



HAITI

INNOVATIONS IN AGROECOLOGY

'GWROUPMAN' IN HAITI BUILDING LOCAL FOOD MICRO-ENTERPRISES

Haiti's rural farming communities have been historically marginalized and disenfranchised, without appropriate support from the State for rural development. In this context, peasant farmers must resort to self organization to develop and spread sustainable farming innovations. Similarly, in order to sustainably grow local economies, they need to reduce dependence on intermediaries and address the growing consumption of cheap, imported, processed foods.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

Since 2009, Partenariat pour le Developpement Local (PDL), as a member of the Groundswell International network, has supported smallholder farmers through a process of reflection and action, to form self-led solidarity groups of 8 to 15 members

called *groupepman*. By forming coordination structures within and across communities, 16 peasant associations with some 20 000 members have been established. They lead activities including farmer experimentation and farmer-to-farmer extension of agroecology,

complemented by savings and credit cooperatives, seed banks and grain banks. Since 2016, *groupepman* have established 13 micro-enterprises to process their agricultural produce for sale to local consumers.

DESIGN AND SHARING OF THE INNOVATION

Farmers mobilize and invest their own savings, complemented by PDL financing and training, to purchase equipment such as mills, and minimally process local crops such as cassava, peanut, sugarcane, rice, maize, and cashew nuts. Farmers have established a local label promoting their agroecological products, and sell them across rural communities, in municipal markets, and to an emerging network of churches and schools in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince.



BENEFIT FOR FAMILY FARMERS AND FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Family farmers are incentivized to scale agroecological farming practices, as they create outlets to process and sell their local produce. This allows them to keep more income, escape dependence on intermediaries, and prevent spoiling of their harvest due to lack of access to basic processing.

Organized smallholder farmers are owners of all steps, from production to processing to marketing. Food and nutrition security of farmers as well local consumers is enhanced.

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Approximately 10,000 farmers have established agroecological 'model' farms, regenerating over

1,000 hectares of degraded land. Thirteen micro-enterprises are allowing some of them to increase income from processing and sale of their products. Peasant associations, which lead holistic local development processes, are strengthened. They are fostering a circular economy based on agroecology, social solidarity and local food culture.



LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Social organization, in the form of *groupepman* and peasant associations, is essential for agroecological innovation, extension, and development of local food economies. Farmers and consumers must build alliances to create a web of dozens of these food micro-enterprises, and incentivize local production.