



A story of courage and hope

The testimony of Jemima Sénat

My name is Jemima Sénat, and I am 21 years old. I come from Santo 25, one of the most dangerous areas in Haiti, where two rival gangs fight for control day and night. Since childhood, my life has been shaped by violence, fear, and uncertainty. I have lived through situations that most people in this world could not even imagine.

Yet, despite everything, I consider myself a lucky girl. Since 2021, I have been part of the INHO Book Club, a community that gave me strength, hope, and a safe space to grow. INHO became more than an activity — it became a family, a refuge, a place where I could dream beyond the limits of my environment.



Jemima's school community.



Jemima Sénat.

Christmas night that changed everything

On the Christmas night of December 24–25, 2023, everything changed for the children and young people of Santo 25. That night, the gangs killed two of our friends — two sisters, only six and ten years old. Their deaths shattered our neighborhood, our innocence, and our sense of safety. Panic spread everywhere. Families ran, cried, and searched for a place to hide. The sound of heavy weapons echoed through the streets, and fear became a physical weight pressing on our hearts.



In memory of the two sisters.

Beth-Tikva: a House of Hope

In the middle of this nightmare, I was among the fortunate ones who found refuge in Beth-Tikva, which means House of Hope. Even with gunfire echoing outside, Beth-Tikva became a safe oasis — a small corner of paradise in the middle of hell.

Life continued inside even when the outside world collapsed. I remember one night when 400 Mawozo and Chen Mechan exchanged heavy gunfire. None of us could sleep. At dawn, we gathered the essentials and fled far from Santo 25, spending a week sleeping in a school building. Thanks be to God, things eventually calmed down, and we were able to return home.

For months, we stayed indoors. We were homeschooled for an entire year thanks to four dedicated adults, and thanks to Fr. Robert, who taught us remotely from Canada — classes in global warming, CSS and HTML, Greek mythology, French, and English.

Food was extremely expensive. Many children struggled to find even one bowl of rice a day. But once again, we were among the fortunate youth who received two meals every day.



A shared meal at Beth-Tikva.



Beth-Tikva, House of Hope.



A dream begins to take shape

In the fall of 2025, I enrolled at UniFA, the university founded by former Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Today, the gangs are less aggressive, but Croix-des-Bouquets remains under gang control. Some days are calmer; others are dangerous. No matter which road you take, you must face the bandits.

Traveling to the university means crossing armed gangs, praying silently to arrive alive. Often, I lacked money for transportation or food, and discouragement weighed heavily on me.

But becoming a dentist has always been my dream. I am the first person in my family to attend university. This school year felt like a roller coaster — one challenge after another. An accident left me shaken, and shortly afterward, illness forced me into the hospital for a full week. Like many Haitians, I was diagnosed with H. pylori. I missed important exams, lost my rhythm, and felt my academic path slipping away.

Yet I never gave up. Something inside me — a light, a conviction, a vocation — kept me standing.



Jemima at UniFA, Université de la Fondation Aristide, Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti.

Resilience, faith, and the memory of two little angels

Every day at the faculty was a battle, but also a victory. I discovered resilience I did not know I had. I learned that perseverance, when supported by a community, can move mountains.

Today, I carry the memory of the two little sisters in my heart. Their lives were stolen, but their story pushes me to move forward — to fight for education, for safety, for dignity, for hope.

I am determined to continue my studies, to rise above the darkness around me, and to honor the gift that Beth-Tikva has given me: the chance to live, to grow, and to dream again.

And above all, I want to give back to my community everything I have received from people who helped me — even those who did not know me personally.



Jemima at her computer.



Practical learning at Beth-Tikva.



A final word of hope

“I have survived what many cannot imagine. And despite everything, I still believe in hope.”

I am Jemima Sénat. I am a member of Beth-Tikva at Santo 25, Croix-des-Bouquets. I have survived what many cannot imagine. And despite everything, I still believe in hope. And above all, I am thankful to everyone who contributed to my education.

Support INHO. Every contribution changes a life in Haiti.

For questions or giving arrangements, contact info@incho.org.
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