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Project Summary

Project Title: Agricultural Haitian worker's Migratory tendencies in the Dominican Republic post-DR-CAFTA implementation.

Date of Implementation: December 16th, 2007

Date of Termination: December 30th, 2007

Location of Project: Loma de Cabrera and Los Cerezos, The Dominican Republic, and Tilori, Haiti.

Project Summary:

I arrived in Dajabón on the Dominican side of the DR-Haitian border by bus on the 16th and stayed at a hotel, it was too late in the evening to make contact with the NGOs that were supposed to help me recruit Haitian workers for my project. The next day I met with José Rivas of the Agrega su Luz NGO. He brought me to a meeting with a Pastor named Roger from Tilori, Haiti. I knew pastor Roger from work I did before in Tilori and I set up a meeting with him in Tilori on the 24th, where he was to have at least 10 Haitian subjects for me ready to interview.

While residing in Dajabón, I traveled to Los Cerezos to set up a meeting with Haitians there, the meeting was set for Friday, December 21st. Haitians were very receptive to me in Los Cerezos because the majority of them know me and I had already established a level of trust within that community. Finding viable subjects to interview in Dajabón was not going to be feasible due to the fact that the Haitians that crossed the border into Dajabón were very transient, and not willing to speak to me about their migrational patterns. Furthermore, the majority were not agricultural workers, but merchants who

specialized in buying and selling goods while transporting them to and from Haiti.

Because of this, after 3 days of futile searching, I decided to go to Loma de Cabrera.

In Loma, I met up with a Dominican landowner who I had worked with in the past, Diego Luna de Los Santos. He took me to a *finca* where he knew some Haitian workers were currently employed. I was able to interview two workers for my questionnaire. Later that evening, I was able to interview eight more workers around 5 pm when they were finished working. In total, I interviewed 11 Haitian workers from Loma de Cabrera. All were male with a median age of 25 years and a mean age of 36.6 years. All 11 were agriculture workers, while 2 also worked construction. They averaged a wage of 125 pesos daily for their labor. None of the participants said they had heard of the DR-CAFTA free trade agreement, but when asked to compare this year's prosperity to last years I found that 55% of them said they were better off this year than last. Also 45% of respondents said that it was difficult to find a agriculture job in the DR, while 55% said it was easy to only somewhat difficult. This data disproves my hypothesis; that difficulty finding jobs in the DR would force Agricultural workers to migrate towards more urban areas, and work in the construction or other sectors. But this was only one location, and I gathered data in two more locations.

I interviewed 19 Haitian migrant workers in Los Cerezos, DR, and 10 Haitian former migrant workers in Tilor, Haiti. I found many differences in the job sectors that migrants at each location go into. The migrants in Los Cerezos have a tighter knit community, with 37% of the participants hailing from the same community in Haiti. It

was obvious social connections and social capital are extremely important for migrant workers in Los Cerezos. They earned an average income of around 100 pesos a day.

The Haitians in Tilori were former migrant workers, 40% had been repatriated back to Haiti from the DR more than 10 times. I found that Tilori was like an out post for many migrant workers who had been returned to Haiti from the DR. Because they had crossed the border illegally so many times, the Dominican military decided to put them in Tilori, a much more isolated and rural town than Juana Mendez (across the river massacre next to Dajabón), in order to prevent the migrant worker from returning to the DR. I also heard a list of complaints about human rights violation by Dominican military personal towards Haitians. Apparently, the military put one of the Haitians participating in my project to work in a prison camp and repeatedly beat him. They also withheld food and water from him for days on end. I feel that an investigation or further research on human rights abuses would be beneficial to both the academic, and policy-making communities. I also think that a research project designed to retrieve data about how Dominican and Haitian coyotes transfer Haitians from the border to urban sectors of the Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo, Santiago, etc.) would be an extremely useful and important endeavor.

I finished my work in Los Cerezos by conducting two in-depth interviews with a Haitian agricultural worker and a Haitian domestic worker. Incidentally, the male agricultural worker was the only Haitian I interviewed to possess papers that gave him legal residential status in the DR. We discussed his reasons for moving to the Dominican Republic, the challenges he faced, and how the community of Los Cerezos has embraced

him as a full-fledged community member. One man has even let the worker I interviewed borrow 10 *tareas* of land and sold him a horse, to which the worker has legal papers of ownership for. The second person I interview for my qualitative research was a Haitian woman who was brought to the DR as a child to work as a domestic servant for a well-to-do Dominican family. She was allowed to attend school and has embraced the Dominican culture as her own. She does not speak Kreyol and does not even consider herself Haitian. What she most laments about her situation is that the Dominican family she worked for did not legally adopt her. Therefore, she cannot legally attend high school in the Dominican Republic. She has no official documentation and is not a legal citizen in any country. She is one of many dislocated Haitians living in the DR without the rights and privileges of citizenship in any country. Further investigative research about these individuals is necessary in order for policy-makers in both countries to be able to remedy this unjust situation many Haitians find themselves in.

I finished my fieldwork the 29th of December and analyzed my data during my last day in the DR. I think the project was a success even though my ideas about how the DR-CAFTA free trade agreement affects Haitian agricultural worker's movement in the DR could not be proven by the data I gathered. I really do feel that the data I collected has value and can be incorporated into my thesis. The fact is that agricultural work for Haitians in the DR is decreasing and Haitians are urbanizing in the DR. This change in migratory trends might be due to a number of factors such as the increase in population density of Haiti, the two tropical storms that hit both countries in December of 2007, or an increase in the demand for cheap labor in the urban construction sectors of the DR.

Doing field research was definitely a learning experience, and the next field research project I pursue will be conducted differently in order to take a better representative unbiased sample of the Haitian agricultural population, but I still feel the data I collected is useful and the techniques I used to gather my data will be beneficial to my research activities in the future.