what he had missed. It turns out that he didn't miss much, as he was elected Class President and graduated at the top of his class.

Nikenson has a passion for theatre and film but his practical side won out for his choice of major and he is finishing up his finance degree this semester. He recently interned with the Haitian Ministry of Commerce where he evaluated promising value chains for Haiti. He hasn't abandoned his artistic interests, helping local filmmakers whenever he can. In January he is headed to Washington DC for a four-month internship with the Libra Group after which he will look for a job in Haiti which will allow him to support his mother.

"HELP has provided me with support that goes beyond the scholarship," he says. It is the chance that I have received from God to work to make my dreams come true."



**Nikenson Romage**  
(5th Year, Finance, UNIQ)

**67%**  
of HELP students  
volunteer on  
a regular basis



### Haitian Education & Leadership Program

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