**North-South Cooperation in Education: A Success Story Despite the Haitian Crisis**

**Draft**

Among the many calamities that stroke Haiti recently, any achievement that can cheer up the Haitian people and somewhat boost their energy is worth mentioning and sharing. Such undertakings are typically identified in the sports, arts and entertainment sectors, among athletes, artists and singers reaching top levels. In some cases, individuals in politics can be added to this list as well. The Haitian media and diaspora will not miss the opportunity to draw the attention of the general society on any Haitian connection that these top performers might have. Whether they would be born overseas from mixed parents (Haitian & non-Haitian), from both Haitian parents, or they would be first and a half (immigrate as children), second or third generation of immigrants, the Haitian community will identify them as Haitians and appropriate all the proud that come with the achievement. Examples include Naomi Osaka in tennis, Jason Derulo in music, Dominique Anglade in Canadian politics, as leader of the Quebec Liberal party. A separate list of these [Haitian-Americans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Haitian_Americans) and [Haitian-Canadians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Haitian_Canadians) is offered.

**Showcasing the success story**

In the education sector, some breakthroughs are being made, but are not as known as those in sports or music. The individuals behind them are also less prominently identified in the traditional or social media with Haitian content. One particular case that is being presented in this article is the Institut des Sciences, des Technologies et des Études Avancées d’Haïti ([ISTEAH](https://www.isteah.edu.ht/index.php/rss/242-l-isteah-premiere-institution-de-formation-doctorale-accreditee-en-haiti)), accredited on March 31, 2014. This accreditation is awarded to ISTEAH specifically for university programs of specialized higher studies diploma (DESS), Master’s degree and Philosophiae Doctor (Ph.D.) on the express recommendation of a committee of international university experts. It is the first accredited doctoral training institution in Haiti.

Founded by the Reflection and Action Group for a New Haiti ([GRAHN-Monde](http://www.grahn-monde.org/)), ISTEAH maintains a network of 23 national partners and is supported by seven core international partners: Dartmouth College (USA), École Polytechnique de Montréal (Canada), École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL, Switzerland), Institute of Applied Sciences (INSA-Lyon, France), University of Strasbourg (France), University of Quebec in Montreal (UQÀM, Canada), University of Quebec in Trois-Rivières (UQTR, Canada), Télé-Université (Canada).

ISTEAH has already graduated 76 students at the DESS level, 33 students at the Master level and 8 at the doctoral level. Currently, more than 600 are enrolled in the different programs whose 25% at the doctoral level. The students reside in the different communes of the country. They are grouped together on the main campus in Génipailler/Milot, with satellites in Port-au-Prince, Cayes, Hinche, Jacmel and Saint-Marc. As the beneficiaries of this high-level training, they are asked to contribute to this collective effort by paying tuition fees representing a tiny part of the costs of the training received.

Recently, the Institute for Data Valorization ([IVADO](https://ivado.ca/en/2021/09/29/ivado-and-isteah-join-forces-to-propel-the-next-generation/)), an internationally respected and well-known Montreal-based think-thank in Artificial Intelligence, has offered scholarships to four ISTEAH students at the master’s or doctoral level, allowing them to carry out supervised research internships at the Université de Montréal, Polytechnique Montréal and HEC Montréal. These internships will begin in the winter of 2022 and last five months.

**Who are behind this success story?**

The institute is led by Professor Samuel Pierre, Chairman of the Board of Directors, full professor of computer engineering at École Polytechnique de Montréal, Director since 1999 of the Mobile Networking and Computing Research Laboratory (LARIM) and of the Mobile Networking and Computing Research Group (GRIM). Dr. Pierre, a first generation Haitian immigrant, is the recipient of several honors, the most recent being: Engineers Canada's [Gold](https://www.polymtl.ca/carrefour-actualite/en/news/professor-samuel-pierre-receives-engineers-canadas-gold-medal) Medal, June 2021; [winner](https://www.polymtl.ca/carrefour-actualite/nouvelles/le-professeur-samuel-pierre-laureat-du-grand-prix-dexcellence-professionnelle-2020-de-loiq) of the 2020 Grand Prix of Quebec Order of Engineers (OIQ) for Professional Excellence. His deep involvement in the Haitian education sector shows that one can significantly contribute to Haiti’s development while still residing abroad.

The faculty - over 225 professors now - come from both local and foreign universities. Some of them live in Haiti and actively participate in the education provided by ISTEAH. However, the vast majority reside mainly in Canada, the United States, France, Belgium, and Switzerland. Some come to teach on site for a few weeks while others deliver their course from their place of residence through videoconferencing. This model has been in place way before the COVID-19 pandemic, which is trailblazing for Haiti.

As a non-profit academic institution, the operation of the institute relies mainly on the volunteer work of these overseas professors and managers (Haitian diaspora and Haitianophiles), as well as on the generosity of donors who support its mission.

**Applying this idea elsewhere in Haiti**

This idea or variants of it can be applied elsewhere. The [joint](http://mt180s.univ-antilles.fr/2021/09/07/interview-de-valery-thesnor-laureate-mt180-en-haiti-edition-2021/) PhD program (between Université d’État d’Haiti, des Antilles et de Nîmes) is a case in point. Hôpital Universitaire de Mirebalais operated by [Partners in Health](https://www.buildhealthinternational.org/project/hopital-universitaire-de-mirebalais/) (Zanmi Lasante) is another one. In these examples of effective international cooperation, the volunteering aspect and local participation are of utmost importance. Many more similar programs (not projects) are needed throughout the country, not only in education and health, but also in the business sectors such as agriculture, energy, transportation, engineering, etc. These business undertakings would be labelled "social enterprises" and part of the net profits generated may be used to redistribute to the neediest in the Haitian society.

Let’s hope that the country will find some form of stability, will put an end to institutional corruption, will embrace good governance, and will promote local production that will generate jobs, including high skills and high-paying ones. Such a scenario is required to improve the standard of living of the population, stop the brain drain, and keep highly trained individuals in the country that is in dire need of its human capital.