



## SUCCESS STORY

### USAID Invests in Training for Improved Cacao Production in Haiti



Photo: DAI

Above, DEED's beneficiaries learned about cacao quality control in Dame Marie, in July 2009. The general consensus is that "the experience was innovative and enriching." The Training of Trainers was a joint initiative with DEED's USAID sister project MarChE, which is using the same training approach with 1,800 farmers in Grand-Anse, in an effort to revive the production of cacao in most of its growing regions.

Furthermore, hoping to eradicate - through early detection, some contagious diseases that threaten the island's agricultural production and environmental health, Dominican experts have offered to provide free training in cacao disease detection to their Haitian counterparts. Talks are now underway with DEED and MarChE for a week-long training in the Dominican Rep. of the Cacao Farmer Field School trainers dispatched in Grand-Anse and in Limbé, for early 2010.



Photo: DAI

Above, trainers in Port Margot teach farmers how to side-graft improved genetic material onto an existing cacao tree.

USAID's DEED (Economic Development for a Sustainable Environment) is a 3 year project aiming to protect two watershed areas in Haiti – Limbé in the north and Montrouis in the west, through improved agriculture. With this new training, cacao exporter - Novella, the northern federation of cacao cooperatives - FECCANO and DEED jointly launched a cacao Farmer Field School for 2,400 producers in the North, aiming to dramatically increase national cacao production levels while increasing farmer revenues.

In a first phase, 24 agronomists received intensive 2-week training from two international cacao experts. Soon after, they were dispatched to establish 96 farmer field schools to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology in Grande Rivière du Nord, Acul du Nord, Port Margot, Petit Bourg de Borgne, Limbé, and Milot. The trainees have already acquired marketable skill in cacao nursery management, in grafting to increase production in seedling and mature trees, pruning to maximize flower and pod production, plus techniques to improve post-harvest cacao quality. A farmer from Berranger in Grande Rivière du Nord admits: "My whole life I mistreated the crop; I didn't trim the trees and lost half the harvest when climbing to pick the cacao, plus I dried it carelessly. I now know better and see the money coming in. Alleluia!"

Improved access to information through the program has allowed farmers to receive a higher price for their quality cacao, raising their revenues 72% in the past four months alone, while world prices went up only 14% during the same period of time. The layers of intermediaries who traditionally controlled the market by fixing a low price for cocoa throughout the region - regardless of quality, are now being influenced by an efficient communication channel established between the producers in the rural zones and the exporters.

Novella Exports, the region's main exporter, co-invested in the 12 month program by purchasing sorely needed cacao drying equipment for the 2,400 farmers, covering the trainers' salaries, and providing the working capital to finance the purchase of the farmer field school's increased quality cacao production.

In order to improve their organizational structure and guarantee their financial sustainability after the program's end, DEED will provide training in production and marketing to FECCANO and member cooperatives through its service provider, GUIDEE. Hi-Five, a sister USAID project, will offer technical training in financial management and book-keeping. Agronomes Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (funded by the EU) will teach them how to process cacao. In addition, the trainers are expected to continue teaching farmers after DEED's departure, and earning a living as Fee for Service agents. M&M Mars, world leader in cacao import, has also expressed interest in co-funding an expended and accelerated training effort in Haiti.