



WINDOWS ON OUR WORLDS

News from *PARTNERS IN PROGRESS (PIP)* – Spring 2011

“Test Block” Stage Begins for Second “Earth Block” Classroom Building



The first of three, planned, “earth block” classroom buildings for the elementary school, operated by PIP’s partners – the **Centre d’Inspiration Jeunesse (CIJ)** or **Youth Inspiration Center** – in the rural community of Deslandes, was completed in December with plastering of the interior and exterior walls using a natural earthen plaster and with the addition of floors and an entrance stairway. Compressed “earth blocks” consist of 80% soil (containing clay), 15% sand, and 5% cement used to “stabilize” the blocks. The soil and sand are locally available and all work was done by a local, trained crew. The thermal properties of “earth blocks” help maintain the interior temperature of the rooms well below the outside temperature,

making the new classroom building the “coolest” space in the area!

The Deslandes “earth block” construction crew began making “test blocks” for the second classroom building in March 2011 using a hydraulic block machine donated to CIJ last year by **Ital Mexicana**, a Mexican firm with experience in “earth block” construction. The machine produces some 200 blocks an hour. The second building will be constructed on an innovative, “stabilized rammed earth” foundation. The design of the Ital blocks allows for increased seismic and hurricane resistance in the wall construction through an innovative system of vertical and horizontal reinforcement. Construction of the second classroom building is set to begin in November once the hurricane season ends.



Fondwa Partners Unveil Water Purification System and New “Fatima House”

There are new signs of continuing recovery from the massive earthquake that devastated the Fondwa community in January 2010. To address the need for clean, potable water, the **Little Brothers of St. Therese** have contributed an ozone, water purification center that will be operated and managed by the **Little Sisters of St. Antoine**, a member group of PIP’s partner organization the **Association of Peasants of Fondwa (APF)**. The system will provide clean water for the Sisters, the children of the Fatima House Orphanage, visitors and volunteers, as well as residents of the Fondwa area.



Construction of a new **Fatima House Orphanage** complex that will house the more than 60 orphaned and “at risk” children whose basic, educational, and health care needs are met by PIP’s partners in the **Association of Peasants of Fondwa (APF)** is progressing not far from the site of the former Fatima House that was severely damaged and rendered unlivable by last year’s earthquake. The new Fatima House is constructed of prefabricated walls that “sandwich” styrofoam insulation between sheets of aluminum. The complex will include living space for some of the **Sisters of St. Antoine** (who operate the orphanage) as well as chapel and dining areas. Potable water is available on site and a security wall will be erected around the entire complex to provide additional safety for the children on Fondwa’s steep slopes.

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St. Antoine School Reconstruction Advances Beyond “Design Phase”

Progress towards the reconstruction of the **St. Antoine Elementary and Secondary School** in Fondwa continues to advance “ti pa ti” (“step by step”). After extensive consultation with teachers and other stakeholders in the school project, consultants retained by the **Association of Peasants of Fondwa** (APF) and supported with funds from **Partners in Progress, Family Health Ministries, Fonkoze, Heart to Heart International** and other friends of APF, successfully completed a preliminary “design phase” for the project. A selection committee – consisting of the APF senior staff, the school leadership, representatives from Fonkoze and Heart to Heart, and various Haitian construction firms – adopted the proposed design and observed that the design makes good use of the terrain and takes into account everything the teachers and staff indicated were important.

The **Association of Peasants of Fondwa** (APF) has selected **Philippe Magloire**, one of Haiti’s most successful architects, to oversee the project. Several additional steps must be taken before the project costs and time for completion can be reliably estimated. A soil analysis is necessary and detailed architectural and structural designs must be drawn. Several Haitian engineering and construction firms are under consideration for various aspects of the project. The entire project will be staged in phases with priority given to constructing a fully functional, affordable classroom complex with adequate space, ventilation and illumination for the more than 600 students enrolled in pre-school through secondary.

“Soil Health” Initiative Launches School-based Tree Nursery and “Trial Plots”



Children from the **Centre d'Inspiration Jeunesse** (CIJ) school are learning “first hand” principles of biology and general science and about improving “soil health” in their community by planting seeds that will produce multi-purpose trees. The trees will yield food or fuel as well as “organic matter” in the form of leaves and branches used to produce the compost that will enrich the soil. Professor Cassimi, director of pedagogy at the school, uses the tree nursery to help students learn about sustainable agriculture as a strategy for developing increased community “resilience” in the face of economic and environmental challenges.

More than 50 farmers, organized into 4 traditional “konbits” or work groups, are participating in the **Konbit Vanyan Kapab** (“Together We Can Succeed”) initiative to improve “soil health” through experimentation with various techniques of sustainable agriculture. In March the groups met to review various “agroecological strategies” such as companion planting, polycropping, mulching, and composting, as well as constructing hedgerows and contour terraces to reduce erosion and capture water. The *konbits* selected the final designs for their “experimental gardens” and identified varieties of seeds, trees, and cover crops that will be integrated when the plots are planted once the “rainy season” begins.



PIP Board Seeks New Leaders for Second Decade of Sustainable Development



In July 2011 **Partners in Progress** (PIP) will begin its second decade of promoting and supporting sustainable community development in rural Haiti! By pursuing a strategy of “partnership” with strong, grassroots, community-based organizations and their visionary leaders, PIP has been privileged to share in many of the remarkable achievements of its partners in the **Association of Peasants of Fondwa** (APF) and the **Centre d'Inspiration Jeunesse** (CIJ) in Deslandes. All this is made possible by the support of PIP’s loyal and generous donors, its staff, and a volunteer board of directors that is responsible for the governance of Partners in Progress.

The PIP board is eager to welcome new members and invites anyone who shares a passion for PIP’s mission to contact the current board president, Nick Wilson, at nwilson@alumni.cmu.edu. Biographies of current board members and the PIP staff are available on the **NEW** PIP website at www.PIPHaiti.org.

Partners in Progress

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