

Rural Center for Sustainable Development Bas Boen (Centre Rural de Développement Durable de Bas Boën, CRDD)



FONHDAD Introduction

Haitian Foundation for Sustainable Agricultural Development (Fondation Haïtienne de Développement Agricole Durable), FONHDAD is a nonprofit organization financially and administratively autonomous. Its activities encompass private sector, universities and farmers' associations. The major objective of the foundation is the modernization of Haitian agriculture by promoting an innovative and sustainable agricultural system that follows a value chain approach. It introduces new techniques to farmers, and thus improves their agricultural inputs. It also provides new materials and equipment to enhance crop yields consequently increasing farmer's revenues.

CRDD in Bas Boen was founded in May 2011 by the Feed the Future West/WINNER project. The project was funded by USAID as a pillar of its component related to the increase of agricultural productivity in the Cul-de-Sac corridor. In April 2014, the facility of CRDD in Bas Boen (including training and research center with a demonstration plot) was transferred to FONHDAD under contract with Haitian Ministry of Agriculture (MARNDR).

The Bas Boen facility includes:

- An administrative building with a proximity laboratory. The laboratory performs soil fertility testing, water analysis and plant diagnosis. It has also a small food processing section.
- A distance learning center with offices.
- A dormitory accommodating 30 people including full catering service.
- A storage depot for agricultural materials/seeds and equipment (9 tractors, threshers and others).
- 3.5 ha of a demonstration farmland that serves for research purposes.
- An outside training center for training farmers and extension agents.

FONHDAD Activities

Master farmers program

The center has trained 1,183 master farmers (30% women) during its five years existence during the WINNER project. Nowadays, they work as extension agents in different provinces. Additional 208 agents (45% women) have been trained and certified since the transfer of the center to FONHDAD in April 2014.

Agricultural outreach

Technical assistance is provided to tens of thousands of farmers throughout the agricultural campaigns, 124 farmers associations and 6 agricultural boutiques with collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MARNDR). Comparatively to the traditional farming, the new techniques supported by the center have increased crops yields 368% for corn, 85% for beans and 118% for rice. CRDD participated in implementation of the Haiti Pilot Soil Survey Initiative covering 3,000 ha of land. This study was performed in collaboration with Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS), USAID and MARNDR.

Research

Studies on different crops varieties, soil fertility, plant density and application of biostimulants have been conducted at the center since its creation. New varieties of corn and rice have been introduced and disseminated.

Innovations

One of the agricultural advances was 'drip and bucket' irrigation. It is a low cost irrigation method introduced with the support of University of Florida for small farmers that maximizes the use of irrigation water in water desperate areas.

Other novelties includes rotative weeders to clean rice fields and adjustable hole digger for planting. The foundation also possesses and utilizes threshers for corns, beans, rice and sorghum processing. Part of the innovating approach applied by CRDD is a construction of greenhouses to promote vertical and sustainable agriculture.