

# A FOOD CRISIS **MANUFACTURED**

CARACOL INDUSTRIAL PARK





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*When they gave us money  
we could buy food but we  
quickly ran out of it and  
then couldn't buy anything...  
We even had to sell our  
cattle because we didn't  
have anywhere to put them.  
The money was not even  
enough to buy cattle.*

— Vigénise Bien Aimé

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Front Cover Photo by Marilia Leti / ActionAid



## LAND WAS SEIZED, AND COMMUNITIES LEFT BEHIND, TO MAKE WAY FOR HAITI'S CARACOL INDUSTRIAL PARK

In January 2011, approximately 3,500 people were forced from their land in Northeast Haiti to make way for the Caracol Industrial Park, a compound of garment factories and related infrastructure funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and other international donors with earthquake reconstruction funds.

The land taken for the park was the most fertile agricultural land in the area. Almost overnight, the farmers and their families lost their primary source of income and food security. They waited almost three years for promised replacement land, only to be told that most families would instead receive an inferior and inadequate cash compensation package.

Almost all of those families now struggle to meet their basic needs.

On 12 January 2017, the seventh anniversary of the earthquake, the Kolektif Peyizan Viktim Tè Chabè, a collective of hundreds of displaced farmers, filed a [complaint](#) with the Bank's accountability office. The Kolektif, supported by [Accountability Counsel](#), [ActionAid](#) and local partners, is calling for fair compensation for their lost land and for the Bank to address the many other environmental and social problems, including pollution and poor working conditions, linked to the industrial park.



# FOOD INSECURITY CAUSED BY THE CARACOL INDUSTRIAL PARK: EXACERBATING HAITI'S FOOD CRISIS



The 442 farmers displaced by the Caracol Industrial Park in January 2011 lost not only the income that land provided: they lost their primary source of nutritious food for their families.

The 250-hectare park is located on the most fertile land in the area. The Trou-du-Nord River runs through the site, providing a natural irrigation system even during dry periods.

Prior to the park’s construction, the land supported mango, papaya, beans, cassava, corn, spinach, peanuts and bananas, among other crops. A baseline study, undertaken only after the park displaced the farmers, estimated that the land produced on average **1,400 metric tons** of food per year. Some families also grazed cattle on the land, providing access to important meat and dairy products.

**Food security – reliable access to sufficient and nutritious food – cannot be taken for granted in Haiti.** A **2016 food security assessment** estimated that 3.6 million Haitians are suffering food shortages. Haiti imports **more than 50 percent** of its food, while low incomes leave Haitians extremely vulnerable to local and international price shocks. Frequent droughts and natural disasters exacerbate already severe food shortages.

Yet the Inter-American Development Bank and its client essentially ignored the impacts of the loss of locally-produced, nutritious food when selecting the site for the industrial park. A 2010 assessment of possible locations for the park wrongly described the Caracol site as “**devoid of habitation and intensive cultivation**”, when the opposite was plainly visible.

“Before our land would give us a lot of things, a lot a lot a lot. We would plant a lot of fruits and vegetables, we would produce a lot of peas, maize, you see? Well, now we don’t have enough money, when we go to the market, it’s already hard to buy food for kids, if you want to buy oils, spices, meat, you need money, and today we don’t have money. Before we had tomatoes, peas, when we went to the market we would make money and could buy food. Today I can’t buy.”

— Anne Leroy

The impacts have been devastating.

Most of the farmers and their families have been left without land to cultivate. The Bank and its client promised for three years to provide replacement land, only to abandon that promise. Instead, most families received an inferior package of cash compensation that has proved **insufficient** to obtain new land or to establish alternative, sustainable livelihoods.

To make matters worse, the families – now forced to purchase food with reduced and unstable incomes – have faced dramatic increases in the cost of food in the area. For example, the price of a pound of black peas – a crop many families cultivated on the land now occupied by the industrial park – in nearby Cap Haïtien markets doubled from 25 Haitian gourdes in January 2011 to **50 gourdes** just two years later.

The compensation packages failed to properly account for this lost food security. Families received on average US\$80 per person per year, or 22 cents per day, for lost food security during the compensation period. This figure in no way reflected their actual food security needs. According to the Haitian National Coordination for Food Security, the nominal cost of a food basket in January 2011 was **US\$272.37** per person per year.

As a result of the lost income and the lost produce, most families have faced – and continue to face – severe food shortages.

“Where they have chosen to place the park is almost criminal. They have prioritized what the United States needs, but not what Haitians need to produce and feed themselves.”

— Doudou Pierre Festil, Community Leader

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*It was very fertile soil. I was able to grow corn, peanuts and black beans, and got two harvests a year. Now I have to buy food imported from the Dominican Republic which is much more expensive. Before corn was 4-5 gourdes per kilo, now it's 100.*

— Etienne Robert

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Photo of local farmer, Jean Jocelyn by Marilia Leti / ActionAid

## THE WAY FORWARD

In spite of how they have been treated, the Kolektif believes that fair compensation remains possible. Working in collaboration with approximately 210 victims of the displacement, the Kolektif has developed a detailed proposal, including fair financial and non-financial compensation to reestablish sustainable livelihoods as well as specific support for their children's education. Their complaint seeks a constructive dialogue with the Bank and its client, facilitated by the Bank's independent accountability office.

Additionally, the Kolektif requests a new, meaningful, consultation process to explain the broader environmental and social risks and impacts of the Caracol Industrial Park to affected communities and to facilitate their input into how those risks will be managed.

For more information about the complaint, see [accountabilitycounsel.org/communities/current-cases/haiti-caracol-industrial-park/](https://accountabilitycounsel.org/communities/current-cases/haiti-caracol-industrial-park/).





#CARACOLHAITI

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