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Fondasyon konesans ak libète
Fondation connaissance et liberté

ANNUAL REPORT | 2023



Fondasyon konesans ak libète
Fondation connaissance et liberté

2023 FPOS Funding for FOKAL

Grantee: Fondation Connaissance et Liberté

Annual Report

Grant Period: 1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023

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I. Fondation Connaissance et Liberté

Created in 1995, Fondation Connaissance et Liberté / Fondasyon Konesans Ak Libète (Foundation for Knowledge and Liberty), FOKAL, is a national foundation within the Open Society Foundations, OSF, a worldwide network of foundations and initiatives created by philanthropist George Soros for the promotion of the rule of law, human rights, and democratic values. FOKAL also receives support from other funders, among which the Kellogg Foundation, the European Union, the French Agency for Development (AFD), and Lawyers-Without- Borders Canada. FOKAL offers to local communities throughout the country and to civil society organizations a large spectrum of activities and support in the fields of education, human rights, civic engagement, arts and culture and sustainable development.

Since its creation, FOKAL chose to support sectors in Haitian society that are likely to contribute to positive change for the country; by targeting issues involving children and youth, civil society associations and historically marginalized sectors. Our actions and support revolve around five main themes: access to information, youth and civic engagement, art and education, human rights, and environment. This last point includes the project on the creation, management, and civic outreach of the Martissant Park, made possible with the support of the Haitian government, the Open Society Foundations, the Kellogg Foundation, the French Agency for Development, and the European Union.

1. Our mission

FOKAL aims to promote the implementation of structures necessary to the emergence of a just, democratic, and inclusive society; to support individual and collective autonomy by encouraging critical thinking, creativity, responsibility and cooperation through education, training, and communication and finally to reinforce organizational processes to increase the active implication of the Haitian people in their country's cultural, social, and political life.



II. Letter from the Executive Director

FOKAL was created to nurture the seeds of cultural, economic and social progress in Haiti. From the very beginning, we sought out organizations and individuals who were leading positive transformations and we accompanied their efforts. In some instances, we ourselves modeled innovative approaches to change. We were joined from the start by artists and felt validated by their recognition, thus, creativity and culture were almost always embedded in our endeavors. We also took infinite care to build our team; to model our values and to practice within our organizational culture the civic care we are hoping to see emerge in our society.

As our struggling nation faces increasingly hard challenges, our values, our commitment and our internal capacities are constantly tested. I am both proud and humbled to note that our team has met those challenges. We have faced drastic budget reductions and staff compression while confronting increasing violence, loss, and the many tragic consequences of state failure. Yet we have managed to work hard, watch one another's backs, uphold our programs and reinforce our reach, values and trusting relationships with partners and grantees. As the security climate deteriorates, we do not know what the future holds but we know we are a solid working team with immense hopes for our community.

In August 2023, Michèle Pierre-Louis and I had the immense privilege of attending what may have been the last international gathering of the Open Society Foundations such as we have known it for the past 28+ years. It was the Open Society's Global Convening for the Restitution of African Heritage, and it took place in Accra, Ghana. Many dear colleagues from the OSF network attended but representatives of more than 60 other organizations were also present, including those from five African regions, international agencies, artistic communities, academics, artists and activists. It was a deeply meaningful, thought-provoking and profoundly moving event. We deepened our understanding of the long struggle for the restitution of African heritage pillaged during colonization and we shared the unique -and often ignored- experience of Haiti's coerced payment of an indemnity for its hard-won independence. It was an occasion to reaffirm in our hearts FOKAL's fundamental connection with artists and with culture. May they continue to accompany our journey as well as our own efforts to approach Haiti's specific needs to learn from and come to terms with history.



Lorraine Mangonès

Executive Director, FOKAL

III. Ayiti Demen

Letter from Ayiti Demen’s executive director

In August 2023, on the second anniversary of the earthquake that struck Haiti, I experienced an incredible journey through Haiti’s southern peninsula. From Miragoane to Anse Hainault, via Anse-à-Veau, Les Cayes, Camp-Perrin, Jérémie and Dame-Marie, I visited isolated communities on the crests of mountains that seemed to touch the sky. I stumbled upon charming valleys and small communities, each with a unique character and welcoming locals. I came back invigorated and optimistic. While Port-au-Prince suffers from gang atrocities and a governmental inability to restore security. I was impressed by the resilience and organization of the people in the rest of the country. It’s as if life goes on without a hitch – albeit destitute for many, but with courage and dignity.

The country’s southern peninsula is lush, with mountains as far as the eye can see as if crossing the Catskills without the tarred roads, beautiful cottages, bears, small country towns, and lovely villas. Yet, just a few kilometers away, entire districts of Port-au-Prince, the capital, were under siege by bandits. At the time of the visit, the historic Carrefour-Feuilles district of Port-au-Prince, home to some of Haiti’s renowned artists and writers, was under threat of invasion by armed gangs. The district borders the offices of our partner, FOKAL, in the field. It’s hard not to worry about trips to the Haitian capital. However, to get a taste of tranquil life in Haiti, you must leave Port-au-Prince, cross the mountains, meet the farmers and organizations working on the ground. With the fatigue that came with it, it’s an experience that has left a lasting impression on my heart, and I’m eager to return!

In 2023, we did our best and will continue to do so because we share a common heritage with Haiti. As Frederick Douglass said, this country “taught the world the danger of slavery and the value of liberty.” While we enjoy freedom in the streets of New York, Pretoria, Montreal, Accra, Tokyo, Paris, or London, it is often threatened in Haiti by violence, natural disasters, and suffering. Yes, there is poverty, but mostly gratitude for the help obtained and hope for a better country amid deepening crises and ballooning humanitarian needs. In this report, we look back on our support and outreach as we continue to work with communities of smallholder farmers, social entrepreneurs, and artists in Haiti.

Yvens Rumbold

From Ayiti Demen’s 2023 annual report, p6. Please see the [full report here](#)



IV. Program objectives and progress

1. GOAL 1: Civic engagement, democratic exercise, and social justice

i. Sustainable Development

Theme: Economic Equity & Justice

Subtheme: Civic Engagement and Inclusive Participation in Democratic Governance (Economic Equity & Justice)

FIELD: Civic Engagement and Inclusive Participation in Democratic Governance

Description of proposed work: Through small economic investments, we continued to assist rural grassroots organizations and agrobusinesses with a social and environmental ethos. Our goal was to help increase revenues, reinforce skills, and enable activities with economic, social, and environmental impact. Promising SMEs were supported to reach fair-trade markets mostly in coffee and cocoa. We also encourage federating activities and exchanges among smallholder farmers organizations in the hope of building capacity to advocate at the national level for food security and public services.

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Smallholder farmers are the backbone of Haitian economy and culture yet remain marginalized. FOKAL continued its work in 2023 under worsening security conditions due to gang expansion into rural areas and road blockages to and out of the capital. Despite these challenges, we supported 40 grassroots organizations, with emphasis on the South, Grand'Anse, and Nord'Ouest. Funds facilitated sustainable agricultural practices, water management, environmental protection, income-generation, and youth/women empowerment. Outreach extended to communes like Chardonnières, Camp-Perrin, Jérémie, Saint Louis du Sud, Aquin-Cavaillon, joining others in Artibonite and Centre. Our efforts align with the strengthening of exchanges and federating activities as well as access to fair-trade opportunities.

CHALLENGES

2023 saw a dramatic increase in gang violence. Armed groups seized control over most of Port-au-Prince, expanded into rural regions (Artibonite and Centre), creating roadblocks, kidnappings, and forced road closures. This severely disrupted logistics, inputs, market access, and safe movement of field staff. Some organizations were forced to temporarily suspend field activities and reallocate project funds toward security and remote coordination.

NEXT STEPS TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE

1. Decentralization of Support: Strengthen and operationalize community resource centers in rural zones—South, Grand'Anse, Central Plateau—as regional hubs for training, production, civic engagement, and micro-enterprise activities, reducing dependency on Port-au-Prince infrastructure.
2. Strengthening exchanges and federating activities among farmers associations to promote food sovereignty advocacy, territorial rights, and policy dialogue. Collaborative activities can lead to the constitution of a platform for rural communities to influence local governance, especially amid State dysfunction and rising violence.
- 3 Diversifying Partnerships & Mobilization: Deepen relations with philanthropic supporters (WKKF, Citi-CAF America, Ford Foundation), and leverage Ayiti Demen, FOKAL's U.S. 501(c)(3), to engage new donors and diaspora networks. This ensures financial resilience and advocacy capacity in a shifting humanitarian landscape.

4. Remote Coordination & Tech Use: Further deploy digital tools and hybrid coordination models to maintain program continuity, ensure transparent monitoring, and preserve field presence. Security threats require us to rely heavily on remote engagement, data gathering, and community-led implementation.





ii.Martissant Park

Theme: Economic Equity & Justice

Subtheme: Urban Space Development for Civic Engagement

CONCEPT : Preservation of Martissant Park through civic engagement and community outreach.

Description of proposed work: The Martissant Park has proved its capacity to provide safe spaces to support transformative and regenerative processes for urban populations living under high political and economic stress.

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2023, despite complete gang control over the neighborhood and total closure of public activities at the park, FOKAL maintained its scholarship program to support children from Martissant. A total of 136 students across 7 schools were awarded scholarships. These scholarships allowed the children to remain in school despite the collapse of security and mobility in the neighborhood. In addition to scholarships, FOKAL preserved a small operational field presence in the park through a minimal team composed of gardeners, rural guards, and a field agronomist. So far, park infrastructures and nature were not targeted. While larger civic engagement and cultural programming have ceased due to insecurity, these actions symbolize continuity and commitment in the face of state failure to protect vulnerable populations and public space.

CHALLENGES

The socio-political instability that has raged in the country since 2018, with a dramatic increase since the assassination of President Jovenel Moise in July 2021, has resulted in Martissant being caught in the worst gang war to date, which forced the permanent closure of the Park to the public. Since 2021, funding for initiatives has come from third parties—either fundraising efforts from Ayiti Demen or the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Faced with funding and security issues, FOKAL is working on an exit strategy for Martissant.

NEXT STEPS TO THIS OBJECTIVE

We continue to support civil society organizations engaged in the defense of human rights and advocacy for a solution to the crisis. However, we cannot control the extreme violence affecting the capital and most of the territory. Since 2020, we have considerably reduced the headcount for this project, and this process continued in 2023. If the situation persists and conditions for reopening the park are not met, we will begin to apply our exit strategy. In the meantime, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation remains our primary supporter for Martissant, complemented by the efforts of Ayiti Demen to sustain engagement.





iii. Heritage project

Theme: Economic Equity & Justice

Subtheme: Urban Space Development for Civic Engagement

CONCEPT: Preserving and rehabilitating culturally significant neighborhoods

Description of proposed work: The Dufort House today is a fully equipped space with a business plan to serve as a center for the promotion of Haitian art and heritage with a pedagogical perspective and a social change ethos. It is a place for training, fundraising and income generating activities, collaborations with museums, galleries, the Centre d'Art, and regional cultural institutions such as the Ludwig Foundation in Cuba, the National Gallery in Jamaica and other institutions in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE:

Throughout 2023, the Dufort House has continued to host a variety of exhibitions and cultural events centered on contemporary art. In February, young painter Christian Cadet presented his first solo exhibition, curated by Georgy Lundy. This milestone marked his entry into the professional world of Haitian art, with his work gaining visibility among the art-savvy visitors of the Dufort House. During Contemporary Art Week, an exhibition titled Confluences showcased works by 16 visual artists, under the patronage of Akoustik Prod. This extensive collection attracted significant attention and celebrated the diversity of contemporary artistic voices in Haiti. In the summer, the Centre d'Art held its annual exhibition, featuring the creations of 14 artists who participated in a workshop led by renowned Haitian artist Mario Benjamin. Their work powerfully reflects the impact of Haiti's ongoing socio-political crisis and drew thousands of visitors. In August, a photography exhibition titled Deconstruction of the Ordinary, directed by David Duverseau, presented the outcomes of a creative workshop exploring the reimagining of everyday life. Throughout the year, the Dufort House welcomed numerous international visitors and architecture students interested in the heritage of Gingerbread architecture. The site also continued to attract regulars who booked private photoshoots in the stunning historic setting. In June, work began on developing Maison Chenet to house the future Library Monique Calixte.

CHALLENGES

Adapting the original architectural plans for the BMC to align with updated development goals

NEXT STEPS TO THIS OBJECTIVE

Complete construction within the projected timeline.



2. GOAL 2: Access to information and public awareness to rights

i. Human Rights and Civil Society

Theme: Human Rights Movements & Institutions

Subtheme: Human Rights – General

FIELD: Human Rights Movements & Institutions

Description of proposed work: We are committed to nurturing and reinforcing new tendencies in the Haitian human rights movement exemplified by the dynamic Bureau des Droits Humains en Haiti (BDHH) and by the new leadership emerging in Haitian feminist organizations. We are also committed to accompanying the administrative reinforcement of RNDDH, the largest national human rights defense network. While we continue our granting to several human rights institutions and initiatives, we will also continue to develop dialogue with chosen funders and with regional voices in order to build alliances on key issues.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE:

FOKAL gave 24 grants in this area focused on: -

- Support the local judicial struggle against impunity through technical assistance and funding
- Support academic research in areas related to democracy / the rule of law
- Funding for publishing, film, conferences, events, etc. on those issues
- Funding technical assistance, advocacy, networks, and training, strengthening civil society organizations to achieve their goals as key actors in the democratic process.

FOKAL also supported the publication of reports and research on human rights, the organization of conferences and participation in international conferences and meetings. FOKAL continued its support to the Bureau des Droits Humains Haiti (BDHH), a dynamic structure that is tackling pretrial detention, detention conditions; litigating successfully in favor of sexual minorities and against sexual abuse; engaging law students in human rights debates. FOKAL has also been invited to discussions with major organizations in the United States, working on strengthening networks as well preserving relationship between Haiti and immigrant communities.

CHALLENGES

Civil society weakens due to many internal and external trends, including the protracted process of State collapse that has worsened since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021. Generation-to-generation transmission is lacking, and younger generations are less involved or less interested in human rights issues.

NEXT STEPS TO THIS OBJECTIVE

Continue to search for partnerships and donors who share our values and approach.



ii. Library Program

Theme: Information & Digital Rights

Subtheme: Information – General

FIELD: Information & Digital Rights

Description of proposed work: We assert reading and access to books as a right in a country where it is still a privilege. FOKAL has brought Haitian libraries to regional and international networks and supported strong attendance to conferences –ALA, IFLA, and ACURIL. Partnerships with international instances on concepts such as mobile libraries and online training platforms demonstrated FOKAL’s leadership and capacity to attract new funders, but such partnerships are not long term and leave us to face a continued lack of public commitment to this issue. Our program on public awareness to rights and civics education aimed at youths with our partner institution Avocats Sans Frontières (Lawyers without borders) Canada has begun since July 2017 and includes collaboration with the Library Program and other FOKAL programs. As stated previously, Maison Chenet will house the future Library Monique Calixte that was housed in FOKAL’s resource center.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE

Amidst the rising insecurity in Port-au-Prince gradually spreading to other regions, the libraries faced more challenges and yet found ways to transform them into opportunities by adapting to the situation and focus on resilience. In 2023, several events were organized by community libraries on women’s rights, vaccination sensibilization campaigns, and activities promoting books and reading.

The library program initiated the creation of five short stop motion videos. Timoun San Tras is a FOKAL emotional education pilot project to raise awareness of the importance of a positive, benevolent education, respectful of children (7 to 11 years old) and their emotional needs, and the harmful effects of stress and/or violence. The Fondation de France agreed to finance the creation of five more videos, dissemination has started in the metropolitan area and the Southern peninsula.

CHALLENGES

The biggest challenge to date remains insecurity. Gang violence accompanied by roadblocks, street fighting and looting deeply affected libraries as well as all other sectors. Libraries no longer have access to certain services and materials. Lack of reliable internet services remains a big issue.

NEXT STEPS TO THIS OBJECTIVE

Our community library network expressed the need for training as an important aspect of their work. FOKAL has created its own unique adapted online learning platform. The next steps would be to have more cohorts taking the courses and content development, as well as continuing the develop the Timoun San tras series.



iii. Media Program

Theme: Journalism

Subtheme: Journalism – General

FIELD: Journalism

Description of proposed work: FOKAL Media Program has chosen to work with young photographers and documentary filmmakers because they were a neglected group in the field, and because the visual and audio-visual language seemed potentially powerful in our context. The next year should help us assess whether this choice is gaining ground and wider support. Our mapping and assessment of the role of community radios, formerly a powerful tool for social and political movements, revealed the sector today as fragile and partly taken over by evangelical missionaries. We will further explore this sector’s viability as a tool for social change.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE

With the intensification of violence and kidnappings in the capital and beyond, in person training has become even more difficult and online formats were not able to address all the issues at stake and were for this reason limited to a few initiatives. Reacting to the context, the Media Program reached out to different networks of experts in the field of safety for journalists and media: ACOS Alliance, IWMF, Radio Canada, Open Briefing, Freedom House.

Thanks to this work, the Media program organized training for 30 journalists from different media or collectives but also freelancers to work on safety protocols on an individual and institutional level, with the support of Open Briefing. The Media program also partnered with Internews and Panos Caribbean to build actions to analyze and counter disinformation. These collaborations around training and handbooks resulted in an online mini festival around disinformation including workshops for journalists and masterclass for the public, online screenings, talks around safety issues linked to disinformation and related psychological burden. In 2023, FOKAL continued this initiative by providing support to media professionals through an online awareness campaign entitled “Konsèy pratik sou sekirite jounalis,” dedicated to journalist safety. This initiative sought to enhance the protection of press members operating in a challenging environment by offering practical guidance and raising public awareness on the critical issues surrounding journalist security.

The Emergent photography fund in Haiti (FPEH) continued through a partnership with the Centre d’art. Several brochures will ensure the visibility of the works. Regarding grantmaking, aside from some institutional support, the annual call for proposal was able to support 19 initiatives led by individuals, media and organizations.

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

The political, economic and security crisis that emerged mid-2018 and has worsened since has affected our activities in the field and particularly the follow-up of our grantees on the ground in rural areas and our training actions. Media and journalists need continued support on safety/security issues. The core support of media that uphold their ethics and values has never been more vital.



3. GOAL 3: Strengthening Human Capabilities

i. Art and Culture – Resource Center

Theme: Democratic Practice

Subtheme: Democratic Practice - General

CONCEPT: FOKAL's resource center as a center for interaction and debate

Description of proposed work: The physical center itself, indoors and outdoors, with its library, atrium, multifunction auditorium and technical capacity for audiovisual production, incarnates and models the role arts and culture can play in social change. All year long, an otherwise neglected urban population mingles with local and international artists, professionals, intellectuals, activists and discovers Haiti and the world through exhibits, conferences/debates, films, performances, and workshops.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE

Despite financial and technical challenges, the artistic community has learned from the experience of creation for online dissemination and tries, when possible, to combine live and online performances to reach a wider and different audience. These constraints also have the merit of promoting multidisciplinary and create the need to open the performing arts to skills and talents in the audiovisual and digital fields. They have also favored greater collaborations with the Haitian diaspora in North America and beyond. Due to the growing climate of insecurity, the Arts and Culture operational program has not been able to resume onsite cultural activities in 2023. We concentrated on the production of online and hybrid events, on supporting artists in the difficulties they experience, on continuing to provide them with access to training on security and psychological support, on rethinking the program in the light of budget cuts and the search for new sources of funding.

Support for artists and partner festivals: Programming activities allowing the artists and technicians to perform and find financial support: Assistance for research projects, artistic training, and creation beyond walls. About 75 people benefit from this assistance.

- Support for the production and distribution of live performance creations: online distribution of the creations and programming of our partners and our beneficiaries, FOKAL's networks as well as those of partner organizations. About 10 000 viewers are registered on different social media platforms

Production of online specials: Artists continued to produce curated content for FOKAL's online platform and programming.

Workshops

Feminine, Masculine / Deconstruction of the ordinary. A cross-disciplinary training and reflection workshop on gender organized online (and in hybrid form on the ground in Haiti) in co-production with the Citizen Education project for artists from different disciplines (theater, slam, rap, etc.). A space for discussions, exchanges centered on issues related to consent and gender relations. The 25 participants held a last workshop in 2023, that concluded with a multimedia exhibit at the Maison Dufort.

CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

- Continue to support the cultural and artistic sector in crisis by inventing new methods as well as working on training, constantly adapting to the needs.
- Contribute to think, and prepare, in the hope of a possible future, the reactivation of the public spaces at FOKAL and the creation of other spaces that the artists will be able to use.



Atelier cda 2023

Restitution

EXPOSITION

15 juillet au 31 août

Maison Dufort, #9, 2ème rue
Directeur artistique Mario

ii. Art and Culture- Grants

Theme: Democratic Practice

Subtheme: Democratic Practice – General

FIELD: Democratic Practice

Description of proposed work: The arts and culture sector in Haiti is generally civically minded but is also a vector for conquering and defending liberties. It is the voice of inclusion and the place of transcendence, away from prejudice, division, and mediocrity.

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Funding new documentary films and publications in line with FOKAL's values

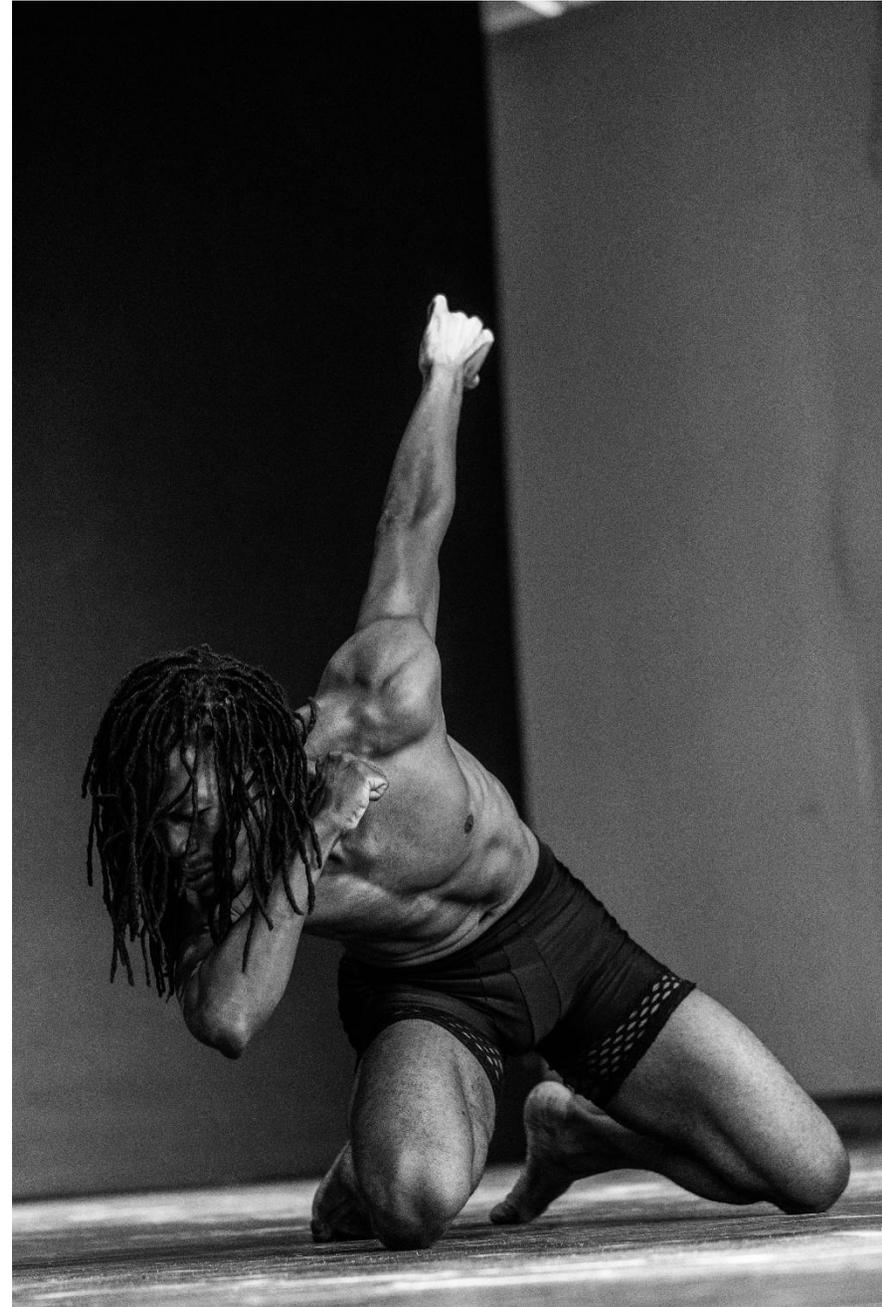
- Quality training of artists through partnerships
- FOKAL has granted most of the budget allocated to the Art and Culture program to 32 beneficiaries selected in the context of calls for proposals to produce high-quality cultural products.

CHALLENGES

- Support for cultural institutions is becoming increasingly scarce and more organizations in the sector are turning to FOKAL for grants.
- travel restrictions and other elements linked to insecurity deeply affected an already struggling artistic community.

NEXT STEPS TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE

Continue to seek financial and technical partnerships in the field in addition to OSF support.



iii. Youth Initiative Program

Theme: Democratic Practice

Subtheme Civic Engagement and Inclusive Participation in Democratic Governance (Democratic Practice)

FIELD: Civic Engagement and Inclusive Participation in Democratic Governance

Description of proposed work: Through multiple partnerships, third-party funded initiatives, and collaborations, this program promotes youth civic engagement and advocacy across the country. It is a flexible initiative, primarily composed of training sessions, conferences, workshops, and debate camps, with highly encouraging results: young women and men are trained to identify goals, develop problem-solving strategies, and acquire advocacy techniques. The program is implemented in partnership with Lawyers Without Borders Canada (ASFC) and is designed to be cross-cutting with other FOKAL programs (media, libraries, universities, arts & culture), as well as the Youth Exchange Program. We also lead Joint Leadership Youth Initiatives (JOLYI) in collaboration with Basketball pou Ankadre Lajenès (BAL) and the National Network for the Defense of Human Rights (RNDDH).

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE

- Strong collaboration with FOKAL's Civic Education Program, Lawyers Without Borders Canada, and the JOLYI project partners (RNDDH and BAL).
- Training provided to BAL youth on debate club management.
- Creation of a network of certified debate judges for the BAL association.
- Human rights and youth violence awareness training delivered by RNDDH to PIJ youth.
- Multiple interschool debate tournaments are organized in several regions across the country.
- Nearly one hundred new debate judges trained and certified between 2023 and 2024.
- Several workshops organized nationwide using tools (books) developed under the AJULIH project.
- A dozen individuals trained to facilitate workshops using AJULIH project materials.
- Support provided to the national university debate tournament organized by the Haitian Debate Federation (FHD).

CHALLENGES

- Harmonizing activities between the Civic Education Program and the Youth Initiative Program.
- Organizing a retreat for club facilitators and coordinators.
- Ensuring the program is directly adopted and managed by partner schools across the country.
- Conducting in-person activities despite limited mobility due to road blockages and insecurity caused by armed gangs.

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS OBJECTIVE

Launch Egalego: an online resource platform financed by the Civic Education program Lawyers without Borders Canada



iv. University Partnership Program

Theme: Higher Education

Subtheme: Higher Education – General

FIELD: Higher Education

Description of proposed work: FOKAL has always worked with the higher education sector, in Haiti and abroad, to contribute to form a critical mass of citizens capable of responding to Haiti's challenges: scientific, economic, environmental, cultural, social, and political. However, this already ailing sector collapsed almost completely with the 2010 earthquake. Foreign universities asked FOKAL to serve as interface for their assistance to that sector. In agreement with OSF, FOKAL created a "University Partnership" program (UP) under the direction of Michele Pierre-Louis. This category was reduced to meet the budget target. FOKAL will be awarding less grants in these categories from the OSF budget.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE:

Higher education is critical in creating well trained scientific experts and academics that can play a major role in revamping the education process in the country. FOKAL continued to support innovative initiatives in this field. From 2021, the Higher Education Program benefited from a contractual grant from W. K. Kellogg Foundation for a three-year period. Our grant to Ecole Normale Supérieure (State University Teacher College) expanded its scientific programs in mathematics, biology, and chemistry as well as in languages. The Agricultural School used a grant from FOKAL for distance learning and teaching for students and teachers who could not afford the related costs.

FOKAL also partners with a small European initiative (Caribaea Initiative) that aims to train Haitian students to become experts in environmental issues including specific research in biodiversity. Michèle Pierre-Louis, who coordinates this program, has been invited to participate in an OSUN class on civic education. We aim to consolidate ties with OSUN and other higher education institutions abroad that highlight the role of humanities, liberal arts, civic engagement, and scientific fields.

CHALLENGES

Higher Education is a very sensitive sector and the most neglected in the education chain by international donors. The most important challenge in this area is to try to halt the brain drain, by encouraging the educated youth to remain in the country and contribute to its recovery and development. Today, eLearning and teaching have added a new challenge to the higher education system confronted with issues of electricity, access to the internet and to computers.



V. Administration

Theme: Foundation Administration

Subtheme General Administration (Foundations)

Concept General Administration (Foundations)

Description of proposed work: General administrative expenses such as salaries and operational costs (utilities, security, bank charges, insurance, etc.).

A few words from the Financial Director – Marie Edmonde Jeune

In 2021, OSF engaged in the process of an organizational transformation which will affect its entire network including the National Foundations. The impact on FOKAL was a progressive reduction of its funding by 50% over the next three years beginning in 2022; a reduction of \$ 1.0 million per year is expected for a cumulative amount of \$ 3.0 million by 2024. Therefore, some programs will be spun off and operational costs decreased resulting in some positions and roles being eliminated. In that regard, with OSF/LAP backing, FOKAL has offered a Voluntary Separation Program (VSP) for its full-time and part-time employees. As of December 31, 2022, the program was completed. In 2023, the staff, albeit smaller, continued to work for streamlined programs. The dedication and tenacity of our staff and partners encourages everyone to move forward. This year again, the External Audit Firm gave a positive rating to the administrative and financial management of the foundation.

Communications

In 2023, FOKAL's Communication Department played an essential role in advancing the institution's strategic objectives by providing consistent support to its various programs through targeted visibility and dissemination efforts. The department contributed significantly to the promotion of the foundation's activities, notably through the management and publication of content across social media platforms, the development of digital communication tools, and the coordination of thematic awareness campaigns. Notable initiatives supported during the year included the campaigns on journalist safety ("Konsèy pratik sou sekirite jounalis") and feminist engagement ("Okonba"), as well as training sessions and events held in Haiti and the Dominican Republic within the framework of the Kiskey'Art program. Furthermore, the department ensured the regular production of the institutional newsletter and actively contributed to the visibility of projects through live broadcasts and public screening discussions.

VI. Third Party

In 2023, FOKAL continued its efforts to diversify its portfolio and financial commitments by gaining more third-party donors. Some commitments were obtained via call for proposals (European Union), others by collaborations (Agence Francaise de Developpement). Some commitments were short spanned but were very interesting to pursue to better understand procurement and procedures from different agencies.

1. Will Keith Kellogg Foundation (WKKF)

- A general support grant for the Martissant Park and the Municipality of Anse-à-Pitre (Upholding Haitian Dignity). The General Support Grant was essentially to support the continuation of FOKAL's scholarship program in Martissant and the installation of computer laboratories in several schools benefiting from the first program. The "Upholding Haitian Dignity" project was designed to support the municipality's efforts to uphold the dignity of Haitians in the commune of Anse-à-Pitre, in reaction to hardships experienced through the deportation of Haitians by Dominican authorities and other tensions on the border.

Due to the difficulty to access Martissant, the General Support grant was reallocated to these specific programs and initiatives:

- Sustainable Development: Engage at least 40 smallholder farmer organizations to reach the following results: Accompany at least 30,000 families through 50 training sessions on water management and organizational strengthening, plant 15,000 trees, operate 4,000 livestock units, and train 800 farmers in biodiversity-friendly techniques for agricultural resilience.
- Strengthening Gender Equity and Social Enterprises:
- Support at least 300 women-led savings and loan cooperatives in increasing capital savings, issuing new loans, and achieving membership growth.
b) Assist a minimum of 4 social enterprises in accessing new capital and markets.
- Youth Leadership and Education: At least 200 youth receive leadership development support and education through university scholarships, training for high school students in debate civic engagement, and the execution of at least 50 youth-driven community projects.
- Arts, Culture, and Social Change: Support at least 20+ artist/artisan-led projects promoting heritage, culture, and positive societal narratives locally and nationally, with ten youth-led cultural organizations driving creative social change.
- Library Program: Enhance literacy, education, civic awareness, and information access for at least 600+ youth and community library patrons through literacy tools, information resources, and civic education materials.
- Strategic Partnership & Collaboration: Establish at least 1 strategic partnership to advance community outcomes and drive systemic change.
- Library Program: Enhance literacy, education, civic awareness, and information access for at least 600+ youth and community library patrons through literacy tools, information resources, and civic education materials.
- Strategic Partnership & Collaboration: Establish at most minuscule 1 strategic partnership to advance community outcomes and drive systemic change.

- Since 2021, the Higher Education Program benefited from a contractual grant from W. K. Kellogg Foundation for a three-year period.



@Plésius Junior

2. Civic Education

In April 2017, Lawyers Without Borders Canada / Avocats Sans Frontières-Canada (ASFC) launched the project “Accès à la Justice et Lutte contre l’Impunité en Haïti” (AJULIH), funded by the Government of Canada, with FOKAL as a partner. This project focuses on three main areas:

- improving access to justice;
- contributing to the fight against impunity and corruption;
- promoting citizen participation in democratic processes.

FOKAL is particularly involved in this latter area through its Civic Education Program.

- FOKAL’s directory of human rights initiatives has been updated; however, FOKAL’s libraries (BMC and CCKD) remain closed until further notice. The directory will be published on an IT platform dedicated to the program once it is operational.
- The three children’s books are finalized and distributed to schools, libraries, and partner cultural centers. The titles “*Théo, Le grand départ*”, “*Fifi, les retrouvailles*”, “*Fifi, tounen lakay li*”, “*Teyo, lavil mwen prale*”, “*Théo et Ti Da, découvrent le passé*”, and “*Teyo ak Ti Da, Dekouvri yon paj listwa*” are printed and used in activities organized by the project in several schools across the country.
- The new version of the debate guide is regularly used throughout the PIJ network: clubs and partners.
- A multimedia installation took place at Maison Dufort in Port-au-Prince, from February 10 to 17, 2023. The event, part of the workshop series “*Feminine/Masculine: Deconstruction of the Ordinary*”, featured three multidisciplinary creations by artists. The installation aimed to deconstruct gender identities and roles, while exploring the links between oral tradition narratives and both feminine and masculine gender constructs.

3. Kiskey’Art

Funded by the European Union, supported by FOKAL and Azuei and carried out as part of the bi-national cooperation program, the project “Kiskey’Art! Kilti bay lanmen! Cultura solidaria!” promotes creative and cultural exchanges to improve mutual understanding of citizens of both countries. It is part of a broader binational cooperation program designed to strengthen ties between the Dominican Republic and Haiti through art and culture.

The European Union’s financial contribution was essential in implementing the core components of Kiskey’ART, Kilti bay lanmen! Cultura solidaria!:

- Promotion of binational cultural creation as a tool for peace,
- Cultural exchange between the two nations,
- Dissemination and networking of island-wide culture via a dedicated binational cultural portal.

Kiskey’ART fully aligned with FOKAL’s mission to foster democracy in fragile urban environments, defend human rights, promote culture and creativity, and expand access to education and information as levers of transformative change.

Key Achievements with Lasting Impact

Co-led by FOKAL and the Haitian–Dominican collective Azuei, Kiskey’ART delivered impactful activities throughout 2022 and 2023, including:

- Two residencies for multidisciplinary artists and cultural practitioners from both countries, focused on conflict resolution through art,
- A series of 11 concerts across the island,
- Seven artistic workshops and three online conferences,
- Production of a documentary film and two music videos,
- Launch of a virtual portal dedicated to the binational cultural network,
- Implementation of five selected initiatives, supported through an open call for proposals: a history festival, a film festival, an art exhibition, a theatrical collaboration, and a documentary project, all led in Haiti and the Dominican Republic

4. Lekòl Nou (Our School)

Lekòl Nou is an initiative by FOKAL implemented as part of the Avni Nou program, supported by the French Development Agency (AFD). It aims to promote the role of teachers in Haiti and to strengthen educational communities. The project unfolded progressively through complementary phases, combining research, media production, community mobilization, and impact evaluation. The project began with formative research conducted between late 2022 and the first half of 2023. This research, led by Caroline Hudicourt and Jacqueline Baussan, aimed to identify perceptions and realities surrounding the teaching profession across several regions of the country. More than 230 consultations were carried out during the study. The findings were shared in July 2023 during a writers' workshop in Cap-Haïtien, marking the beginning of the writing process for the radio drama Chapo Ba. At the same time, a teacher appreciation campaign was launched on social media between November and December 2023. This initial public initiative helped increase the project's visibility and laid the groundwork for a committed community focused on valuing the teaching profession.



5. Fabrique des Arts (the Art Factory)

Using art as a medium to strengthen social bonds—this is the vision that inspired the French Development Agency (AFD) to finance the creation of *La Fabrique des Arts*. A funding agreement was signed on November 9, 2022, with the Fondation Connaissance et Liberté (FOKAL) as the lead organization of a consortium that includes two other partners: the Centre d'Art and the Association Quatre Chemins. This new cultural space is intended to be established in the heart of Port-au-Prince as a multidisciplinary center for creation, performance, training, and exchange within civil society. It will serve as a landmark of Haitian culture—a space fostering social cohesion, supporting the professionalization of artists and cultural practitioners, and promoting active citizenship, as well as promoting access to culture for all by integrating *La Fabrique des Arts* into the local neighborhood and the broader city. The *Fabrique des Arts* project was officially launched in January 2023. The first half of the year was dedicated to preparing the necessary documentation to initiate the project. Since June 2023, several key contracts have been signed—for the development of architectural plans, communication strategies, and social research studies on the Haitian cultural sector.



VIII. Board of Directors

FOKAL BOARD MEMBERS



MAXIME D. CHARLES

President

Former CEO of the Bank of Nova Scotia in Haiti. His legal and finance career includes teaching international law from 1985 to 1991 at the Public University of Haiti, and fulfilling international assignments in Canada and the Caribbean for the bank of Nova Scotia from 1992 to 1996. Charles is active in a number of professional and civil society organizations, serving as a board member for the Arbitrage Tribunal of the Chamber of Commerce of Haiti and as president of the Anti-money Laundering Committee and of the Association of Professional Bankers. He has used his position on the money laundering committee and the banker's association to bring these groups together and pursue legal reform. Charles has LLM degrees from the Public University in Haiti and from the Faculty of Law at the University of Provence in France.



DANIELE MAGLOIRE

Vice President

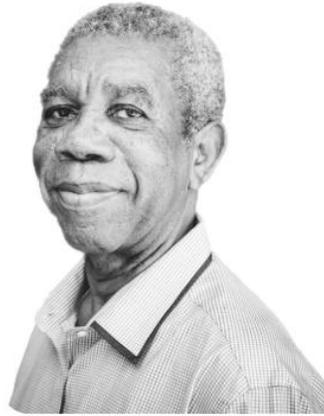
Sociologist, management consultant, human rights activist and a founding member of the feminist organization Kay Fanm, which operates a shelter in Port-au-Prince for gender violence survivors and works to promote women's rights and economic development. She has worked to develop national policies and responses against gender violence and is coordinator for the Collective against Impunity, a leading group in the effort to bring former president Jean-Claude Duvalier and his associates to justice in Haiti. Magloire was a prominent member of the government's advisory council during the post-Aristide transitional government from 2004 to 2006. Following her service to the government, Magloire became the executive director of the Haitian office of the Canadian NGO Droits et Démocratie, where she directed human rights advocacy



NORMA POWELL

Secretary

Former General Director of the Center for Facilitation of Investments (CFI), Haiti's national investment promotion agency. Founding member of the Haitian Liberal Party and of the Haitian Association for the Fight against Poverty. Powell's engagement with philanthropy includes working to establish the Association for the Management of Risks and Continuity of Activities, a private sector initiative that works with local authorities to help prevent and respond to disasters. She is also a board member of Haven, a housing and community development NGO based in Ireland that is working with Haitians to build or repair thousands of homes and restore public hygiene and sanitation in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake.



JEAN-JOSEPH EXUME

Member

He is a very reputable lawyer specializing in civil and commercial law. He was Minister of Justice and Public Security twice, notably during the government of Michèle D. Pierre-Louis (2008-2009). He is a pro-bono advocate of the group of victims against Duvalier, the Collective against impunity. He was a member of the presidential commission set up in January 2012 for the Revision of the 180-year-old Haitian penal code and a draft revision of the Penal Code was submitted in March 2015.



ELISABETH COLIMON WOOLLEY

Member

She is a militant lawyer with Dantes P. Colimon and a member of the Port-au-Prince Bar since 1978. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Legal Studies from the Faculty of Law and Economics in 1980. She is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Law Society of Port- Administration of the Haiti Arch and the Haiti Fund for Women's Aid; Member of the Ethics Committee of the GHESKIO Centers and the Soroptimist International Club of Port-au-Prince. She is also interested in micro-credit, ethics and personal development (motivation and selfknowledge).

CREDITS

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