

GOT GOATS? WE DO!

This spring, the Farmer-to-Farmer Agroecology for Food Sovereignty Initiative (Farmer-to-Farmer) of the *Konbit Vanyan Kapab* Agroecology Project, began distributing goats as part of the initiative. Recipients are the 30 farmers from Savanette Cabral, Vye Kay, Papaye, and Deslandes training who recently completed the two-year Farmer-to-Farmer initiative. Each community also received support to help sustain a local tree nursery.

The provision of goats is part of a strategy to ensure farmers have trees, plants, tools, and now the farm animals needed to adopt and advance agroecology on their own farms. Going forward, Farmer-to-Farmer participants will receive goats in their second year of participation in the program.

Farm animals help regenerate soil health, increase food production, and reduce greenhouse gases through improved soil carbon sequestration, especially when integrated with agroecology strategies such as *ramp vivan* or use of cover crops.

Results from two Farm-to-School Child Nutrition farms, the Sisters of St. Antoine (SSA) Farm and the St. Yves School Farm, illustrate the important role that cows and goats can play in the agroecosystem. On the SSA Farm, crop yield not only increased, but also led to production of more nutritionally dense and diverse traditional food crops. Similarly, the St. Yves Farm was able to provide 30% of the food consumed in St. Yves Farm-to-School lunch program during the first year of winter production.



Mademoiselle Velius Jean with her mama goat and two kids.



COMMUNITY-LED EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE BEGINS

Partners in Progress (PIP) and our partners have launched a community-led emergency response plan to get food and other aid to rural areas hardest hit by the August 14 earthquake. With nearly 2,200 deaths, tens of thousands of homes destroyed, widespread environmental damage, and loss of crops, these communities are now facing hunger, child malnutrition, and increased risk of Covid-19 and cholera. Here's the plan:

- Corn, beans, and peanuts are being purchased from farmers of

communities in the Farmer-to-Farmer initiative of the *Konbit Vanyan Kapab* Agroecology Project. Rice is being source from Artibonite Valley rice growers.

- The first of several distributions to villages impacted by the earthquake and Tropical Storm Grace is scheduled for this week, and will include 13,650 pounds of food along with hygiene kits and other supplies.

Besides providing vital aid, you will be helping farm families by "purchasing local."

LITERACY PROGRAM STARTS THIS FALL

This fall, PIP and Ecole Communautaire Gamaliel de Deslandes (EGD) will pilot a literacy program designed especially for farmers. The program will provide basic skills for learning while increasing farmer capacity for innovation and sharing knowledge with others.

The impetus for developing this unique literacy project grew out of yearly evaluation with farmers of the *Konbit Vanyan Kapab* Agroecology Project. Literacy has consistently been identified as a top priority by farmers. An estimated 80 percent of Farmer-to-Farmer participants from Deslandes cannot read or write. Access to adult education opportunities in rural Haiti is almost nonexistent.

Through a grant from the Kelley Foundation, farmers and EGD teachers worked with a licensed Adult Basic Education teachers from Minnesota to determine and develop the focus and content of the literacy program. Lesson modules integrate and reinforce agroecology methods, traditional Haitian foods, nutrition, finance, and environmental regeneration — all themes farmers deal with in their daily life.

In October, a three-day training in the curriculum materials will be facilitated with four EGD teachers. Teachers will then pilot the curriculum over a four-week period with six Farmer-to-Farmer participants. Teachers and participants alike will evaluate the pilot sessions. The literacy program and related materials will be completely developed by March and ready for delivery in spring 2022.

BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARMERS IN HAITI AND UGANDA

DESLANDES FARMERS SHARE AND BRING BACK INNOVATIONS IN GLOBAL EFFORT

In March, nine Agroecology Educators of the Farmer-to-Farmer initiative of the *Konbit Vanyan Kapab* Agroecology Project began preparations to share their experience and knowledge globally. For weeks, Agroecology Educators developed scripts, prepared, and rehearsed to create educational videos on their proven agroecology techniques. Sunlight Productions, in Gonaives, Haiti, led by Junior Georges, directed and edited the videos.

NEW FARMER-TO-FARMER INITIATIVE LAUNCHED

In April, these educational videos were part of an Agroecology Workshop with farmers from Nebbi District in Uganda! The workshop launched a new Farmer-to-Farmer initiative that provides opportunities for sharing of knowledge and advancements in sustainable farming and traditional foods between Alur indigenous farmers in Uganda and farmers in Haiti.

Equally important as these farmers' sharing with others, is that they are bringing valuable development solutions back to Haiti from Uganda.

This global expansion of the Farmer-to-Farmer initiative offers a tremendous opportunity for building networks and for sharing that can lead to new and better innovations in agroecology and traditional foods to benefit rural communities in Haiti and Uganda. The Farmer-to-Farmer initiative is based on "south-south" cooperation. South-south cooperation is increasingly viewed as a critical development approach for achieving United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. This type of cooperation recognizes that opportunities and support for sharing among communities that face similar experiences and challenges is more likely to lead to creative and appropriate development solutions (FAO UN, 2016).

FARMERS ARE SEEN AS LEADERS & AGENTS OF CHANGE

As demonstrated already in Haiti, these cross-community exchanges not only promote a spirit of innovation, but enable farmers to experience their power to be agents of change—locally, regionally, and now, globally. Joanel René, an Agroecology Educator from Deslandes, said, "It's a lot of pleasure to share my knowledge with farmers from Uganda. I never thought this would happen. I feel so blessed. This project brings joy and life!" Another, Ancelot Faustin, said, "I feel very valuable because I have opportunity to share my knowledge to others."

Farmer-to-Farmer continues to expand in Haiti. A new cohort of farmers from two remote communities, Gwayavye and Layaye, Haiti, will enter the program in September. Soon after, farmers from Savanette Cabral and Vye Kay also will begin training to become Agroecology Educators.

VIDEOGRAPHER JUNIOR GEORGES PASSES

We are very saddened to report that in late July, Junior Georges passed away due to complications from Typhoid and Malaria. He worked tirelessly on the Farmer-to-Farmer agroecology video project with farmers. His creativity, which helped launch the global educational initiative, will live on.



Alur farmers use an "A" frame level to find contour at the Agroecology Workshop in Nebbi, Uganda.

SALE: COVER CROP SEEDS

Grown, processed, packaged, and marketed by *Konbit Vanyan Kapab* Agroecology farmers, cover crop seeds are now for sale! They increase available soil nutrients for crops, reduce weed pressure, rebuild organic soil matter, and improve health of the soil microbiome. Some cover crops, like Sunn Hemp and Velvet Bean, are also valuable forage for farm animals.

Velvet Bean 5lb bag \$7.00
Macuna pruriens

Jack Bean 5lb bag \$7.00
Canavalia ensiformis

To order, contact:

St. Geste Charles
509-3695-2784
stgestecharles651@yahoo.com

Mike Neumann
651-260-9787
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