



**Konbit Sante**  
CAP-HAITIEN HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

**2015 ANNUAL REPORT**



## Dear friends,

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In this report, we profile five Haitians who work to improve conditions in their communities every day, and two Konbit Sante volunteers who regularly travel to Cap- Haitien to support our work there.

While many highly educated and capable people leave the country, the Haitian people profiled here have opted to stay and make a difference close to home. We are inspired by what they do every day and are motivated to support them to keep up the good fight - their fight - to improve conditions for the people of Haiti.

We wish that you could know all of these people as we do. We hope these brief introductions will give

you a sense of who it is that gives us hope in a place where hope is sometimes hard to find.

Today's best public health research links better health outcomes in communities with access to responsive and effective systems of care. Health systems, however, are very complex and have many moving and interdependent parts. They require a capable workforce, essential medicines and materials, appropriate facilities and functional infrastructure, good management of those resources, and good data to inform its decisions. These are what we refer to as the “building blocks” of a health system. As you will see in this report, we try to address those aspects in the work we do with our partners.



*“Extraordinary people are doing extraordinary things that are making a huge impact in northern Haiti”*







Nathan Nickerson and Jose Raymour



There is one building block that stands out as more important than all of the rest. It is the one that gives us the greatest hope for a better tomorrow: people.

In order for health services to be most effective, they ideally have well-designed programs and systems, and the right people working in them. Having the most perfectly designed programs with the wrong people working in them will inevitably fail, but the right people will make less-than-optimal situations and circumstances better in spite of all of the challenges and shortcomings they face. We see this all of the time in our work.

As we try to move ahead together, sometimes the systems in place today actually present obstacles to overcome rather than serving as platforms for positive change. Getting all of the

building blocks aligned around particular goals takes a great deal of time and extraordinary effort on the part of many people. In truth, some parts of it are beyond our resources or sphere of influence at this point.

In spite of the challenges that they face, extraordinary people are doing extraordinary things that are making a huge impact in northern Haiti, and we would like to introduce you to just a few of them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nathan Nickerson".

**Nathan Nickerson,**  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jose Raymour".

**Jose Raymour,**  
Country Director



# Health Facilities Infrastructure

## Meet Boss Jacques: 47 Years of Service Providing Water at Haiti’s Second Largest Public Hospital

Every hospital needs basic infrastructure to provide quality care, including decent facilities and reliable electricity, but it most especially needs an adequate supply of water. At the Justinian Hospital, Boss Jacques has been the man responsible for the distribution of their limited supply of water to the different services, for hospital laundry, and for keeping the hospital grounds clean since 1969.

Konbit Sante volunteer engineers have formed a close working and personal relationship with Boss Jacques, supporting him in his efforts to

meet the needs of the hospital. Since they started working together, two new wells have been added to the single one that they used to have, and an inventory of plumbing and well supplies have been made available to the hospital staff. The goal is that the hospital staff can maintain the improvements, because, as Boss Jacques explains, “the biggest problem that we have is when we can’t find water anywhere to satisfy the needs of the hospital. To fix the problem, the leaders are forced to buy a big truck full of water for the hospital,” straining their already limited resources.



### Improvements Made at the Justinien University Hospital in 2015

Water Survey: point of use  
assessment of the entire  
hospital

Evaluation of water  
disinfection procedures

Well Repairs

Electrical system replaced  
(funded by USAID in  
response to Electrical  
Study conducted by Konbit  
Sante in 2014)

Participated in the final  
planning for demolition  
and construction of the  
new Pediatrics Building

“

Konbit Sante has helped  
us so much. They also  
repaired the work area  
where we lay the clothes  
we wash and they help  
clean and maintain the  
washing machines.

”



**BOSS JACQUES**  
Grounds Manager, JUH





Boss Jacques with Konbit Sante board member and volunteer engineer Hugh Tozer.

Boss Jacques says “In the past it was really hard to find water, but now it is very easy. When a pump breaks down, we tell the leaders of the hospital, and now we can fix it or replace it in a short period of time. I am always there when they need me to open the correct valves and provide access to the water system.”

“Konbit Sante has helped us so much. They also repaired the work area where we lay the clothes we wash and they help clean and maintain the washing machines.”

After all of these years, Boss Jacques is still dedicated to his work, and Konbit Sante remains committed to supporting him being successful at it. “I like my job; it helps me stay active because I like working. All of the hospital is in need for water, but the operating room, the maternity and the pediatric unit are the departments that need water the most. Sometimes, I leave for only a moment and they call me to provide water for one or another department!”

## Community Improvements

Konbit Sante supported a partnering organization’s (SOIL: Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihood) work to dramatically expand access to household composting toilets, because introducing sanitation solutions in Cap Haitien neighborhoods lacking any sanitation infrastructure is an important way to promote health. This partnership began as Konbit Sante, one of the few international NGO's in compliance with the Haitian government, was needed to serve as their fiscal agent for this Grand Challenges Canada project. We congratulate SOIL in recently obtaining their legal status in Haiti, and look forward to collaborating with them in new ways going forward.





## Research & Evaluation

### ORIGINAL RESEARCH DESIGNED TO IMPROVE EMERGENCY CAESAREAN CARE

We were very happy this year to support **Dr Nelly Osias** and her medical resident colleagues as they conducted original research on the impact on women and their children when provision of emergency caesarean section is delayed.

Dr Osias is an incredibly bright and energetic woman, always ready with a warm and infectious smile, who invites people to call her Nelly. Nelly studied general medicine in Cuba, and practiced family medicine in Haiti for two years before entering the OB/GYN residency program at Justinian University Hospital three years ago; a decision she made because she

was moved by seeing too many preventable deaths related to inadequate care during pregnancy and deliveries in her community. She has dedicated herself to changing that picture by working tirelessly with others to help improve care throughout the pregnancy and afterward for both mothers and their babies.



**DR NELLY OSIAS**  
OB-GYN Resident at the JUH





“

My goal is to help decrease maternal and prenatal death rates. Most deaths happen during the specific periods of pregnancy, mostly at the time of birth. I want to contribute in reducing the impact of existing negative conditions on the first days of life of the babies. Helping pregnant women find favorable prenatal care, so that they stay in good health and give birth to their babies in good condition is my goal. - **DR NELLY OSIAS**

”



This passion to improve care led Nelly and other third year residents to take a hard look at their own quality of service delivery within the Justinian maternity service by conducting rigorous research on how rapidly they had responded to obstetrical emergencies requiring c-sections over the past four years, and what impact delays have had on health outcomes for the mothers and babies in their care. They were assisted along the way by Konbit Sante staff and volunteers with content expertise, but the research was conceived and executed by them. We will share the results in our next newsletter.

It is rare that research questions in Haiti are posed and answered by Haitian caregivers themselves. Information is power, so supporting new researchers is an exciting way to build the capacity of the Haitian system to really evaluate and address

its own health issues. Konbit Sante would like to take this further and **is seeking funding support to help the Justinian University Hospital develop their own research center** where research methods are taught to all of the medical residents that are training in the facility, and more quality original research can be conducted that will both inform their care improvements and policy, and be relevant to share with other resource challenged providers in other parts of the world.

The good news is that Nelly has an appointment with the Ministry of Health, and she is staying at the Justinian after she completes her residency to provide quality care to the women that she feels so deeply for, and to be a dynamic educator and mentor for the residents that will be following in her footsteps.



# Medicine, Supplies and Equipment

## Keltlie Deslandes: Konbit Sante's Supply Chain Support Specialist

Having adequate and appropriate materials on hand to deliver high quality care is one of the essential “building blocks” of a functional health system, and it has been one of the areas of focused support that Konbit Sante has tried to provide from the beginning. We continued those efforts in 2015, sending our 17th 40-foot shipping container from Maine, and hand-carrying many urgently needed supplies along with volunteers and staff. We also purchased and shipped a substantial order of essential medicines and other requested items, like birthing beds and recliners for ‘kangaroo care’.

Too many well-meaning containers are shipped to Haiti and do not end up serving their intended purpose, because the materials are not in response to specific needs and priorities, or there is a lack of capacity to manage them effectively when they arrive. To that end, Konbit Sante has supported the central depot at the Justinian University Hospital to inventory, store, and disburse the materials that they receive. One key person that we have been pleased to employ in that process is Keltlie Deslandes.

Ketlie has been working in the JUH depot since 2010, and describes her challenging work as “receiving donations that come for the hospital, preparing a stock-list of medications and materials and then delivering them to each service in the hospital for a final utilization. Depending on the type of medication, a particular service may have need for it to be a priority”, so she often needs to make difficult decisions about allocating limited resources.

She laments that “At the present time, we are only four in all of the depot and management of supplies; the depot manager, two storekeepers and myself,...and the depot is too small to receive everything from even one shipping container.”

Despite space and staffing challenges, Ketlie can be relied on to be at work every day, and always with a positive attitude to make things work, in spite of the fact that the systems are not ideal.

Ketlie's role at Konbit Sante ensures that all donated medicines and supplies are accounted for and reach patients in need.



**KELTLIE DESLANDES**  
Supply Chain Support Specialist





## Combating Malnourishment

Many children (22%) in Haiti under five years of age suffer from acute malnutrition; a devastating, preventable illness that contributes to 35% of under-five death globally.

An innovative organization Konbit Sante has partnered with for many years is working to change this. Medicine and Food for Kids (MFK) built a production facility in northern Haiti to locally produce ‘Medika Mamba’ in Creole, or “peanut butter medicine”.

Medika Mamba is an RUTF (ready to use therapeutic food) made of ground roasted peanuts, powdered milk, cooking oil, sugar, vitamins and minerals.” It is considered the “gold standard” by WHO for treatment of malnutrition and severely undernourished patients show improvement in six weeks. With proper care, there is an astounding 90% recovery rate, much more effective than traditional milk-based treatments. Medika Mamba is developed, produced and distributed using peanuts cultivated by and purchased from Haitian farmers.

Local pediatric staff at the Justinian University Hospital began advocating for switching away from the traditional treatment using milk formula for their hospitalized patients, citing evidence showing that Medika Mamba reduces time of hospitalization and improves outcomes for these children. Through an agreement facilitated by Konbit Sante,



### Meet One of Our Newest Board Members: Fighting poverty is his day job

Konbit Sante has recently welcomed three new members to our Board of Directors; all from the Cap Haitien community. One of them, Andre Jean-Pierre, is the Director of The Center for Nutrition and Education for Women and Children, (formerly Centre Sacre Coeur), which provides services for undernourished children and their mothers. The Center has been an informal partner and friend of Konbit Sante for many years. Here, Andre prepares a meal for a child receiving treatment for malnourishment at the center he directs.

MFK generously began donating monthly supplies of Medika Mamba to the JUH inpatient pediatric service in February 2015, and Konbit Sante and JUH staff are managing the treatment. Soon after this change was initiated, the Haitian Ministry of Health began proving the Medika Mamba for the service, so it is now integrated into their system of care in a sustained way.

Since this new initiative, about 120 children were admitted into pediatrics fttor treatment of acute malnutrition. According to Dr. Rony Saint Fleur, a pediatrician working for Konbit Sante who is embedded in pediatrics at the JUH, “The service is seeing rapid improvements among patients being treated with Medika Mamba.”



# Management & Leadership

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## Dr Paul Toussaint: From Practitioner to Medical Director

Dr. Paul Toussaint worked for Konbit Sante for many years as a respected pediatrician and educator at the Justinian University Hospital. While he still works there as an employee of the Ministry of Health, he has also taken on the important role of Medical Director at the Haitian Convention Baptist Hospital (HCBH); one of Konbit Sante's partner health facilities. Now Konbit Sante is collaborating with him in both roles.

Speaking about that ongoing partnership, Dr Toussaint says “HCBH is still open today and is able to offer good health care to the community because of Konbit Sante. The hospital was threatened with closure in January 2014 for financial reasons, but Konbit Sante found the resources to keep HCBH open. Since this time the hospital has improved and been able to expand.” In fact, the hospital has become progressively less dependent on external dollars since that time. This is due to a lot of hard work and dedication of the staff there, and it is also because they have been willing to do things in new ways.

Dr Toussaint appreciates the approach of accompaniment without taking over the reins. **“Konbit Sante is like a brother to us. They do not just do their own work or projects, but rather they work with Haitian people. They provide both moral and technical assistance.** I was not formally trained in administration, but Konbit Sante brings us new skills and abilities in management and monitoring that allow me to be a good Hospital Director.”

“This is what we need in Haiti from foreign people... improve my capacity and my skill in management and allow me to apply my capacity and ability to manage my staff for the expansion of the hospital and for it to blossom. I think that this is a very sustainable approach.”





## Trainings In Maine Build Capacity to Manage Health Facilities

At the request of Dr. Geto Dubé, the Justinian University Hospital's Executive Director, Konbit Sante hosted chief administrator Mr. François Zephyr in Maine for a very personalized one-week management workshop in late May, 2015. Jose Raymour, Konbit Sante Country Director, accompanied him on this visit and worked with a team of volunteer consultants and other Konbit Sante staff to plan and implement the activities. The training and problem-solving activities were based on specific needs and issues that Mr. Zephyr identified from his real day-to-day management challenges and responsibilities. Topics ranged from management of the hospital utilities and materials to donor relations.

Rather than simply lecture, the team integrated discussions of management practices and tools into hands-on project planning. Two site visits –to the Yarmouth Water District and the Winthrop Family Medicine Center- allowed for discussions with other administrators on how they approached similar challenges, and how Mr. Zephyr might apply those management principles in his unique work context. Mr. Zephyr returned home with some specific management improvement plans.

Konbit Sante staff and volunteers were impressed with the level of engagement and thoughtfulness about all of the issues discussed by the management team. Rather than see this training program as a limited intervention, we see it as one step in supporting the capacity building needs at the hospital and are happy to support Mr. Zephyr as he works to implement these and other action plans.



Dr Paul Toussaint mentoring pediatric medical residents at the Justinian University Hospital.

## Local Leaders Set the Agenda for a Healthier Haiti

Unite de Lutte pour la Sante (ULS) is a private, non-profit health and community development organization formed by a group of Haitian physicians and nurses in 2010 and one of Konbit Sante's primary partners. ULS offers primary health care services, community health education and outreach, and economic development opportunities to a geographically isolated section of Cap-Haitien. Since its founding, the organization has relied primarily on volunteer staff to run and manage projects. The volunteer model was essential to the establishment of the organization, but unlikely to allow the organization to deliver effective health services indefinitely. In recent years, the Executive Director of ULS has sought the assistance of Konbit Sante staff in strengthening their organization, and finding and cultivating financial support.

Starting in 2014, Konbit Sante Program Specialist Tezita Negussie has been working intensively with ULS to develop project proposals for different funding opportunities. Working one-on-one, in person and through video chat, ongoing development of specific skills related to grant writing have been provided, including project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In 2015, our shared efforts came to fruition when ULS received for its first large independent grant from the Inter-American Foundation.

Konbit Sante is committed to building the capacity of health organizations in Cap-Haitien such as ULS. To that end, we will continue to work alongside each other until they independently secure grants and funding to ensure their finances for the future.



Dr Maudelin Mesadieu and Konbit Sante Program Specialist Tezita Negussie collaborating to secure their first independent funding source.



# Workforce & Health Services

## Out in the Community: Maguy Cénatus, community health worker

Konbit Sante helped establish the community outreach programs at partner facility Fort St Michel Hospital (FSM). The community health workers CHW, called *agents de santé* in Haiti, are the cornerstone of that work, and Maguy Cenatus is an extremely dedicated and effective one that we are proud to support.

Maguy has been working as a CHW since 2010, while she studies management at university. She describes her work as “visiting and assisting pregnant women, people with high blood pressure, or high blood sugar; promoting health awareness for the population where we provide information on how they can protect themselves against disease. We also focus on education around sanitation, because insects can spread disease from one to another individual.”

In addition to education, the CHWs accompany and assist community members as they negotiate the health system. For example, Maguy relates the story of “a woman I met on a visitation day with a very underweight six-month-old baby. I invited her to bring the baby to the hospital for vaccination, but she told me that she couldn’t because people rejected her with the baby, saying that she should not bring a so puny a baby to the hospital. Even the father of the baby rejected him.”

“I kept encouraging her to take the baby to a doctor. She finally agreed to take the baby to the hospital, but the baby still could not put on weight. I then advised the mother to try the Haitian Baptist Convention Hospital. When I brought the baby along with his mother, they took him to Port-au-Prince where they took good care of him. Now, the baby is fine and is enjoying good health. The mother is very happy. When she met me after she got back from Port-au-Prince, she gave me six earthenware plates! Every time she meets me, she shows me her happiness.”

Konbit Sante continues to support 18 CHWs who provide this important connection between partner health facilities and the communities that they serve.



Dr Vic Herson (L) training on neonatal resuscitation

## Meet Volunteer and Neonatologist Dr. Vic Herson

Konbit Sante’s work to build health workforce capacity often depends on volunteers who generously offer their expertise so that it can be directed and applied to meeting the goals and objectives that are identified by our partners. Neonatologist, Dr. Vic Herson, and his colleagues, have been supporting JUH pediatric service goal of reducing deaths among newborns for several years now.

Dr. Herson had been the Medical Director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Hartford Hospital and then Connecticut Children's Medical Center for the past 35 years before entering semi-retirement. When Konbit Sante starting recruiting for a pediatrician who specializes in the care of ill or premature newborns, fellow pediatrician and Konbit Sante volunteer, Dr. Adam Silverman, asked him if he knew of anyone who might be interested in working on this problem with Haitian colleagues, and his response was "As a matter of fact, I do---me."

Dr Herson had witnessed “remarkable success in reducing newborn and infant mortality in the U.S. in his career and hoped that he could help Konbit Sante and Haiti’s health system apply current knowledge and technology to improve positive outcome of newborns in Haiti”.

Dr Herson relates that “the goal of our first visit in 2014 was to do an overall assessment of newborn care with a priority of identifying opportunities for improvement.” They sat with key members from pediatrics and maternity services, toured the facilities, observed care directly and reviewed the reasons that contribute to newborn deaths. One major cause of preventable newborn death identified was birth asphyxia (lack of oxygen) and babies were often not receiving timely and adequate resuscitation. Since providing this kind of intervention does not require high tech equipment, they returned nine months later with a team of volunteer doctors and nurses from Connecticut Children's who conducted a week-long training program for 80 nurses and doctors in neonatal resuscitation. This in turn was followed up with an instructor training in neonatal resuscitation for 10 pediatricians and obstetricians at JUH so they could independently provide this training for their respective staffs. In that way, the knowledge becomes institutionalized and sustained. Those trainings are being offered on a regular basis now.

Dr Herson comments how “very gratifying it’s been to see the motivation and commitment of the young physicians and nurses at JUH. They carry out their work with so few resources and so little support. It is an incredibly challenging environment, yet they are so eager to learn and improve. I'm impressed with how upbeat they remain--how little cynicism we encountered... (even though) they see babies dying who they know could be saved but for the lack of medications, supplies and equipment.”



Maguy Cenatus (R) engaging in an educational skit for tuberculosis prevention with another community health worker.



## Volunteering at Home and in Haiti: Brenda Cushing

Brenda Cushing, RN first arrived in Haiti in the early nineties, well before Konbit Sante was founded in 2001, when a side trip from the Dominican Republic to work in an orphanage resulted in the adoption of two of her children. Although she took them home to Freeport, ME, she had to learn Haitian Kreyol to communicate with them.

Years later, after reading an article about the founding of Konbit Sante in the local paper, she called to learn about volunteering. That was over 12 years ago, and Brenda has traveled 7-8 times since. “My way of getting to know the nurses at pediatrics was to just start working with them and asking how I could help. I observed how they did things and their relationship with the doctors firsthand. I made it clear I wasn’t there to tell anyone what to do, which I wasn’t.”

In March, 2015, Brenda co-led a training and problem solving workshop for nurses on essential newborn care with Manuchca Alcime, RN, one-time Konbit Sante staff member, and current board member. This is the care that every baby needs immediately after birth in order to assure the healthiest start in life. Brenda reports that “The exciting thing was that we could do an evaluation to see if these protocols were actually being followed, and if not, explore what the challenges were that prevented it. This led to a much deeper understanding of areas for improvement, and what can be improved upon most immediately through training. I know things are getting better. Morale is up and protocols are being followed. As a RN, I am impressed.”

As much as Brenda has worked to advance nursing practice in Haiti, for almost three years she has been working equally hard coordinating sales of Haitian metal art to benefit Konbit Sante. “I volunteered to do metal art because I have had a long time fascination with Haitian culture and art, and I like that by buying a product in Haiti for a fair price and selling it here, it benefits a health organization and supports artists and the local economy. Haitian art is internationally celebrated and we get to help share it with others.”

In the past year alone, Brenda has coordinated over half a dozen art exhibits and shows, and sales are bringing in thousands of dollars to benefit Konbit Sante’s work. Brenda asks that you contact her if you want to be involved with promoting metal art, and you can reach her at [art@konbitsante.org](mailto:art@konbitsante.org).

Our deepest appreciation and thanks are owed to volunteers like Brenda- volunteers who are thoughtful about how they can be helpful building local capacity in Haiti, but also commit their time and energies at home to realize a more just, equal and healthy Haiti for all.



Brenda Cushing, RN, managing metal art sales from our Falmouth office.

## Konbit Sante Trainings in FY15

Safe post-abortion care training for Maternity and Family Medicine residents

Neonatal Resuscitation training for Pediatric and Maternity residents and nurses

Monthly Case Reviews and Lectures with Pediatric Residents and faculty

Essential Newborn Care training for Pediatric and Maternity residents and nurses

EKG Training for Internal Medicine Residents

Pediatric Care training for Drs St Fleur and Muscadin at MMC

Management training for JUH administrator





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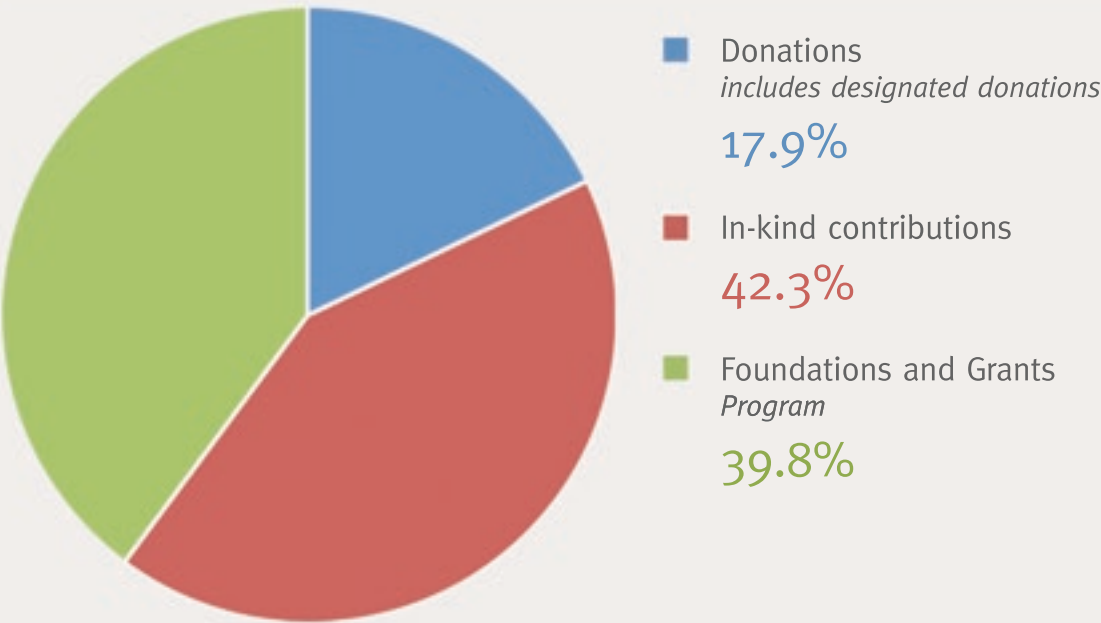
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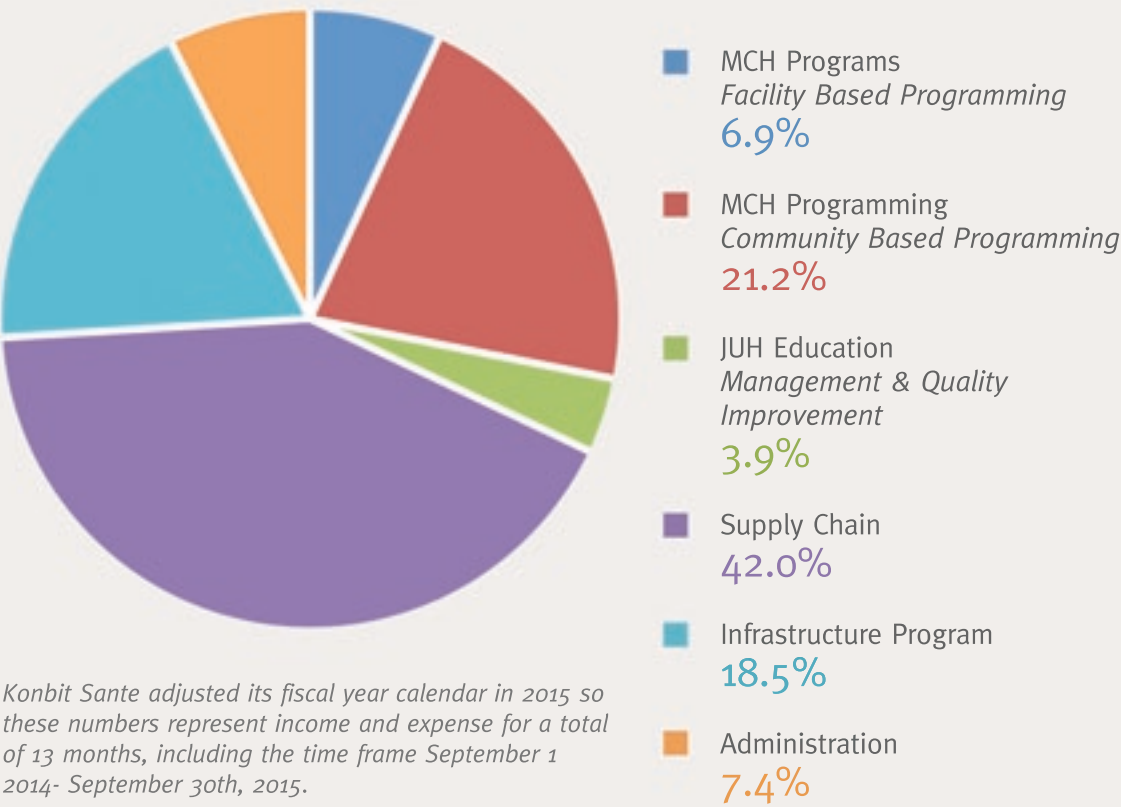


For full financial information, including independent audits, visit [konbitsante.org/financial-information](http://konbitsante.org/financial-information)

Total Income: \$1,540,947



Total Expense: \$1,547,326



Konbit Sante adjusted its fiscal year calendar in 2015 so these numbers represent income and expense for a total of 13 months, including the time frame September 1 2014- September 30th, 2015.



Traveling Volunteers

Volunteer	Degree Title & Occupation
Mike O'Neil	Biomedical Technician
Adam Silverman	MD, Pediatrician
Vic Herson	MD, Neonatologist
Stephan Mahier	RN, Pediatric Nurse
Ellen Skoly	RN, Pediatric Nurse
Sandra Motta	MD, Pediatrician
Bob MacKinnon	Engineer
Jeff Musich	PE, Engineer
Hugh Tozer	PE, Engineer
John Shoos	ED, Cohen Foundation
Kristen Sciacca	MD, Internist
Michael Quinn	MD, Radiologist
Christina DeMatteo	MD, Internist
Emily Mecklenburg	MD, Internist (Resident)
Dean Curran	Diplomat
Brenda Cushing	RN, Pediatric Nurse
Carol Kuhn	MD, Family Medicine
Kim Simonian	MPH, Public Health Practitioner
Eva Lathrop	MD (OBYGN), MPH
Erin Berry-Bibee	MD (OBYGN), MPH
Dr. Youseline Telemaque	MD (OBYGN)
Meike Schleiff	MPH, Public Health Doctoral Student

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- St. Lawrence Arts Center

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- Emory University
- Global Giving
- Grand Challenges Canada
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# Building Capacity for a Healthier Haiti



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