



ITINERANT UNIVERSITY OF RESISTANCE IN HAITI 2021 PROGRESS REPORT / 2022 GOALS

2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2021 was a year of tremendous growth for UNITE, despite the challenges of COVID; gross political dysfunction, including a presidential assassination and a new president selected by Western powers; growing gang control; and severe weather disasters.

Dear funder-allies, as you read, please see yourself reflected in our work. Many funders have fled due to what is known as “Haiti fatigue,” but deserting people in crisis is not an option for us - or clearly you, either. We would not exist without you.

Women Matter, Too:

In August, we launched our new Women Matter, Too program with a flourish. We sent a delegation of six young Haitian women activists to the Dominican Republic to meet with counterparts, receive political training, and further develop their Spanish. (Many more had hoped to attend, but were denied visas by the Dominican government.) The trip included the following activities:

- *Climate Justice Forum:* Our students learned about the planetary crisis and exchanged strategies of environmental protection;
- *Sonia Pierre Political School:* Run by Dominican women, the school’s objective is to develop critical thinking about gender justice, Latin American political history and philosophy, and anti-racist struggles. Our students and their Dominican colleagues also developed, together, a cross-border agenda of struggle and alternatives;



Our delegation meeting with their Dominican counterparts in a month of anti-extraction and decolonial feminist learning and exchanges. Our coordinator, Claudia Alvarez, is seated at front left.

- *Territory defense tour*: Our group met with ten organizations and three communities to learn new strategies of organizing and advocacy;
- *Inequality tour* around Santo Domingo, and discussions about the roots of inequity.

In 2022, the Women Matter, Too program will be our first priority. We are starting a search for a program coordinator.

Spanish Classes: Staff taught beginner and intermediate Spanish – using our original materials – to approximately 60 activists, focusing on extraction and land defense, as well as women’s rights.



Graduates of our Spanish class, who simultaneously graduated from the Charlemagne Peralte Political School, one of our organizational partners.

Research on Mining: We did extensive research of mining throughout Haiti, especially on what damage it has created and can create. We also gathered research on what consequences mining has had across the world; on the health of humans, animals, and the planet; on increasing community impoverishment and disempowerment; etc.

Movement Education for our Spanish-Language Students: We developed new Spanish-language and movement-strengthening teaching materials against mining, and in support of land defense and women’s rights. As one example, we created a deck of enlarged, laminated (for protection) playing cards. Each card gives extensive Spanish-language information on corporate and government myths about mining told to communities, successful resistance strategies, or details about land and extraction in Haiti; and

- We held three community workshops around the country, using the cards to deepen grassroots knowledge of conflicts that typically arise in communities where mining companies operate, as well as effective strategies for organizations.



Public Education for Other Organizations: While not an original part of our plan, we have found numerous ways that our unique materials can be useful to others, and have thus been offering them far and wide. Some examples:

- The Fray Matias Human Rights Center is the primary migrant support center located in the southernmost point of entry into Mexico, which helps tens of thousands of refugee seekers each year. The group is now using our textbook to help Haitians learn Spanish before beginning their treacherous journey through Mexico to the US border;
- The Sonia Pierre Political School in the Dominican Republic is using our textbook to teach their students about Latin American struggles and movement history;
- FASOL, the Mexican-wide solidarity economy network, is using our “50 Questions about Mines” deck of cards for grassroots member education; and
- In February, we published online four stories of Latin American political history. We used a Spanish version to strengthen our Spanish students’ abilities. We created a Kreyol version for the Haitian public.

NEW PROGRAM PLANS FOR 2022

While continuing the activities discussed above, we will add the following in 2022.

Build our Women Matter, Too program: We will:

- Help women develop strength and capacity to become leaders in the movement, through: hosting discussions in Spanish classes and women’s gatherings on their needs as woman and as activists; working together to strategize solutions to the problems; compiling inspiring materials which present other gender-justice models, such as the Zapatista’s Revolutionary Laws of Women, which outlines women’s rights in the Mexican movement; and increasing the number of women in our trainings in order to provide them with greater tools for exchange and articulation;

- Create opportunities for international exchanges with counterparts, whether live or virtual, as well as learning opportunities through travel (when possible) and fellowships;
- Host in-person empowerment workshops among Haitian women's groups, using peer discussions, theater of the oppressed, and other tactics to draw out ideas and feelings;
- Increase to at least 50% the number of women in our Spanish classes. Between girls and women carrying an exorbitant workload in the home and family, and prohibitions placed by fathers and husbands, females only represent about 40% of our students – though that is in fact extraordinarily high for Haiti. Gender equity will be difficult to attain, but we will keep working to confront these hurdles;
- Once COVID allows, too, create opportunities for face-to-face learning and engagement of women in our program with women's justice and land rights movements in other countries. We will sponsor women from our program to attend international gatherings of movements and networks to which their organizations belong;
- Again, as permitted by COVID conditions, create permanent links with counterpart women, economic justice, and anti-mining movements and networks throughout Latin America; and
- Find ways to publicize the work of Haitian women activists, to inspire and conscientize others. Some opportunities include: collaborating with the national network of community radio stations, to air essays and interviews with women from our program; publishing declarations and other documents that emerge from women's meetings; and creating an oral and/or written series with women narrating the stories of organizing and advocacy in their organization or community.

Spanish classes: Our goal is to expand to six classes, with a total of 100 students;

Grassroots training on defending lands and stopping mining: We will create, and expand current usage of, our training tools, including:

- Workshops in communities on damage caused by mining, how companies deceive and cheat communities, etc.;
- A domino game (dominoes being popular in Haiti) on women in resistance against mining, with each domino imparting information on victories, strategies, and tactics;
- Another card-deck teaching tool, aimed at helping grassroots groups know how to plan their struggles - determining objectives and strategies to win a fight, garner support, etc. - especially related to land theft and mining;
- Continued distribution of the "50 Questions about Mines" card deck, with its wealth of political and strategic information; and

- An audio version of the 50 Questions about Mining deck of cards, to be distributed by the network of popular radio stations across Haiti.

Social Media: We will begin using social media to more broadly distribute our materials about the risks and dangers of mining, and struggles against them.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING IN 2022

- We will hire a half-time Women Matter, Too coordinator;
- We will hire a half-time Spanish-class coordinator to help our overworked coordinator develop educational materials for our Spanish classes, and organize those classes; and
- We are developing a stronger fundraising program to allow us to expand our work. US-based Julie Meyer, an international justice activist with a focus on fundraising and administration, has joined our coordinating committee with a commitment to fund-raising. Marybeth Grimes, a young US activist, will manage our fundraising program.

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO YOU DONORS WHO MADE OUR WORK IN 2021 POSSIBLE:

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Rony and Catherine Shimony Philanthropic Fund
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WE ALSO THANK YOU DONORS WHO HAVE ALREADY PLEDGED FOR 2022:

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