

FACT SHEET

FEED THE FUTURE HAITI APPUI À LA RECHERCHE ET AU DÉVELOPPEMENT AGRICOLE (AREA)**Support to Agricultural Research and Development****Project Background**

In 2015, the U.S. Agency for International Development awarded a five-year contract to a consortium of three U.S. land grant institutions led by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences to support its Feed the Future initiative in Haiti to reduce the country's chronic food insecurity. The project — known in French as Appui à la Recherche et au Développement Agricole (AREA) and in English as Support to Agricultural Research and Development — assists Haitian agricultural researchers, professionals and institutions to modernize the country's agricultural sector. AREA's target area includes Kenscoff, Cul-de-Sac, and Matheux corridors, a region that serves as a breadbasket for the Haitian population.



AREA researchers Edzer Milord (left) and Boaz Anglade (back) join Columb Louisma, director of the Duvier Rural Center for Sustainable Development, to inspect an experimental plot of high-yield mustard greens. Photo credit: Eli French/Appui à la Recherche et au Développement Agricole

Challenges

Food insecurity has been a long-standing challenge in Haiti, exacerbated by natural disasters, a lack of resources to increase farm productivity and a myriad of other factors. For example, the yields of crops such as common beans — a primary source of nutrients in the typical Haitian diet — falls short to the country's potential, partly because traditional varieties are not optimally adapted for Haiti's diverse agroecological zones. Plant diseases and pests cause significant crop losses, yet Haiti has few laboratory resources to diagnose and address them. The adoption of new technologies, such as improved varieties of crops and tools, suffers from ineffective or limited formal agricultural extension and technology transfer programs.

Strategy and activities

A key strategy of the project is to build the capacity of Haiti's governmental, higher education and research institutions to address the needs of farmers and agribusinesses. AREA's research team works closely with representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, agricultural colleges at institutes of higher education and Rural Centers for Agricultural Extension and Development to support a wide-range of initiatives, including funding research, improving laboratories to better diagnose plant diseases, and modernizing teaching methods and curricula. The project is funding the agricultural education of 20 Haitian graduate students at the University of Florida and Louisiana State University who have committed to returning to Haiti to improve its agricultural sector.

Research activities include developing higher-yield varieties of crops, introducing new production technologies through an effective extension system and improving soil fertility. Recognizing the critical role women play in the agricultural system, the project incorporates women into activities and develops new avenues for women to participate in the food chain.

Progress

Among AREA's early accomplishments are:

- Launching a large-scale project to evaluate three models of extension and determine the best ways to transfer new technologies, tools and high-yielding varieties of crops to Haitian farmers.
- Identifying promising advanced lines of beans and peanuts that outperform local varieties.
- Equipping pathology laboratories with much-needed equipment such as microscopes and building an isolation room to improve disease diagnosis.
- Installing internet-enabled weather stations to provide farmers and researchers with meteorological data.
- Training hundreds of students, professionals from public and private institutions, and farmers in subjects ranging from limiting postharvest losses to proper pesticide spraying techniques and safety issues.
- Funding 20 Haitian graduate students to attend the University of Florida and Louisiana State University.
- Sparking numerous improvements in curricula made by Haitian faculty who participated in a new Faculty Development Academy, which is designed to modernize and improve agricultural education at institutes of higher education.
- Producing comprehensive soil maps and developing recommendations for how farmers can improve soil fertility, such as using specific cover crops and formulas of fertilizers depending on soil attributes.

More information

To learn more about AREA, visit the project's website at <http://global.ifas.ufl.edu/area-project>. The project is funded by USAID as part of Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global food and security initiative.

Feed the Future

Feed the Future is the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative. With a focus on smallholder farmers, particularly women, Feed the Future supports partner countries in developing their agriculture sectors to spur economic growth and trade that increase incomes and reduce hunger, poverty and undernutrition. For more information, visit www.feedthefuture.gov.