



SPRING 2023

# productive cooperatives HAITI

*I must walk very far for water. I leave my  
home very early in the morning. I cannot  
imagine my life if water was closer to my home.  
When this happens, I will give glory to God.  
My thankfulness will have no end.*

*If we have water, we shall have peace.  
Water will bring us peace.*



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



## EDITORIAL

I am much conflicted these days about what to say when it comes to Haiti. Do I restate how god-forsaken things have become? Do I, once again, bow to the marvel of existence in such times? Neither seems fair. My Haitian colleague recently reminded me that God created both darkness and light and we must sing through both. We pause. We focus. Such is the new skill set for the times. “Go among your people. Love them. Learn from them. Begin with what

they know. Build on what they have,” wrote the Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, “But of the very best of leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say ‘We have done this ourselves.’” It has been 24 years since I chose this role here and embraced such a vision. In Haiti’s present cesspool of dysfunction, I am pressed to ask myself if we have hit any home-runs? I put this to the pcH team... “If we cannot identify a change in behaviour, in



perception, or attitude by virtue of our action or inaction, our impact is diluted in value, and we need to change course.” What does it mean to influence over 20,000 acres of cultivated land if people are still hungry? What does it mean to have over 2,000 men and women registered for adult literacy if they still have no means of transferring their knowledge? What does it mean to have 1,500 patients show up in a week of mobile clinics if the deeper issues are not addressed?





Annual reports are rife with numbers and percentages. I can appreciate that is what donors and investors understand. Unfortunately, such statistics are lost on most Haitians...even the dire ones.

So, what can Haiti look like when the philosophy of Lao Tzu is applied?

In a two-day training in cooperative principles, management and financial tools, the seven participating cooperatives provide all food from their own resources. This is replicated in the mobile clinics where, without expectation of the pcH team, the cooperative leaders provide well-prepared and tasty meals to the medical team during the entire week. They demonstrate responsibility, ownership and care, even in these difficult times. An adult literacy teacher comes down with a fever and cannot lead her class. However, she trains so well one of her literacy participants that she is able to have a substitute for one week of classes. The pcH staff visit her centre and attest to the remarkable performance of the student who so capably performs in the role of teacher. One literacy participant expresses her motivation to learn as fast as possible so as to realize her dream to become the secretary of the board of her agricultural cooperative. Another participant arrives every day before class begins to practice reading and writing in order to improve her capacity to be a presenter in the worship service of her church.

Following a training session on Literacy Level II, a literacy supervisor exclaims, "I realize how much pcH cares to develop competency and skills for each cooperative member to facilitate their full participation in the development of the cooperative business model; this is a model for me in how I must be patient with the literacy participants so they, too, can be successful in their journey."

If it is leaders that Haiti needs, then we must learn how to be the best of leaders. So that when the task is done, the people will know they have done it themselves.

Betsy Wall, Executive Director



WHERE THERE IS WATER, THERE IS LIFE

Fon Batis is a community of 9,376 people. The water here can be deadly. The “Marianne” spring water source is a two hour steep and dangerous climb. It is mostly undertaken by women and children who often suffer fractures, injuries, and sprains due to the terrain. FIDA/pcH is extremely grateful to Hope International Development Agency (HIDA) who are choosing to invest in ensuring water can be safely accessible to this community.



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## Nezilia Elcius and Jean Fritzner

*We have six children. All of them are in school. We are farmers. Without water, we can do nothing. It is life. It is especially difficult when laundry needs to be done. I must walk very far. I leave my home at 6:00 am and return by 7:00 pm. I cannot imagine my life if water was closer to my home. If it was close. I would have so much more time to do other things like work in my garden. When this happens, I will give glory to God. Our thankfulness will have no end.*

## Geffard and Jillian Tamille

*While we have no children, we are raising seven children related to our family. Water affects all aspects of our life. In the day we work the fields and care for the children. So we must get water at night. It is very difficult because the path to the spring is steep and rocky. I lie without sleep thinking about those who are trying to get this life-saving thing. This project is for all our lives. When water is so scarce, animals die, gardens die, and people die. We find ourselves fighting. If we have water, we shall have peace. Water will bring us peace.*









## KREYÒL GARDEN

The Kreyòl Garden is an agroforestry model designed to increase food security, reduce soil erosion and provide crops that are adapted to local conditions. Plots are created to educate school children on the role of agriculture and cooperative in their lives. To date:

- Cooperative members, students and local technicians organized a tree nursery consisting of 6,086 fruit trees and 2,337 trees for reforestation
- “Good Nutrition Practices” presented to students led them to establish school gardens with cabbage, tomatoes, and eggplant to supplement lunches of rice and beans
- Students realized that local products like eggs, usually dedicated to sell only to the local market, is an essential source of protein. They shared this knowledge with their parents. Eggs are now part of the breakfast meal.



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We are deeply grateful for the support of Hope International Development Agency (HIDA) for their longterm commitment toward food independence in Haiti.



While it seems like I have been preparing for this role for most of my life, the learning curve for me is still steep. My personal natural strength is people. I love meeting new people from all walks of life, hearing about what they do and building relationships. Community clubs such as Kiwanis and Rotary offer all that and more. I am thrilled to be invited by so many clubs in the area of Florida where I live who are eager to hear my story and the story of FIDA/pCH. More often than not, I am joined by my sister, Betsy. So, with the combination of our experiences in Haiti, we make a pretty good speaking team. We have been advised that we can anticipate support as a result!

We were delightfully surprised this past month when the President of the Sebastian Rotary Club invited guests to present themselves. In this case, one guest, Annette Marchionda, was from my parent's home town of St. Catharines, ON an area where FIDA receives considerable support. The other guest, Carol Gledhill, was from Grand Bend, ON close to Parkhill where I grew up. She was very familiar with many of my father's initiatives in the area. We accepted this as more than a coincidence.

I wish to thank the clubs that have supported this work in Canada over the many years and now those in USA. The Rotary motto of "service above self" has shown itself in Haiti.

Ruth-Wall Olbrych

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**A**s an organization active in a country such as Haiti for 40 years, it can be of no surprise that, from time to time, I am asked, “How do you manage issues of accountability?” I reply, “Accountability is not an issue. It is a value. When you view it as a value then you develop structures and systems that will ensure and uphold the value.” I have been critiqued for employing inappropriate metrics for Haiti. Donors to missions have often said to me that their job is to send money and that is where accountability ends for them. How then can we fault Haiti for its rampant corruption?

We have set out to be better. As a fully registered Haitian not-for-profit, we commit to following the rules and laws of the country and to ensure full financial and legislative compliance. We also undergo a separate external audit for our in-country operations. In the final debrief of our recent fiscal year, the auditors had this to say: *“pcH is a far stronger organization compared to much larger and more visible organizations in Haiti who virtually have no framework outside of ‘best practices.’ They comprise a great team, always available, and on time (unusual in Haiti). They were fully cooperative, with all documents readily accessible. The organization demonstrates a practice of stringent fiscal management and accountability principles. In auditing every single element of the pcH organization, the procedures were found to be beyond expectations, with articulated values, tools and commitment... including beneficiaries (who were interviewed) and who spoke highly of the commitment and trust of the organization.”*

The auditors concluding comments were to *“keep doing what you are doing, your work matters in the field. It is valuable. You are on the right path for the country.”*

The senior management and administrative team (who are all Haitian) deserve high praise for the above. They are motivated to demonstrate that Haiti can do better... when it is expected of them. The motto, “People respect what you inspect.” contributes to a better Haiti. We cannot simply continue to lower our expectations and beg others to continually rescue us.

Of note, FIDA/pcH has been accredited its 2023 Candid / GuideStar Platinum Level of Transparency.

Platinum  
Transparency  
2023

**Candid.**



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productive cooperatives Haiti (pcH)

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