



June 23, 2015

I am grateful to count the American Red Cross as one of HELP's major partners in expanding access to education for some of Haiti's most promising youth, and giving them the skills, motivation and opportunities to lead change in their country.

HELP provides comprehensive needs-based university scholarships to straight-A students so they can contribute to a more just society in Haiti. More than half of our incoming freshmen come from families that survive on less than \$2 per day. However HELP graduates earn, on average, \$15,000 annually and commit to contribute 15% of their salary back to HELP to give the same opportunity to more students.

In the weeks following the 2010 earthquake, when countless university students were leaving Haiti to study abroad, the American Red Cross integrated scores of HELP students into the relief effort, giving these young men and women a unique opportunity to use their education and skills to provide relief to the millions grieving, injured and displaced. Medical and nursing students worked at makeshift clinics, business students helped create supply chains and accounting students kept the books. The students the American Red Cross could not place were referred to partner organizations, allowing HELP to place over 90% of our students in the relief effort. Many students worked for months with these organizations and some still work there today. In a country where less than 1% of young people are able to access university and 84% of university graduates live abroad, keeping educated Haitians in Haiti and using their skills for the common good is one of the most essential, and rarest, components of social and economic development. In Haiti's hour of greatest need, the American Red Cross was able to do just that.

Working closely with the American Red Cross during this period, I saw the staff working tirelessly to organize relief efforts in the most devastated and chaotic environment I have ever encountered. Staff and volunteers alike worked 18 hour days for weeks at a time, and at night slept on roofs, parking lots and floors. Five years later, HELP continues to work closely with American Red Cross.

Through their Community Investment Fund, more than 150 university students receive career services, internships and training in leadership, citizenship, and community service. This leads directly to increased employment, decreased brain drain and a new educated class committed to progress in their home country. Red Cross support also strengthens HELP's outreach and recruiting activities, allowing us to visit almost 1,000 high schools around the country, expand opportunity by finding top candidates in remote regions and encourage hundreds of thousands of students to use education as a path out of poverty. Locally managed programs like the Community Investment Fund are vital for providing targeted assistance to local organizations like HELP which are often overlooked by larger funders.

While those of us working in Haiti know the country's many challenges, past, present and future, we look forward to continued collaboration with partners like the American Red Cross to help Haitians achieve their vast potential.

Sincerely,

Conor Bohan
Executive Director