



WINDOWS ON OUR WORLDS

News from *PARTNERS IN PROGRESS (PIP)* – Fall and Winter 2011

School Reconstruction in Fondwa: Steady Progress Now Set to Accelerate



With the completed paving of the Fondwa road leading to the St. Antoine Elementary and Secondary School campus and the construction of a new retaining wall, steady progress towards a new, permanent classroom complex is set to accelerate. PIP's collaborating partners in Fondwa, the **Association of Peasants of Fondwa (APF)** completed the design phase of reconstruction last spring. The Haitian Engineering firm of lead project engineer M. Philip Magloire has prepared the structural drawings and blueprints. The site survey, topographical analysis, and soil analysis have all been completed. Actual construction of the new classrooms is expected to begin before the year's end and could be completed as early as the fall of 2012.

The new classroom complex will include a three-story main classroom building that houses 12 classrooms and will be anchored into the bedrock beneath the campus. Another two-story building connected to it will provide 4 additional classrooms and will incorporate two existing cisterns in its foundation, providing water for the separate lavatories and latrines. The new classrooms will provide an enhanced teaching and learning environment for the nearly 600 students enrolled in the combined St. Antoine Elementary and Secondary School. **Partners in Progress (PIP)** is one of a consortium of funders for the reconstruction project that includes **Family Health Ministries (FHM)**, **Fonkoze**, and **Heart to Heart International**, in conjunction with the **Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)**.



Intensified Training Marks Phase II of Deslandes "Earth Block" Construction



Construction has begun on the second, "earth block" classroom building for the elementary school operated by PIP's collaborating partners in Deslandes, the **Centre d'Inspiration Jeunesse (CIJ)**. "Earth Block" expert **Jim Hallock** from the **Tierra y Cal Institute** in Mexico is providing intensified training for the already-skilled crew that completed work on the first classroom building last year. An efficient, new technique for grading the foundation was introduced and several, anti-seismic and anti-hurricane innovations are planned for the foundation and wall structures. Volunteers from the **School Parents' Association** are contributing their labor and participate in the weekly "earth block" technology training sessions along side the skilled construction team.

Blocks for the current phase of construction are being produced at a rate of almost 1000 per day using a hydraulic Adopress manufactured by **Ital Mexicana** and donated to PIP's CIJ partners by **Ecoblock International**. Made primarily from locally available soil with a high clay content, the blocks are "environmentally friendly" and reduce the need for expensive, imported materials. Completion of the current classroom building is expected in April 2012. A third building will complete the classroom complex and its construction is expected to begin after the hurricane season next year. Both the current and proposed constructions will provide additional training opportunities leading to the launch of an **"Earth Block Construction (EBC) Training Center"** that will focus on equipping both men and women with skills needed to help build their own, affordable houses using the "earth block" technology while generating revenue for PIP's community-based partner organization, the **Centre d'Inspiration Jeunesse (CIJ)** or **"Youth Inspiration Center"**.



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Seed Bank and Grain Silo to Aid Farmers and Support Deslandes School



Most farmers in rural Haiti do not produce enough to enable them to save seeds or store crops and are thus forced to sell their grain when prices are low (harvest time) and buy seeds when prices are high (planting season). This problem was considered recently at a meeting of the parent association of the school operated by PIP's Deslandes partners, the **Centre d'Inspiration Jeunesse (CIJ)** or "**Youth Inspiration Center**", while discussing the need to increase operating revenues for the school in order to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. Their "brainstorming" outlined a vision that involves participants in the PIP sponsored **Konbit Vanyan Kapab** "soil health" project selling a portion of their harvest as seed or grain to CIJ at market prices. CIJ will store the grain, creating in effect a Seed Bank. At planting time a portion of the acquired harvest will be

resold to participating farmers at a price below the prevailing market price for seed. Konbit farmers will be able to maintain their incomes at harvest time while increasing their purchasing power at planting time.

The remainder of the local harvest acquired from participating Konbit farmers (consisting primarily of beans, millet, or corn) will provide the basis for the CIJ School lunch program. The women's committee of the school will prepare the school lunches and also sell in the open market any excess of grain beyond what is needed to feed the children. The CIJ anticipates that after the first year – assuming an adequate harvest and no crop-destroying, natural disasters – income from the seed bank and grain storage will be sufficient to cover the cost of food for the lunch program, pay the women who cook, and subsidize salaries for the teachers at the CIJ school.

PIP's CIJ partners in Deslandes are intent on offering their community a path of development that promotes cooperative solutions to problems while increasing community resilience and food sovereignty by emphasizing local food production and local markets along with "value added" food production and alternative, non-agricultural economic activities that provide jobs and sustainable livelihoods in the Deslandes region.



Fondwa Sisters: Growing Community Launches Van Transport Business



Sister Marie Carmelle Voltaire was recently elected superior of the **Little Sisters of St. Antoine**, the community of Catholic religious women that staff the **Fondwa Medical Clinic** and the **Fatima House Orphanage** – home to more than 70 orphaned and "at risk" children – and that direct the combined **St. Antoine Elementary and Secondary School**. In her leadership role Sr. Carmelle will be assisted by **Sr. Simone Achille** and **Sr. Claudette Prevot**.

The community of Catholic sisters which now numbers 20 recently launched a new business enterprise. With a grant from PIP made possible by the **Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth**, the Fondwa sisters have purchased a 15 passenger van and hired a driver to operate an income-generating transport business, carrying passengers between the capital of Port au Prince and the popular, tourist destination of Jacmel on Haiti's Southern peninsula. The van normally makes one round trip per day, but during holidays – when large numbers of "in country" tourists descend on Jacmel's beautiful beaches – the van makes as many as four round trips a day. Income from the business enterprise supports the Sisters' growing community, which now numbers 20 and is seeking to expand beyond the Fondwa region its mission of education and care for orphaned and "at risk" children.



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