

THE *PROGRESS* REPORT

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SPRING
2018



Alimen Tilme speaking to a group of farmers.

WATCH FOR ANNUAL REPORT IN MAY

Partners in Progress, along with members of the communities in Deslandes, Fondwa, and the Little Sisters of St. Antoine deeply appreciate your contributions which are fueling hope for a better tomorrow. Every contribution makes a difference in the lives of countless individuals and the local communities in which they live. Without your help, we could not provide the support and resources needed to help rural communities in Haiti emerge from the intractable cycle of poverty.

PIP is pleased to announce its first-ever annual report. The 2017 PIP Annual Report will allow us to honor and express our gratitude to you, our donors.

On May 1, you'll be able to read about our pride in the achievements of 2017 and the donors who helped make them happen, by accessing the annual report link on the home page at www.piphaiti.org.

FARMERS BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

People everywhere who live close to the land are on the front lines of climate change. Unfortunately, widespread poverty and environmental degradation make Haiti especially vulnerable to climate change, and its poor farmers are among the first to feel the impact. Haiti is the country third-most affected by climate change in the world, according to the Climate Change Index. Deslandes-area farmers consistently describe how the days are hotter and drier over the past 20-30 years, and how drought and storms are more frequent and more severe.

The drought of 2015-17 caused crop losses of up to 70% in many parts of Haiti. In the past four decades, according to the USAID, rainfall amounts have continually decreased. Droughts are more common and more severe. The frequency of hot days increased by 63, and hot nights increased by 48. Storm wind and rain devastate crops and further erode already fragile soils. Alimen Tilme, an elder and leader of the Konbit Vanyan Kapab Agroecology Project, says, "strong winds are not good for beans and other crops because the wind makes their flowers fall down."

To fight back, farmers in Deslandes are building resilience to climate change through more sustainable farming as well as better construction methods. New agroecology techniques now practiced in Deslandes can

"BECAUSE OF THE *RAMP VIVAN*, (PLANTING NITROGEN-FIXING TREES ON SMALL BERMS ALONG A CONTOUR), WATER CANNOT WASH MY GARDEN AWAY ANYMORE."

Louis Jeune Bossuet, local farmer

help reduce damage from water and wind. Louis Jeune Bossuet, a local farmer, explains, "because of the *ramp vivan*, (planting nitrogen-fixing trees on small berms along a contour), water cannot wash my garden away anymore." In addition to protecting against soil erosion, ramp vivans serve as a windbreak to protect young plants from wind damage.

As part of the agroecology project introduced two years ago, fruit trees and other trees planted in yards also have reduced wind damage to homes. Use of Compressed Earth Block construction, and development of our new, local building standards greatly contribute to healthier and more wind and earthquake resistant structures.

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY 2018 WITH US

Celebrate and learn more about the dramatic change — restoring local ecosystems, creating new economic opportunities and building climate resilience — that your generous support, and solidarity with farmers in rural Haiti, is creating.

Duquesne University Student Union, Africa Room, Third Floor, 600 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15282

Sunday, April 22 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Please RSVP at info@piphaiti.org or call 412-668-3353.



BUILDING HOME PHASE II BEGINS

PIP, in partnership with Ecole Gamaliel Deslandes, has launched Phase II of the Building Home initiative. Phase II objectives include: 1) improve building design while lowering costs, 2) establish local construction protocols for building disaster-resistant homes, and 3) develop and pilot a community home loan program with four families. PIP is working to reduce the costs of the homes, while providing basic sanitation including a toilet. In January, with assistance from Jim Hallock of Colorado Earth, we tested two versions of an earthen floor — one made with Compressed Earth Blocks (CEB) and the other made by compacting several layers soil. CEB blocks will be used for flooring in the next home that is constructed. The floors are sealed with several layers of linseed oil. Earthen floors cost less than the concrete slab floors, are durable and healthy, and are made with local materials and local labor.

Last fall, PIP and EGD began work with



the CEB build team and members of the Building Home planning committee to develop protocols or steps for future CEB construction projects. Most construction projects Haiti are executed informally, with no adherence to building standards or an acceptable process. Most homes, for example, and even some larger projects such as schools, are not built with a formal set of construction plans. Also, very few projects utilize seismic and wind-resistant designs. The aim of our construction protocols is to ensure proper, consistent standards for building healthy, safe, earthquake and wind resistant buildings become the norm in Deslandes and surrounding communities.

KONBIT STRONG VALUE-ADDED FOOD PROJECT STARTS IN 2018



Farmers Plan with Kalidas Shetty of GIFSIA/NDSU

Successful, sustainable development in rural Haiti must address improving local economies. Farmers of the Konbit Vanyan Kapab Agroecology project are doing just that. Thanks to a seed grant from the Carl and Margaret Schmitt Fund and individual donors, farmers, PIP, and EGD will launch the “Konbit Strong Value-Added Project” this summer.

Over the past decade, agricultural value chains have become a centerpiece of successful poverty reduction efforts in poor, rural communities around the world. In value chain development, farmers add value to raw materials grown on their farms to create products that are linked to diverse markets. Farmers in Haiti have few resources for

developing such opportunities.

Konbit Strong will address poverty and malnutrition in Deslandes through creation of a start-up enterprise selling farmer-made, nutrient-dense food products. The primary goal in the first phase is to build farmer capacity for safely processing and packaging foods as a first step towards development of a small farmer-driven value chain enterprise that is linked to markets both domestically and globally. Farmers will grow, harvest, dry, and package ingredients for value-added products to be sold in local markets in and outside of Deslandes.

Three potential products have been identified for this initial phase of the project: a dry soup mix, a seasoning base, and herbal phytonutrient enriched tea. Mango and other dried fruit chips could also be produced and sold. Farmers will also receive basic training in money management and business development. After evaluating food processing and marketing activities, farmers will engage in business planning. The Global Institute for Food Security and International Agriculture (GIFSIA) at North Dakota State University will lend its vast global expertise in plant and food science to the project.

RUN, RICCARDY, RUN

Partners in Progress Haiti, Board of Director's member Riccardy Volcy is running in the 2018 Dick's Sporting Goods -Pittsburgh Marathon on May 6, 2018



to raise funds for Partners in Progress' work in his native Haiti. Riccardy emigrated from Haiti to the United States when he was 13 years old, joining his father in Florida, where he achieved US citizenship and graduated from Florida A&M University. Riccardy moved to Pittsburgh in 2011 to accept a UDREAM Fellowship at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Architecture and today works for the Continental Building Company as a Project Engineer and serves on PIP's Board of Director's.

Please help Riccardy and join Partners in Progress achieve his goal to raise \$2,000 for PIP's Building Home project by sponsoring his run. <https://www.crowdrise.com/partners-in-progress-2018-pittsburgh-marathon/fundraiser/riccardyvolcy>.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF OUR PARTNERS:

Asosyasyon Peyizan Fondwa, Dominican University, Duquesne University, Earth Block International, Earthfort, Ecole Communautaire Gamaliel Deslandes, Fatima House Orphanage, Friends of Anne, Innovative Design Engineering Associates, Jacksonville Planning Committee, Linda M. Costello Tax and Accounting Services, John and Margaret MacCartan Charitable Fund, Komite d'Planifikasyon Delandes, Maritech Engineering, Maison des Enfants Handicape, Mullaney's Harp and Fiddle, Notre Dame Club of Pittsburgh, John T. Ryan Memorial Foundation, Sacred Heart Church, Schnader, Harrison, Segal and Lewis; Carl and Margaret Schmitt Fund, Sisters of St. Antoine, Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth KS, St. Antoine Professional School, St. James Church of Wilkinsburg, St. Mary's of the Mount Congregation, St. Sylvester's Church, and many amazing individual donors and volunteers.



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