



WINDOWS ON OUR WORLDS

News from *PARTNERS IN PROGRESS (PIP)* – Fall / Winter 2014

PIP Names Incoming Executive Director – Michael Neumann

The PIP Board of Directors is pleased to announce that **Michael Neumann**, PIP's current Associate Interim Director, will begin serving as Executive Director in January 2015. Mike will take over from PIP's founding executive director, **Dr. Rich Gosser**, who led the organization for 13 years.

Michael brings over 12 years of non-profit management experience and 15 years of experience managing community-led, asset-based development and education programs. This work has focused on agriculture, environmental restoration, health education, supportive housing, and green building efforts; mainly in Native American and low-income communities in Minnesota and in rural Haiti.

Since 2011, Michael has coordinated the EGD school construction and **Konbit Vanyan Kapab** projects, as well as some of PIP's grant making activities. He has a J.D. from Hamline University School of Law and B.S. in political science/psychology from University of Houston. He will complete his M.Ed. in Agricultural Education from University of Minnesota in winter 2015.



Third EGD Building Means New Educational, Housing, Economic Opportunities



Construction is nearing completion on the third classroom building of ***Ecole Communautaire Gamaliel de Deslandes*** ("EGD"). The building will house a **"Community Cyber Center"** to be used by students and teachers during school hours and by farmers during evenings or weekends. The new building will also house the **"Agroecology Resource Center"** ("ARC"). The ARC will include a "tool bank" and storage for food processing and soil analysis equipment. The building is constructed using a sustainable earth building material; "compressed earth block" ("CEB"). CEB buildings have economic, educational, environmental, health and safety advantages over conventional concrete blocks.

In conjunction with the construction of the third classroom, PIP and EGD will explore **opportunities to create a local "earth building" cooperative business enterprise**. The enterprise will manufacture earth blocks and provide construction and training in "earth block" projects across Haiti. **Potential projects – already under consideration – range from single family houses to permanent housing for elderly and disabled persons.**

In preparation for future economic and housing opportunities, PIP and EGD have **expanded earth building training opportunities** for community members. Over the summer, 16 men and women received training in block manufacturing. Last month, masons trained in earthen wall construction, provided training in block laying for general laborers presently working on the third EGD building. Additional training will be offered in advanced earth building design and earthen plasters in December and January.



St. Antoine's Lunch Program Boosts Capacity With New Equipment



Thanks to the continued support of **Change for Haiti** fund of **St. Margaret Mary Parish** in Lower Burrell, PA the **St. Antoine School** was able to purchase much needed cooking and sanitation equipment for its school lunch program. Pots, pans, and cooking utensils as well as a basin for washing hands, will enable the lunch program to provide meals with greater efficiency. More than 600 students are enrolled in the St. Antoine elementary and secondary schools in PIP's partner community of Fondwa.

Konbit Vanyan Kapab Accomplishes Milestone -- Farmers Teaching Farmers

Last month, farmers of the "**Kobit Vanyan Kapab**" ("**Together We Can**" or "**KVK**") project planned and facilitated a two-day event called "Pot Ouvet" ("Open Door"). Eight (8) KVK farmers served as facilitators -- leading knowledge sharing sessions that included hands-on demonstrations of sustainable "agroecology" practices. Seventy-eight (78) community members participated in the event. Topics included: cover crops, *ramp vivan* (live hedgerows of beneficial grasses and trees), natural organic pesticides, compost making, compost tea, spacing when planting, and mixed crops. The event also included talking circles, music, food and celebration. In addition to KVK farmers who served as facilitators, another 21 planned and assisted in logistics of the event.



The Pot Ouvet represents accomplishment of a major milestone of the KVK project -- **farmers teaching farmers**. This farmer-to-farmer approach is viewed as an effective way to educate other community members about the benefits and techniques of agroecology. It is also an opportunity for farmers to build communication and leadership skills needed for continued agricultural innovation and for serving as "change agents" in their community.



Video taken of farmers leading Pot Ouvet sessions will be edited into short instructional videos that will be made available for viewing in local schools and other community events at the **Agroecology Resource Center ("ARC")**, which is presently under construction at the "**Ecole Communautaire Gamaliel de Deslandes**".

Partners in Progress provides technical support for the KVK project as well as financial support derived from generous individual donors and partnership with the "**Harvest for Haiti**" program of **Mt. St. Peter Church** in New Kensington, PA.

Fondwa Sisters' Sustainable Water Project Nearing Completion



Construction of a rain water capture system that will provide water to the formation house of the "**Little Sisters of St. Antoine**" is nearing completion. The Sisters of St. Antoine are a community of women religious who work "*men nan men*" ("hand in hand") with the **Association of Peasants of Fondwa ("APF")**. They are responsible for managing the PIP-supported, primary-care **medical clinic**, the **Fatima House Orphanage**, and the **St. Antoine elementary and secondary schools**.

Children and youth in the religious and education program and vacation bible school of **St. James Parish** in Sewickley, PA raised more than \$8,000 through a "penny power" campaign, bake sales, a walk/run/jump-a-thon.

Partners in Progress

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