

## WE'RE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THE LAUNCH OF A LITERACY PILOT PROJECT IN DESLANDES, HAITI



Literacy students the first week of class

A highly anticipated Literacy Project, designed and planned in collaboration with farmers and teachers in Deslandes, began this past summer with 25 students. All are farmers. The project is unique in its culturally relevant focus on traditional foods and medicines, agroecology, environment, and rural marketplaces. It is highly interactive, with an emphasis on experiential literacy and basic math activities. PIP adult education consultant, John Each, worked closely with farmers and Ecole Gamaliel Communautaire de Deslandes (EGD) teachers to design the project.

“Ensuring that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy” is one of the targets of the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals. The UN recognizes that being able to read and write empowers and liberates rural individuals and communities and is critical to sustainable development. Education, economic opportunities, and health outcomes for rural people, especially women and girls, are improved through literacy.

Children of parents who can read and write are more likely to attend and complete school. As one Deslandes farmer said during the design phase of the Literacy Project, “I want to learn to read and write so I can help my children with their homework.” As communication skills improve, so does one’s self-confidence and ability to share ideas. This builds capacity for contributing to community development.

Some of the literacy students are FAFSI farmers, including four Agroecology Educators. Improved communication skills will help these farmers to expand their movement to rebuild food sovereignty in communities



Students in writing activity at the chalkboard

across Haiti. Basic literacy and numeracy will enable these farmers to develop digital and information and computer technology capabilities. This will lead to increased independent learning about agroecology movements and practices used in other countries through internet research.

More farmers will be able to use digital field analysis tools for assessing the benefits of agroecology to soil health, crop yield, biodiversity, and climate resilience. This will help diversify the ways FAFSI farmers are able to communicate these benefits to other farmers in Haiti and even globally, especially with younger generations of farmers.

EGD, FAFSI farmers, and local elders view intergenerational knowledge sharing about traditional foods, medicines, arts, and natural resource management as a way to stimulate economic innovation that is good for both people and planet among youth and young adults. The desired outcome is that more young people will be excited and optimistic about careers in food, art, and the environment as well as about the beauty and potential of rural communities to become places of sustainable health, happiness, and harmony.

At a EGD teachers meeting, PIP Project Evaluator Catherine Twohig asked teachers, “Are you having fun?” Literacy teacher Herby Petit-Lys responded, “Oh, yes!” and went on to tell the story of one student who, after writing their first sentence, began jumping up and down, joyfully exclaiming, “I can write, I can write!” Herby also shared that another student was excited about using a phone for the first time.

### REMEMBERING GEORGE OPIO, FAFSI ELDER AND AGROECOLOGY EDUCATOR FROM RADA, UGANDA

#### In loving memory of Mr. George Opio

November 1, 1960 – July 9, 2024

It's with heavy hearts that we mourn the loss of a devoted farmer and true champion of agroecology. George Opio's unwavering



commitment as an Agroecology Educator reflected the core values of Oyera Rural Inclusion and Well-being Initiative Ltd (ORIWIL). Because he always worked tirelessly to create harmony between the land and people, his legacy of nurturing the earth with care and dedication will continue to inspire us all. Though his presence is already deeply missed, his spirit lives on in the fields and in the hearts that he touched.



George Opio on his farm

# ALUR FARMERS GROW OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHER FARMERS' SHIFT TO AGROECOLOGY



FAFSI farmer Akumu demonstrates a mulching technique at the Ith Community Innovation Farm



Oreste, a farmer from community of Ith, has made shift to agroecology with help of FAFSI farmers

One way participants in the Farmer-to-Farmer Agroecology For Food Sovereignty Initiative (FAFSI) in the northern province of Uganda are growing the food sovereignty movement is by sharing knowledge and resources neighboring farmers need to make the shift to agroecology. This summer, these Alur farmers made it possible for 121 farmers to begin practicing agroecology! Sixty-five percent of these farmers are women and 35% are younger farmers, ages 17 to 35.

Here are just a few of the ways Alur farmers spread opportunities to transition to agroecology this summer:

- Shared technical expertise and hands-on demonstrations of agroecology techniques
- Increased the number of Community Agroecology Innovation Farms from 2 to 3
- Distributed trees with health, economic, and environmental benefits
- Provided cover crop seed and assistance integrating them into agroecology systems
- Raised awareness of health benefits of traditional Alur food crops over imported hybrid or GMO crops
- Shared knowledge and plants for reducing damage to crops caused by pests and animals (e.g., vetiver grass for repelling goats)
- Shared seeds of traditional Alur food crops, such as beans, pumpkins, and greens as part of seed conservation project
- Linked farmers to markets in 9 communities where they can now sell their healthy, traditional food crops at a fair market price, including 2 markets developed through FAFSI.

Why Agroecology? Through agroecology, farmers are able to improve the diversity of life both in and above the soil, thereby creating a more balanced ecosystem. Healthy ecosystems provide a range of services and benefits including helping conserve and manage water in both dry and wet seasons, improving soil organic matter and fertility, providing protection against storm events, and increasing resistance to disease and pests and carbon sequestration. The result is higher yield, greater diversity of food crops, and increased farm income. This increases availability and access to foods that are more nutritionally dense and contain bioactives for health and prevention of chronic disease.

## AFOYO!/MÈSI!/THANK YOU!

Despite conflict and worsening climate, your support and solidarity with the people of Haiti and Uganda this year has enabled farmers and our community partners to continue to ensure basic needs, while expanding the key development initiatives shared with you in this newsletter.

FAFSI farmers and community partners in Haiti were able to provide critical food relief to 10,020 individuals displaced by conflict. The School of St. Antoine, Fatima House Orphanage, and Paroisse St. Yves School continue to provide a range of children services, while improving community stability and sense of hope and optimism. On the other side of the world, FAFSI farmers are reporting strong production even with a slow start to the growing season caused by drought. Over 55,000 trees have been planted and a third market stand is being constructed for farmers to sell their healthy traditional food crops.

These are just a few examples of the way you have helped these partner communities remake healthy and thriving rural communities for future generations. **We hope you will consider an end-of-summer gift** and join our partners in their work to rebuild food sovereignty; improve rural economies and the environment; and increase access to housing, education, and children's services.

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR: OUR FIRST EVER FUNDER BRIEFING IS NOVEMBER 14

I invite you to join me, virtually, on **Thursday, November 14 at 7 pm ET** for a first ever donor briefing and discussion to learn about the innovation happening in our partners' communities, emerging development opportunities, and ways you can contribute to this exciting change taking place in Haiti and Uganda.

I will also provide an update about our work as an organization, current happenings on the ground with our partners, and be available to answer questions about our work.

Registration is required so we can provide you a personal link to our meeting. You are welcome to invite a friend or two to join us. **You can register online using the link on our home page at [www.piphaiti.org](http://www.piphaiti.org).**

Michael Neumann  
Executive Director