



AUTUMN 2025 NEWSLETTER

## Agroecology Builds Capacity for Crises Response and Innovation

**In a harrowing situation** that began on November 18, Deslandes residents were forced to flee their homes following threats and an attempt by members of the Taliban and 400 Mawozo gangs to attack and overtake Deslandes. Their efforts were repelled by a citizen's defense group, known as "Coalition," from neighboring Verrettes. Thankfully, no one was hurt and after a few days, Deslandes residents were able to return to their homes. This is the closest that gangs have come to taking over the rural villages where our work is done. Many of our colleagues were affected.

During the displacement, we heard stories of Konbit Vanyan Kapab farmers who immediately helped organize meal preparation and shared what they could for families who had to flee to the forests and hillsides.

Rising to the occasion without hesitation has become the norm for Konbit Vanyan Kapab farmers from Deslandes and other partner communities across Haiti. In the last two and half years, they have provided food and volunteered time to stage, package, and provide food aid kits benefitting nearly 15,000 children and adults escaping violence.

These farmers are part of the Konbit Vanyan Kapab Agroecology for Food Sovereignty Initiative (FAFSI). More than improving food production, livelihoods, the environment, and climate, **this agroecology movement has helped farmers, young and old, find their voice and exercise their power to create change.**

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Clockwise from left: Poliscar Odiphane, ETFI Intern, tree nursery enterprise grows and sells trees.

FAFSI farmer, Odette Cadet, from Deslandes is a founder of the women's microenterprise group.

FAFSI farmer Piwun Esther with beehives.

## Gratitude and a Lesson on the Importance of Food

**By Sister Claudette Prevot, Fondwa, Haiti**

*(Excerpt from Thank You Note sent to donors of Fatima House Child Food and Nutrition Program)*

**Your support** has really made a tremendous impact on the life of the children at Fatima House. Now our orphans are becoming friendly to each other and interesting in learning, from their evaluation at school 100% of the children at the orphanage get good scorers on their test because they get somethings to eat, they did not have to think about what to get to eat anymore, we thank God for that the children used to fight to each other, now stopped doing that. What a great blessing. We are grateful to our donors.

With your great support, we collected food supplies from garden of 10 local farmers, the peasants. This opportunity really encourages the farmers to invest more in agriculture, most of the farmers we purchased food supplies have children at school they said to us thank you, I will pay the school tuition of my children, that is a great help, they also have other workers who are beneficiaries indirect of the nutrition program.

All the farmers we purchased from told us that for the next season they will have enough money to purchase more seeds supplies and are motivated to produce more food.

Even our staff at the orphanage are the beneficiary of the food distribution. They always say to us that they are so grateful to receive a meal per day at the orphanage at this time in Haiti. The political crisis created a hunger crisis nationwide, nearly 95% of the country's population are struggling to feed themselves due to gangs' violence, etc. When you share a meal with someone that means a lot in Haiti. You know families who have fled Port au prince and Gressier are heading to other places in the countryside, including Fondwa and Jacmel, not everyone can get a meal per day. That means your generosity is more than a blessing.

# Agroecology and Energy Research Improve Lives, Environment

**FAFSI farmers in Uganda** are piloting strategies for reducing dependence on wood for cooking and purifying water. Use of fuel wood for food and water is major driver of deforestation in Uganda. Wood burning also contributes to a range of health problems. Farmers, ORIW, and Earth Interwoven (E.I.) volunteer consultants David Honsberger, entomologist, and Rolf Scholtz, energy expert, began testing several stoves this fall as well as alternative fuel sources.

Several small commercial stoves are being tested. They are being evaluated for fuel efficiency (liters of water boiled per kg wood), ease of use, smoke level, reliability, and portability. In addition, farmers, ORIW staff, and consultants are testing the manufacture of charcoal briquettes made of crop residues as a more sustainable fuel. Rice husks, banana leaves, and bean residue were initially tested.

In the new year, farmers will test elephant grass and other grasses. Grasses have multiple uses in agroecology systems including erosion control and slope stabilization, and creating a good home for diverse soil microbiology ("soil people"). Briquette manufacturing also has potential to help diversify livelihood opportunities. FAFSI farmers are also piloting ceramic and charcoal filters that can be made locally as well as UV purifiers.

These efforts grew out of the Oyii Agroecology and Climate Research (OACR), a farmer-led research project designed to expand and share knowledge about the potential for agroecology to help smallholder farmers adapt to and help reverse climate change while improving environment, livelihoods, and nutrition.



Top: Farmer Ocwii Paska demonstrating use of ceramic water filter.

Bottom: ORIW staff test making briquettes made with rice hulls.

Additional farmers were trained this year in monitoring of biodiversity (pollinators and other beneficial insects living above the soil, and fungi and bacteria living in the soil). Biodiversity monitoring will be expanded next year and farmers will begin developing strategies for findings of on agroecology and climate research with other farmer groups, local government agencies, and NGOs.

## Capacity Building

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**Here are some recent examples of farmer-led innovation:**

### In Haiti

- Earlier this year FAFSI women farmers organized development of a women's microenterprise lending group. The group already has 30 members and has begun disbursing funds to support woman-owned microenterprises.
- Prioritizing opportunities for youth through intergenerational sharing, which resulted in the start-up of "Konbit Stories" and "Environment and Traditional Foods" internship this year.
- "Building Home," a cooperative home building project that farmers conceptualized and helped design eight years ago, just started a second phase with construction of a home in Savanette Cabral.

### In Uganda

- In the last two years, FAFSI farmers have started five cooperative farms in communities in Nebbi District, Uganda.
- Farmers prioritized and helped to reintroduce traditional beekeeping in all FAFSI communities last year.
- The single-mom FAFSI farmer group began piloting water filters and community solar charging stations programs this year. They continue efforts to monitor the impact of agroecology on biodiversity started late last year and will be exploring ways to communicate the benefits to communities in 2026.

## A Special, Successful Launch of Earth Interwoven

**We are grateful** to those who attended the new name (Partners in Progress to Earth Interwoven) launch event on September 27. Special thanks to Sophie Filsaime and her crew at Caribbean Food and Snack for the delicious Haitian meal and Haitian singer Patrick Carrier for bringing his talents and energy to the event. Thank you also to former Board member, Leslie Nettleman, for helping with organizing and decorations, and to Harriet Oyera and Jody Jackson for the Uganda table with photos and art from Uganda.



Jody Jackson and Harriet Oyera at event

