

“THE FARMERS ARE TAKING CARE OF THIS”

Farmers of Konbit Vanyan Kapab Farmer-to-Farmer Agroecology for Food Sovereignty Initiative (FAFSI) in Haiti are once again at the forefront of community-led food relief.

Rising Hunger In Haiti

According to a UN report, 5.2 million Haitians, nearly half the population, are now facing acute hunger. This is a statistic few if any other countries are experiencing. Soaring inflation and disruption in economic opportunities caused by violence and political instability, along with drought and other climate impacts, are driving this record hunger.

In rural communities, the problem is compounded by the influx of those displaced by violence in the capital and other parts of the country. St. Geste Charles, Director of Ecole Communautaire Gamailiel Deslandes (EGD), reports that 171 adults and 368 children have relocated to Deslandes and surrounding villages in just the past two months. In Layaye, another partner community, Fr. Wilfranc Servil reports that 73 adults and 113 children seeking safety have moved to this village. Most families arrive with nothing but the clothes on their backs, placing a tremendous burden on the available resources in these small communities.

Farmers Continue to Lead Food Relief Efforts

From our fall 2022 appeal you may recall a story about the increased self-determination



(Left to right) FAFSI farmer Andre Vanel on his farm in Vye Kay. At farmer arrives at Layaye food drop-off site with bananas and other food crops for food relief.

and self-reliance that has resulted from FAFSI. In the middle of the pandemic, a period of widespread food shortages in Haiti, PIP staff asked St. Geste Charles if there was a need for emergency food relief in Deslandes. He proudly and resolutely answered: **“The farmers are taking care of this!” These seven words have become a rallying cry as they sum up years of effort, progress, and pride.**

As they did during the pandemic and again in 2021, when farmers provided food relief for earthquake-impacted communities, FAFSI farmers are making preparations to distribute food to families in need.

Agroecology works! Despite drought conditions at the start of the growing season,

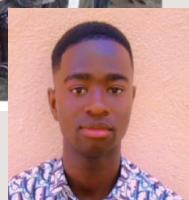
evaluations show FAFSI farmers from 10 of 11 communities had impressive production of a wide variety of crops resulting from agroecology practices. Increased production in agroecology plots ranged from 33% to an astonishing 250% above those in control plots.

As a result, FAFSI farmers are in a position to provide food that will be purchased by PIP partner organizations for relief efforts. As true community leaders, FAFSI farmers are volunteering to package and stage food kits for distribution. In addition to healthy grains, legumes, and vegetables, baskets will include a small amount of cash. Food relief will prioritize feeding internally displaced families and families and organizations caring for the elderly and children with special needs.

PRODUCING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHANGE-MAKERS AT FATIMA HOUSE ORPHANAGE AND SCHOOL OF ST. ANTOINE

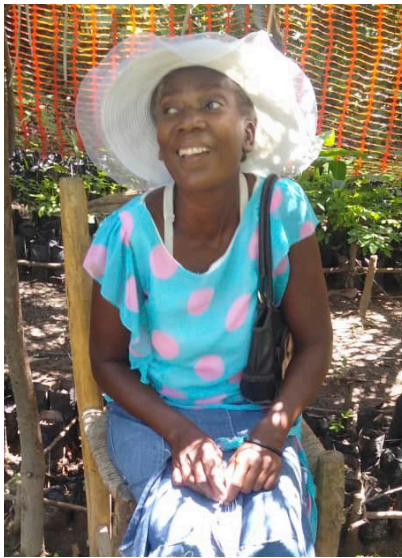


Fatima House Children and Jed Oscar, resident of Fatima House.



Jed Oscar, from Fondwa, came to the Fatima House Orphanage when he was only two months old. Sr. Claudette Prevot says: “Sadly, when we took Jed in at Fatima, his mother died a week after and his father two months later.” Fast forward to last spring when Jed, now 20 years old, graduated from the School of St. Antoine. Jed’s dream is to become a nurse and this winter he will begin his studies at the Notre Dame School of Nursing in Jacmel, Haiti. Congratulations to Jed, and thank you to the many who were there for him!

The School of St. Antoine, Fatima House Orphanage, and Fondwa Clinic combine to provide children from 30+ villages with quality education, health care, food, and nutrition, as well as a permanent and nurturing home. It is for those who have lost their parents or whose parents cannot care for them due to poverty, special needs of the child, or other circumstances. The school, programs, and services offered by the Sisters of St. Antoine and Asosyasyon of Peyizan Fondwa Global provide stability and sense of security while preparing the next generation to create a new, more positive narrative and future for rural Haiti.



Abriyo resident Tercilia Petit Homme receives trees for her Lakou. Deslandes' children prepare to distribute trees.

SE PYEBWA YO FÈ LAVI BÈL E EDE NOU VIV BYEN ("IT IS THE TREES THAT MAKE LIFE BEAUTIFUL AND HELP US LIVE WELL")

This message above about the importance of trees is one that you will hear Agronomist Claubert Versey and FAFSI elders and Agroecology Educators repeat over and over. Trees are an integral part of regenerative agroecology strategies being practiced and advanced through FAFSI. Trees improve the diversity and health of soil microbiology, protect crops and property against drought and storms, and conserve moisture in the soil. Planting trees recharge groundwater, are the foundation to rebuilding ecosystem biodiversity and improving local economies, and can even reverse climate change. At an Agroecology Workshop this past spring, elder Aluis Pierre Louis said: "The trees we are planting now will be even more important for the future once the trouble in the country is over."

Each group of farmers entering the FAFSI program are provided support and technical assistance necessary for starting and sustaining a cooperatively managed tree nursery in their community. Nurseries provide native species of trees for integration into agroecology systems and for distribution to other farmers and community members. This summer in Haiti, farmers and other community members in participating FAFSI communities planted 43,896 trees. In Uganda, 19,198 trees were planted. In both both countries, tree nurseries focus on production of native species that have cultural, environmental, and health and nutritional significance. Non-native species are avoided because they can become invasive or have other detrimental impacts to the environment.

MEET AGROECOLOGY EDUCATOR MIGLITA ETIENNE



Miglita helps a group in Deslandes.

Miglita is from Deslandes in the L'Artibonite Department. She has served as an Agroecology Educator in FAFSI for the last year and a half. She is also a student of culinary arts.

Miglita practices agroecology because "it makes her garden more beautiful" and because she and others in the community are able to grow more traditional foods. She says: "Local foods are very good for us because they are healthy. The food they import is not healthy." She hopes that what her community is doing "can be shared with other countries ...and so that our food will be valuable, too."

HELP STOP THE VIOLENCE IN HAITI

Violence in Haiti has reached record levels—and there is something you can do to help! In August, the UN reported that in the first eight months of 2023, 2,439 Haitians had been killed. There are now over 200,000 internally displaced persons in Haiti.

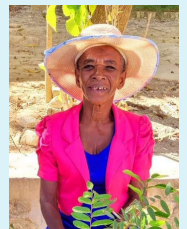
It is estimated that over 90% of the guns fueling the violence in Haiti are from the U.S.

You can help reduce the flow of guns to Haiti by contacting your congressional representative and urging them to support the Caribbean Engagement Act of 2023 (H.R. 4939). Check our website www.piphaiti.org for more information on how to do this.

The Act would step up efforts to reduce the flow of U.S. firearms to Haiti and other Caribbean nations, and also provide training and capacity-building for law enforcement in Haiti; support renewable energy, food security, and health care infrastructure initiatives; and improve access to education for youth, women, and girls.

PIP REMEMBERS THE INSPIRATIONAL ODETTE JOSEPH

PIP just learned the sad news that one of the first FAFSI Farmers, Odette Joseph, from Savanette Cabral, has passed away. In 2019, after her first harvest of peanuts using agroecology, Odette donated the harvest to women in a local women's cooperative she helped lead. This was during countrywide unrest and violence, when food insecurity was on the rise and her selflessness then and now was an inspiration.



Odette's humor, compassion, and skill as a community organizer will be remembered. She was a model for women, farmers, Haitians, for all of us. May her legacy live on and continue to inspire.