

**"Manje Kwit Pa Gen Met" [Cooked food has no owner]: the Hope of Food sovereignty
among the Haitian Diaspora in Canada**

Often, people generally claim that music is what globally reunites people, but following my research, I argue it is food. This past summer, thanks to my Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) grant through Carleton's EDI action plan, I had the opportunity to travel to Haiti, specially *O-Kap* (Cap-Haitian), for three weeks. My research explored EDI through the lens of food security and food sovereignty in Haiti and the Haitian diaspora. Under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Marylynn Steckley, my research focused on the food insecurity experiences of Haitians and the prospects for food sovereignty among the Haitian diaspora. While in Haiti, my methodology was based on critical ethnography to address the implications of food inequalities and injustice. In summary, I conducted 21 interviews with Haitian women and mothers from a local Haitian community center that tackles food insecurity and malnutrition; *Sant Nitrisyon e Edikasyon pou Fanm e Enfan Demini* (C-New-C Centre for Nutrition and Education for Women and Children). Throughout my interviews with the women of the C-New-C Center, I used a detailed food sovereignty survey tool with nine distinct sections. My data demonstrated that most suffered from food insecurity, with more than 63% of the women claiming that healthy food is not accessible due to financial restraints, and 59% agreed that the food they eat does not satisfy their basic needs. When I asked what they think it means to eat healthy, a participant shared: “when I get to choose my food”; and to essentially eat as much as possible. In short, My research emphasizes that in order for countries like Canada to provide more inclusive, equitable foodscapes for Haitians, we need to identify how Haitians envision healthy, culturally appropriate, and environmentally friendly food systems in their own communities. The Haitian proverb at the outset of my research,

“*Manje kwit pa gen met*” [cooked food has no master], is a testament to the value of the traditions of food sharing, community gathering and food justice that are emblematic of Haitian food systems. This quotation reflects that for Haitians, healthy food systems must keep in mind community well-being, cultural values, and social cohesion. Thus, my goal is to further analyze my data and use my findings from my community base- case study from C-new-C as the basis of my honours research essay with Dr. Steckley. My hopes for my research is to continuously explore the possibility for food sovereignty in a meaningful way that contributes to the Haitian community in the literature on food security and race in Canada.