



FALL 2017

productive cooperatives HAITI

“When we are together we think less about the difficulties of life. For us, here, is not only a place of learning and encouragement, it is a place of refuge. We do not want to part”.



The Foundation for International Development Assistance
Fondation pour le soutien du développement international



GIFT OF OPPORTUNITY

When my father founded FIDA, he envisioned a holistic model that would meet the needs of the poor, not just economically, but physically, mentally and spiritually. A cooperative structure, owned and managed by the people, was the vehicle he saw that could service this mission. Hence, the early cooperative communities always included a clinic. For various reasons, the clinic model proved not viable and so this aspect of our program lapsed as we explored what might work. We invited discussion with a number of cooperative members, all who expressed their desire for training and knowledge. Men expressed concern for the maternal and mental health of their wives and prevention of disease for their children. Women wanted to know how they could be better mothers, how to better manage their family, prepare nutritious meals and raise healthy children. How fortunate we were to have received some small funds this past year to experiment with a Mother Leader Nutrition program! I had the opportunity to visit with this group of enthusiastic mothers (there was a father or two as well!) who were quick to describe all that they had learned about the importance of breast feeding and how to detect the signs of malnutrition and what nutritious foods their children need. I then asked if these vegetables were available to them. Their response was unanimous, “No,” they said, “We have no means to purchase them.” I asked what they could do about this and again in excited voices, they told me they could sew, they could make flour, they could do “commerce!” “However,” they said, “We have no tools, no sewing machines, no credit...” I was so moved by their energy. I wept for their dilemma. This dilemma is my reason for being. For all of us, it is a gift of opportunity.

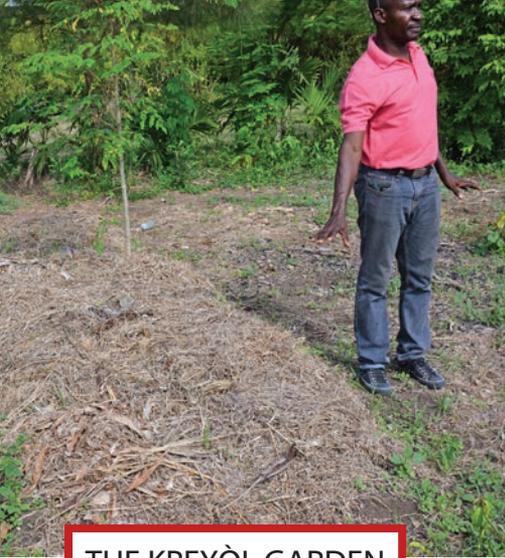

~ Betsy Wall, Executive Director



MOTHER LEADERS TRAINED TO TEACH OTHERS

Following Hurricane Matthew October 2016, thousands of families in Duchity suffered complete and absolute loss. Mothers, in particular, carry this weight as they are without water or food to provide basic care and nutrition for their children. With a small grant from Human Concern (facilitated by Hope International Development Agency), pCH designed and implemented an innovative “Mother Leaders” program, teaching mothers how to prepare balanced meals using local products, the principles of nutrition, and basic maternal-infant care (such as breastfeeding, sanitation). These mothers were trained to serve as “Mother Leaders” to, in turn, train and support other mothers in prenatal and early childhood care. They were taught how to identify the signs and symptoms of malnutrition and how to restore their child’s health. Children suffering from severe malnutrition were given plumpeanut (peanut-based paste for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition). The program brought mothers together each day to learn about the nutritional value of local foods, going to the market to practice what they learned and then preparing a balanced meal. The program was of particular value to mothers with a disability or had a child with a disability and young mothers who had a child as a result of sexual assault. This program, however, became more than just a nutrition project. (At the end of the project, 80% of the children were fully recovered.) More importantly, it became a place for mothers to feel safe and to establish a bond with one another. They did not want it to end. “When we are together we think less about the difficulties of life,” they said. “For us, here, is not only a place of learning and encouragement, it is a place of refuge. We do not want to part”.

**Note: FIDA is currently in application to extend this program to other areas.*



THE KREYÒL GARDEN

This past August, FIDA Canada ED, Betsy Wall, along with FIDA/pcH partners, Ron Smith and Bruce Pendrel of Foresters for Haiti travelled to Haiti to set in motion an innovative “industry-driven agro-forestry project” affectionately called “The Kreyòl Garden”. Duchity is the community of focus as it suffered great losses in the wake of Hurricane Matthew.

Our first stop was the botanical gardens in Les Cayes with the intent to source local and appropriate species for the Kreyòl Garden. The insufferable heat did not dampen the passionate, enthusiastic team managing this garden that had excellent knowledge of local species. They eagerly provided us with a list of species suitable for the southwestern zones that will be available by end of year.

The garden was conveniently divided into different types. Of interest to us were the fruit trees, the medicinal plants, ecological garden and fast growing biomass. Among the species they have growing, two are particularly well suited for charcoal production The “sandwich” concept that is a tool of permaculture was of particular interest. It is a well -recognized “raised bed” method of layered compost using charcoal and different sources of organic matter (green vegetation, brown straw, animal matter, soil) Planting is possible within 15 days. Charcoal serves two purposes: it reduces the temperature by effectively absorbing and distributing the heat, and secondly it adsorbs nutrients as they are released from the breakdown of the organic matter





There is a section that was an ecological garden, which over time will provide additional insights into the ecological benefits of the Kreyòl Garden particularly in terms of wildlife, bird and insect species. Of note, was one species, which is dependent on a particular bird species for seed propagation. In turn, the bird is dependent on the plant. This is a good example of a conservation species for the Kreyòl Garden.

The next step is choosing four cooperative leaders to travel to Plan Sierra in the Dominican Republic to see the model and to provide knowledgeable support as the concept unfolds. It will be the first experience for these leaders to travel outside of Haiti. This requires obtaining birth certificates, passports and visas, which has proven to be an empowering process for those chosen to participate.

We also met with the leaders of the cooperatives of Duchity and Lescav to discover what they know about the pilot and what their expectations are. They appeared well versed in the pilot (thanks to pCH) and articulated their expectations. This allowed the discussion to be elevated.

The members have pride in their area/community and they want to see it restored. The two cooperatives demonstrated good cooperation between each other. They clearly expressed desire to reintroduce coffee and cacao and variety of other trees. They see the Kreyòl Garden as a tool that can provide some element of environmental restoration.





BROILER PILOT LAUNCHES IN GONAIVES

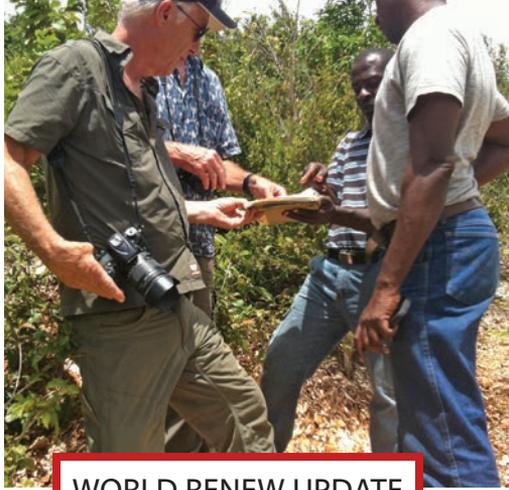
With a mission to unite families and promote the Word of Christ while helping its members become economically self-sufficient, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints approached FIDA/ pcH to introduce a broiler production pilot project in the city of Gonaives. The pilot followed an Exploratory Visit to first assess the needs of the member families.

Five families selected by church leaders based on their level of vulnerability. The aim is to improve the livelihoods of families through training in the transfer and sustainability of modern broiler production techniques. The families were supported throughout the production cycle and commercialization with pcH providing technical assistance and regular follow up.

Training sessions were conducted on the importance of poultry production in terms of capitalization, high quality feed, cleanliness and care, contribution to household food security and nutrition. A history of the poultry situation in Haiti and the main differences between traditional and modern chicken breeding was explained. These differences accentuated the advantages and disadvantages of both types of livestock farming in terms of performance, labour requirements, infrastructure and investment needs. Follow up sessions focused on the standards for building a quality coop, the symptoms of primary avian diseases, preventive measures and treatment, proper feeding and watering of the chickens, and the strategy of feeding chickens in three rations according to the stages of development (start-up, growth, finishing) while taking into account both a technical and economic point of view. Using the trial method, a commercially available premix, the beneficiaries prepared a ration for broiler chickens.

At the end of the first cycle, three of the five families suffered no losses, realizing ample profit to purchase a second cycle in time for the Christmas season. Two families had minor losses but were still able to realize a profit.

FIDA/pcH is grateful for the opportunity to work with a church that has such a sustainable vision for its members in Haiti.



WORLD RENEW UPDATE



The Gojet Cooperative has seen little change in the months following Hurricane Matthew. For FIDA/pcH, this is an opportunity to initiate activities to strengthen the cooperative. In partnership with World Renew a program has been introduced that includes a construction component along with agriculture and environmental components.

The role of pcH is to strengthen capacity of the cooperative and manage construction of the Gojet Community Center. As members were highly discouraged after Hurricane Matthew, pcH began with a participatory leadership planning session to ensure everyone understands all aspects of the activities. This process empowers all parties, determines a timeline, allows for members to take on various responsibilities, and provides training for elected leaders. Minutes are recorded and kept on file by the secretary of the cooperative. A total of 383 people participated (253 women/130 men). These meetings provided a space for members to discuss their concerns with the cooperative leaders and confirmation of the management structure. Leaders participated in motivational meetings and contributed significantly to relaying the information to the community.

The center will be built on cooperative owned land and will include a large room for training sessions, an office, and storage space. As water supply in the area is very crucial, river water will be accessed, transported in plastic drums and stored. Unfortunately funds do not allow for toilet or water storage at this time. Construction is expected to be complete within one month.



~ Patrick Bentrott, Executive Director, FIDA US

Do you know that an average Haitian, 25 years or older, has less than 5 years of schooling; and that over 50 % are semi literate to completely illiterate? These numbers increase dramatically for rural Haitians living in the countryside where up to 90% have never attended school at any point in their lives. The statistics are even more dire for girls. As is common in much of the world, Haitian girls are frequently not provided the same access to formal education as boys due to financial hardship and oppressive cultural and gender traditions. The result is that while women are considered the “pillar of society” the vast majority cannot recognize numbers or letters and can only sign an “X” for their name.

FIDA/pcH strives to correct this social injustice through a comprehensive four-level adult literacy program. Each level is nine months and is written in their language of Kreyòl utilizing symbols and content that relate to their everyday lives and challenges. Currently there are 737 co-operative members participating in literacy classes in the community of Zoranger with 70% being women! These mothers and wives ranging in age from 25 to 75 years old are invested shareholders in their own business for the first time in their lives. After spending long, hot dusty days in the market selling their goods and produce, they eagerly race home each day to prepare for their two hour literacy class held under a tarp or in a school or church. The commitment of these women is inspiring to observe. The self-confidence and skills that emerge are forming a foundation of influential female leaders capably expressing their voice and claiming their rightful place in their cooperative and in their society as thoughtful and insightful decision-makers. This is a vision fulfilled for them and for their children as they are knowledgeably equipped to prepare the next generation of productive and responsible citizens toward a more peaceful country. Thank you for being a part of this exciting and innovative initiative. Your gift is truly a gift that keeps on giving.



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