

Promotion of Resilient Agriculture through Agroforestry in Grand'Anse: Scaling up and professionalising small-scale initiatives to build back better (PARAGA) project

REVIEW SUMMARY REPORT

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Executive Summary

Coordination pour des Actions en Santé et en Développement d'Haïti (COSADH), through the Civil Society Partnership for GAFSP, led a review of the Promotion of Resilient Agriculture through Agroforestry in Grand'Anse (PARAGA) project in Jérémie and Roseaux, Grand'Anse, Haiti, using a participatory, qualitative and rights-based methodology, in November 2025.

Funded by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) with a US\$3 million grant (2023–2026), and implemented by ROPAGA and ActionAid Haiti under World Food Program (WFP) supervision, the project responds to the compounding impacts of climate shocks, earthquakes, political instability and chronic underinvestment in rural areas.

The review found that PARAGA has reached more than 1,200 farmers—around 70% of them women—through the distribution of climate-adapted seeds and seedlings, continuous agroecological extension support, agroforestry and livestock diversification, access to community-based finance, and facilitated market access. The results are tangible. Farmers report higher yields, improved food

availability, diversified incomes and greater resilience to erratic weather, with over 80% of trained producers reporting adopting at least one agroecological practice. Women's empowerment is obvious across the project with access to inputs, training, processing activities and credit translating into increased incomes, stronger leadership roles within producer organisations, improved confidence in public decision-making and positive shifts in household gender dynamics. Nutrition outcomes have also improved through diversified production, food processing and preservation, and awareness-raising around local, seasonal and culturally appropriate diets, reducing reliance on imported foods.

Institutionally, the project has strengthened ROPAGA's role as a regional farmers' organisation, enabling collective marketing, reduced post-harvest losses and improved price stability. However, these market gains remain fragile and heavily dependent on project facilitation. Structural challenges—limited storage and processing infrastructure, weak rural roads, volatile markets, climate instability and security constraints—continue to undermine sustainability.

Recommendations

- **Invest in resilient rural infrastructure.** Allocate additional resources to storage facilities, small-scale processing, irrigation and rainwater harvesting systems, and rehabilitation of agricultural roads to reduce losses, stabilise incomes and buffer climate shocks.
- **Adopt a clear, long-term agroecology strategy.** Formalise an agroecology framework aligned with the HLPE 13 principles, supported by a dedicated monitoring and evaluation system that captures governance, autonomy and food-system transformation—not only technical adoption.
- **Strengthen and decentralise organisational capacity.** Continue improving ROPAGA's internal governance and financial management while extending targeted governance, planning and leadership training to local farmers' groups (GPAS) to build autonomy and sustainability at grassroots level.
- **Build local technical support systems.** Equip ROPAGA members and local partner organisations with advanced training in agroecology, input management, monitoring and strategic planning to reduce reliance on external actors.
- **Stabilise and diversify market linkages.** Develop formal partnerships with multiple local buyers, public institutions and cooperatives; invest in collective storage and processing; and establish transparent group-selling mechanisms to reduce dependency on project-mediated markets.
- **Reform financial disbursement mechanisms.** Shift from pre-financing to advance-based disbursements to accelerate implementation, improve cash flow and enable full utilisation of remaining funds within the project timeframe.

The Project Context

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors in Haiti for economic production, employment and food security, contributing up to 25% of GDP, while employing the greatest number of people in the country. Approximately 45% of the working population is employed in agriculture, rising to 70% in rural areas. Productivity, however, remains low, exacerbated by soil degradation, lack of rural infrastructure and limited access to agricultural services. Conflict and government instability have undermined agriculture by restricting farmers' access to land and disrupting supply chains. Natural disasters severely impact agriculture in Haiti, with the August 2021 earthquake and the subsequent Tropical Depression Grace particularly affecting the Grand'Anse department, devastating livelihoods, destroying key infrastructure, and plunging the region into a severe food security crisis.

In the Grand'Anse communes (or municipalities) of Jérémie and Roseaux, smallholder farmers have little access to key production factors such as technology, technical assistance, training, improved seed and organic fertilisers, upgraded irrigation and water systems and innovative practices for crop efficiency and credit. Additionally, farmers experience high scale post-harvest losses due to lack of storage and processing facilities. The communes often exercise poor agricultural practices and uncontrolled cutting of trees, especially to produce charcoal, as 70 to 85% of Haitian households use charcoal as an energy source for cooking, which comes from the south of Haiti, including Grand'Anse.

About the PARAGA Project

The Promotion of Resilient Agriculture through Agroforestry in Grand'Anse: Scaling up and professionalising small-scale initiatives to build back better (PARAGA) project aims to strengthen Réseau des Organisations Producteurs/trices de la Grand'Anse (ROPAGA) a leading farmers' organisation in the department of Grand'Anse, to support their members in increasing and sustaining their income while protecting the environment, in a post COVID, post-earthquake and climate change context.

The PARAGA project, funded by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) in the amount of US\$3 million, and running between 2023-2026, provides smallholder farmers with quality seeds and technical assistance with the objective to increase production, farmers' incomes, and strengthen food security in rural areas. The project helps to translate national agricultural policies, particularly those aimed at strengthening food sovereignty, improving the livelihoods of rural communities and promoting environmentally friendly agricultural practices, into concrete local level actions.

The project is being implemented by ROPAGA and ActionAid Haiti (AAHaiti), with support by the supervising

entity, the World Food Program (WFP). ROPAGA is responsible for the collection and marketing of farmers' products, while AA Haiti leads training and technical support in the field, and WFP provides funding and logistical support.

The main project activities include seed distribution, including the marketing of productive and drought and flood-resilient varieties of fruit and tubers; farmer training on agroecology, including agroforestry techniques, livestock management and beekeeping; agricultural monitoring and facilitating the sale of produce to local private sector buyers. Through this project, farmers improve their production and income and actively participate in local development through access to credit, including weather index crop insurance, and building alliances with financing and business management institutions.

The project also supports the institutional strengthening of ROPAGA itself, including training in governance, administrative and financial management, leadership and collective decision-making, enhancing its ability to act as the regional lead organisation by coordinating local producers' groups.

The Project Review Methodology

Coordination pour des Actions en Santé et en Développement d'Haïti (COSADH), through the Civil Society Partnership for GAFSP,¹ led a review of the PARAGA project in Jérémie and Roseaux, Grand'Anse, Haiti, using a participatory, qualitative and rights-based methodology, in November 2025.

The review documented the results and lessons learned and gathered testimonials on the benefits of the project for smallholder producers. The review collected in-depth, detailed insights into people's experiences with and perspectives on the PARAGA project. The review used feminist and participatory methods, ensuring a people-centred evidence gathering process, which placed women, young and vulnerable people at the centre of unpacking their lived experiences, including the nature of gender power relations and their social realities. The review also ensured informed consent and put in place measures that upheld safeguarding principles.

Five focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with 80 (28 women, 52 men) participants. Targeted key informant interviews (KIs) were held with five of the main project stakeholders, including project coordinators, field manager and government representatives from the Department of Agriculture in Grand'Anse. Farmers from Jérémie (Basse Voldroque, Grand Vincent, Fond Rouge

Torbeck, Fond Rouge Dahère villages) and Roseaux (Bois Neuf Malor village) participated in the various discussions during the focus groups. The review also collected written stories of change and video testimonies. The selection of participants was purposeful, prioritising those involved in the project's activities. As the review fieldwork took place shortly after Hurricane Melissa, however, focus group discussions were postponed, leading to fewer than expected women participating.



A documentary on the PARAGA project in Jérémie and Roseaux. [View here](#). PHOTO: COSADH

Civil Society Partnership for GAFSP

The Civil Society Partnership for GAFSP (the Partnership) is a consortium of civil society organisations that has been contracted by GAFSP to assess a selection of their grant-funded projects. The consortium is led by *ActionAid International*, together with the *Eastern and Southern Africa Small-Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF)*, *Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (AsiaDHRRA)*, and *Coordination pour des Actions en Santé et en Développement d'Haïti (COSADH)*.

Project Impact

I. Farmers' Productivity and Livelihoods

The PARAGA project's design placed small producers at the centre of the intervention by identifying their priority needs, which include limited access to agricultural inputs, low technical capacities, high vulnerability to climate shocks and lack of structured access to markets. The project specifically targets smallholder farmers through a clear selection criterion, including small plot size, high level of socio-economic vulnerability, and membership in local farmers' groups or GPAS (groupements de producteurs agricoles) and community organisations.

The project has strengthened farmers' productive capacities by providing them with appropriate inputs and deploying extension trainers who are providing training and ongoing support in agroecology. This approach has improved sustainable agricultural practices, increased reported yields and promoted crop diversification. Among the inputs distributed are seeds for food crops (maize, peanuts, beans and vegetable crops), and seedlings of fruit and forest trees (mango, cashew, cashew , cocoa and coffee).

Training has been provided on good agricultural practices, agroecology, soil conservation and water management, contributing to healthier and more climate-resilient production. As a result, farmers now manage several vegetable gardens that are enriching their meals and providing them with cash to meet their basic needs. Increased agricultural production and resilience to climate risks has directly improved food availability for households. Practices, such as contour ridging, are now diffusing to neighbouring farmers outside of the project and they are benefitting from follow-up visits.

ROPAGA facilitates market access through the establishment of marketing channels, the organisation of producers into groups (GPAS), the improvement of product quality, and the strengthening of relationships with local buyers. ROPAGA acts as an intermediary by buying products from farmers' groups, selling the products to other markets (including to WFP, which supplies school canteens) or stores the products to sell them later at a better price. This dual support has led to increased farmer production and reduced post-harvest losses.

Farmers reported that their incomes have risen through collective marketing, improved market access and more stable production. Families have strengthened their financial independence, improved the quality of their diets, invested more in their children's education and reduced their socioeconomic vulnerability. The project has thus contributed to a more stable and resilient standard of living. Better availability of local and diversified foods has helped to strengthen household food security, even in times of crisis.

The project also supports the mutual solidarity groups (MUSO) MISO MITAN, a network of savings and loans societies operating in the Grand'Anse department, which relies on members' regular contributions to a common fund. The funds collected allow members to access small loans to support their economic activities, particularly agricultural or income-generating activities. This mechanism helps strengthen the economic resilience of households, especially in a context where access to formal financial services remains limited in rural areas. The PARAGA project made 6 million gourdes available to the MISO MITAN (in the form of a loan) to provide credit to members because the MISO MITAN's own funds were insufficient. Repayments have already begun.

During the review, participants in interviews and focus group discussions illustrated the following examples.

- Derisseau Sterline and several other participants testified that they now sell their products to ROPAGA, whereas previously they did not have a reliable market.
- Farmers explained that the seeds (vegetable, bean and yam) introduced by the PARAGA project exhibited better germination rates, and that the observed yields were significantly higher than those previously obtained with traditional seeds. In the Grand Vincent area, two female farmers, Gustin Marie Estane and Nahomie Jean Louis, testified that the seeds showed better germination rates compared to other seeds used in the past.
- Staff from ROPAGA, along with the Departmental Director for Grande Anse at the Ministry of Agriculture, attested that the agricultural road in Privilé (an isolated

area benefiting from the project) now facilitates the transport of produce, allowing smallholder farmers better access to markets. It is now easier for farmers to transport their goods because the agricultural road allows trucks to pass through the area.

- In the village of Bois Neuf Malor, Roseaux, two women—Marie Celianne Jeanty and Marie Jacqueline—benefited from training and received a goat as part of the PARAGA project. They reported that their gardens are now producing better yields. They have stopped slash-and-burn agriculture practice and now practice conservation measures. The goats they received are expected to also provide income to help finance their children's schooling. The PARAGA project training also encouraged them to consume products produced locally, rather than relying on imports (such as imported rice).

While the ROPAGA support has contributed to temporarily improving market access for the members of local farmers groups, market mechanisms remain fragile. Market access depends largely on project support and ROPAGA's

facilitation as an intermediary. Producers do not yet have fully structured marketing systems, such as formalised contracts, adequate storage infrastructure or sustainable partnerships with multiple buyers.

The project remains largely production-oriented, with the majority of current activities focused on improving agricultural practices, increasing yields and distributing inputs. While these interventions are important for strengthening farmers' capacity to produce more, sustainably, there is need to strengthen other links in the value chain: processing, storage and marketing of agricultural products.

The project, however, is supporting ROPAGA to build an agricultural product processing centre, due to be completed in early 2026, which will assist in addressing this challenge. The construction was initially delayed due to procurement related issues. The centre will have two parts, one which will process corn into semolina (to be distributed to school canteens), and the other which will process fruit, particularly benefiting women.



Marie Celianne Jeanty, 57, is a mother who practices livestock farming, agriculture and trade. She received a goat as part of the PARAGA project, and now owns three goats. PHOTO: COSADH



Lundi Marie Jacqueline, 30, is a mother involved in agri-business. She received one goat through the project and now has two goats. PHOTO: COSADH

Key lessons

- **Farmer-centred design increases relevance and uptake.** Targeting highly vulnerable smallholders through transparent criteria (plot size, vulnerability, group membership) ensured that inputs, training and market support matched farmers' real constraints and priorities.
- **Combining inputs with continuous extension support is critical.** Productivity gains and practice adoption were driven not only by improved seeds and seedlings, but by sustained agroecology coaching and follow-up visits.
- **Agroecological practices deliver both food security and co-benefits.** Improved yields, crop diversification and soil conservation enhanced household food availability and resilience, while diffusion of practices to non-project farmers amplified impact.
- **Market intermediation can unlock income, but sustainability remains fragile.** ROPAGA's intermediary role improved prices, reduced post-harvest losses and stabilised incomes, yet producers remain dependent on project-facilitated markets rather than autonomous value chains.
- **Access to community-based finance strengthens resilience when formal systems are absent.** MUSO MISO MITAN loans helped households invest in production and income-generating activities, though capitalisation constraints required project support.
- **Infrastructure investments reinforce agricultural gains.** Improvements such as agricultural road rehabilitation significantly reduced market isolation and transaction costs for farmers.

II. Climate Resilience, Adaptation and Agroecology¹

The PARAGA project strengthens smallholder farmers' adaptation to climate change by promoting agroecological practices and more resilient production systems. The project progressively promotes agroecology by providing farmers training on crop diversification and soil protection) and encouraging the efficient use of local resources (agricultural land, water, local seeds, organic matter for compost production). It strengthens resilience to climate change and supports sharing of traditional agricultural knowledge and practices among farmers. This approach is contributing to sustainable agriculture better adapted to the realities of smallholder farmers. Farmers report that they are now able maintain their harvests despite erratic weather conditions, unlike previous years when losses were greater.

More than 1,200 farmers, approximately 70% of whom are women, have been trained in agroecological techniques, including sustainable soil management, crop diversification, intercropping and agroforestry. Training includes making contour lines to reduce erosion in sloping areas; sustainable water and soil management; mulching

and composting to improve fertility; agroforestry gardens combining trees, food crops and legumes; integrated pest management without chemical pesticides; and adaptation techniques to drought and intense rainfall. Following the training, more than 80% of participants reported adopting at least one agroecological practice on their farms.

Access to higher-quality seeds (beans, maize, yams, bananas) and agro-climatic information has enabled producers to improve their agricultural planning, also reducing their vulnerability to climate hazards. The project also distributed seeds adapted to the short winter season (beans, maize, groundnuts, yams, various vegetables) to encourage the application of agroecological techniques on the plots. The seeds are purchased from local producers specialising in seed production, ensuring seed quality while supporting local production sectors. Once farmers receive the seeds, they are encouraged and trained to propagate them themselves, so they can save part of their harvest for planting in subsequent seasons. This practice reduces reliance on annual seed purchases and strengthens producers' self-sufficiency, while promoting a system of seed management and reproduction at the community level.

1. The review defines agroecology in terms of the 13 principles developed by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security.



Thanks to the agroecology training, we now farm more effectively," says Berlin Joseph. [Hear more about her story in this short video.](#)
PHOTO: COSADH

In addition, an agroforestry component is included in the programme, combining trees, annual crops, and livestock, contributing to soil restoration, erosion reduction and improved water retention. It is an essential complement to agroecology in the context of agricultural reforestation. Seedlings (cocoa, banana, cashew, mango and breadfruit trees) are produced at the ROPAGA nursery for distribution to farmers, with 99,500 now planted, covering an area of 636.8 ha. The trees directly contribute to stabilising the soil, promoting water infiltration, increasing fertility, creating protective shade for crops and providing additional income, among other things, the operators explained.

Diversifying livelihoods, particularly through the introduction of goat farming to the most vulnerable households, has

also strengthened the economic resilience of family farms. 352 goats were distributed to 252 farmers (158 women). Multiple production systems, coupled with processing activities, has enabled households to reduce their dependence on a single source of income.

Furthermore, the organisation of producers within farmers' groups (GPAS) has also contributed to environmental and social resilience, facilitating mutual support and collective adaptation.

The project could, however, benefit from the adoption of a clear agroecology monitoring and evaluation framework, aligned with the HLPE 13 principles, to ensure it fully considers aspects of governance, autonomy and overall transformation and food systems.



Elisée Elitane, 60, lives in Bois Neuf Malor, where she grows yams and bananas. She received yam cuttings and banana suckers through the project. PHOTO: COSADH

Key lessons

- **Agroecology is an effective approach to climate adaptation among smallholders.** Training in soil conservation, crop diversification, agroforestry and water management enabled farmers to maintain production despite increasing climate variability.
- **High adoption rates reflect practical, context-specific training.** Over 80% adoption demonstrates that techniques aligned with farmers' realities and resource constraints are more likely to be sustained.
- **Local seed systems strengthen resilience and autonomy.** Promoting locally produced, climate-adapted seeds combined with seed saving reduced dependency on external inputs and enhanced community self-reliance.
- **Agroforestry delivers multiple resilience benefits.** Tree planting improved soil stability, water retention, microclimates and long-term income opportunities while contributing to reforestation goals.
- **Livelihood diversification mitigates climate and income risks.** Goat farming and integrated production systems reduced household vulnerability to climate shocks and market fluctuations.
- **A structured agroecology monitoring framework is needed.** Aligning monitoring with HLPE 13 principles would better capture governance, autonomy and food-system transformation outcomes beyond technical adoption.

III. Gender Responsiveness and Women's Empowerment

The PARAGA project promotes women's leadership in farmers' organisations and in the management of productive resources, leading them to become community relays, local trainers and influential actors in the establishment of agroforestry gardens, as well as promoters of sustainable practices in their families and communities.

The project incorporates a gender-sensitive approach by targeting women's access to training, inputs and economic opportunities. The project directly supports women with adapted seeds, particularly for short-cycle, high-nutritional-value crops (beans, vegetables, tubers), which are often managed by women.

Women also benefit from technical training on good agricultural practices, with women making up 70% of those trained. The training is tailored to women's specific realities and constraints, taking into account their high domestic workload and family and social responsibilities, which limits time available for agricultural activities, as well as their vulnerability to climate hazards.

The project also focuses on the processing and preservation of agricultural products, areas in which women are heavily involved. Training is provided on artisanal processing, food hygiene, preservation and post-harvest loss reduction, enabling women to diversify their products, improve their quality and generate additional income. Products include jams made from mango, guava or grapefruit; flours and semolina made from cassava or yam; processed cocoa products, such as cocoa powder or chocolate; and small-scale market garden produce or packaged goods, such as peppers and chilies.

The project incorporates nutrition and balanced diet awareness activities, specifically targeting women as the primary caregivers for meals within households. These activities strengthen knowledge about dietary diversity, the consumption of local and seasonal products, and child nutrition.

The project promotes women's economic empowerment by facilitating their access to local marketing channels, collective sales within local farmers' groups, and the management of small income-generating activities. This approach contributes to improving their economic power, social status and participation in family and community decision-making.

Economic: The project improves women's income, diversification of activities, and access to productive resources. Derisseau Sterline, 38, a resident of the

Gommier housing estate in the Roseaux commune, is one of the participants in the PARAGA project. Before the project's intervention, she ran a small business with very limited resources. Thanks to the PARAGA project, she was able to obtain a loan through the MUSO. With this funding, she bought cassava to cultivate. At harvest time, she sells her produce to ROPAGA, and the profits generated allow her to strengthen her business. Sterline strongly encourages other women in the community to join the MUSO in order to also benefit from low-cost credit and improve their living conditions.

Social: The project has increased participation of women in association steering committees, improved their confidence in public speaking, and has encouraged them to take up local leadership positions. Siffard Marie Nicole - a mother living in the Betouze area, in the Basse Voldroque communal section stated that she previously struggled to speak in public, but thanks to the training she received through the PARAGA project, she can now express herself freely. She is a member of the organisation's committee in the area.

In Chirac, in the Grand Vincent communal section, Gustin Marie Estane explained that her household has functioned better since receiving training. Her husband is more involved in household chores and prepares meals when she returns late from work. These changes demonstrate the positive impact of the PARAGA project not only on families' livelihoods but also on balance and cohesion within households.

Participants also shared that the project has reduced their domestic work through provision of labour-saving technologies (including tools and equipment, and water harvesting and management techniques), and enhancing the broader participation of women in household decisions. This approach helps to reduce gender inequalities within communities.



"Since attending the training courses, there is better harmony in the family. Before, when I left school, my husband did nothing around the house; he only focused on his work at the school. But after the training, my husband prepares food, cleans the house, and does the dishes. All of this is an improvement"- Gustin Marie Estane. [Hear more about her story in this short video.](#) PHOTO: COSADH

Key lessons

- **Intentional gender targeting yields transformative outcomes.** Prioritising women's access to inputs, training and finance resulted in measurable economic, social and household-level empowerment.
- **Women are effective agents of agroecological change.** High participation of women as farmers, trainers and community relays accelerated adoption of sustainable practices within households and communities.
- **Economic empowerment reinforces leadership and voice.** Improved incomes, access to credit and collective marketing increased women's confidence, public participation and decision-making roles.
- **Gender norms can shift through livelihood interventions.** Changes in household labour sharing highlight how economic initiatives can positively influence social relations.
- **Labour-saving technologies matter for women's participation.** Reductions in domestic workloads increased women's capacity to engage in productive, organisational and leadership activities.

IV. Nutrition

The PARAGA project actively promotes the production, preparation, preservation and consumption of healthy, diverse, seasonal and culturally appropriate foods through an integrated approach that operates on several levels:

1. *Promoting healthy and diversified agricultural production:* The project supports farmers by providing them with quality seeds adapted to local agro-climatic conditions (beans, maize, yams, sweet potatoes, vegetables, etc.). The project encourages crop diversification to reduce dependence on a single crop, improve soil fertility, and ensure a year-round supply of varied foods.
2. *Promoting local and seasonal foods:* The project emphasises the production of local and traditional foods, in harmony with the communities' eating habits. By promoting crops already known and consumed locally, the project strengthens food identity and encourages the consumption of culturally appropriate, fresh, and seasonal foods.
3. *Improvement of food preparation and processing:* The project supports capacity building for smallholder farmers, particularly women, through training in artisanal processing, preservation, and hygienic preparation of agricultural products. These activities help reduce post-harvest losses, extend food shelf life, and diversify consumption patterns.

4. *Raising awareness of nutrition and balanced diets:* The project carries out nutritional awareness activities to promote a balanced, rich, and varied diet, highlighting the complementarity between local agricultural products. Households are encouraged to consume some of their own produce to improve their nutritional health, particularly that of children and women.
5. *Strengthening local supply chains and access to healthy food:* By organising producers into farmers' groups and facilitating local marketing, the project has improved the availability and accessibility of healthy food in community markets. This has ensured better access to fresh and diverse products. Before the project's intervention, many households tended to consume more imported products, particularly imported rice, and placed less value on local products. Through training and awareness-raising activities, participants gradually changed some of their eating habits, incorporating more local products into their daily diets, recognising their importance for their health and the economy of their communities.

Thanks to this comprehensive approach, the PARAGA project makes a concrete contribution to food and nutritional security by strengthening sustainable, resilient local food systems that respect the seasons and cultural practices of the intervention areas, particularly in Jérémie.

Key lessons

- **Nutrition outcomes improve when production, knowledge and markets are linked.** Combining diversified production, nutrition awareness and local market access led to improved diets and reduced reliance on imported foods.
- **Promoting culturally appropriate foods enhances acceptance and sustainability.** Emphasising local, traditional crops strengthened food identity and encouraged long-term dietary changes.
- **Processing and preservation reduce losses and extend nutrition benefits.** Food transformation skills improved food availability across seasons while generating additional income.
- **Local food systems are critical to crisis resilience.** Strengthened short supply chains improved access to healthy food during periods of disruption.

V. Community participation & cohesion

The PARAGA project adopted a participatory and inclusive approach, ensuring involvement of small-scale farmers, farmers' organisations and civil society actors at all project stages, from planning to monitoring. This approach has promoted local ownership and the sustainability of project activities.

Strengthening farmers' groups is a central pillar of the project, which has supported the organisational development of ROPAGA – as a lead organisation at regional level. Training was provided by ActionAid Haiti in governance, administrative and financial management, leadership and collective decision-making, while encouraging the participation of women and youth. Local producer groups (GPAS), however, did not receive the same level of direct training, due to project resource constraints. ROPAGA is expected to disseminate these skills and good practices to its members. Despite this, local producer groups noted that they have not yet acquired full autonomy to manage their activities and gain sustainable access to markets.

Farmers' groups, peasant organisations and civil society organisations have been involved from the planning phase through participatory assessments and community workshops. These workshops identified needs, defined priorities, and validated local action plans. During implementation, the farmers' groups ensure local coordination of activities, including organising training,

distributing seeds and disseminating best practices. Participatory monitoring is conducted through periodic evaluation meetings, which are designed to allow project participants to contribute to the analysis of results and inform adjustments to the project.

The project also has governance and coordination mechanisms, including local steering committees, composed of representatives from the farmers' groups, peasant organisations, community leaders and the project team. These committees meet regularly to ensure the coordination, monitoring and strategic direction of activities.



Danie Cadet, is a smallholder farmer in Jérémie who benefited from seedlings through the PARAGA project. [Hear more about her story in this short video.](#) PHOTO: COSADH



Sterline Civil, a producer and trader in Gommier, Les Roseaux, received a loan from a MUSO, which she used to develop her cassava business. She sells her harvest to ROPAGA. PHOTO: COSADH

Key lessons

- **Participatory planning strengthens ownership and sustainability.** Involving farmers and civil society from design through monitoring enhanced relevance, accountability and local buy-in.
- **Strong apex organisations can amplify local impact.** Capacity strengthening of ROPAGA enabled coordination, market access and service delivery across dispersed local farmer groups.
- **Autonomy of grassroots groups requires deeper investment.** Limited direct training for local farmers groups constrains their ability to independently manage markets and resources.
- **Collective governance mechanisms enhance coordination and trust.** Steering committees and participatory monitoring fostered transparency, conflict resolution and shared responsibility.

Challenges

The PARAGA project has strong potential for sustainability and impact. However, despite the progress made, it faces several major challenges.

- Structural constraints persist, disrupting production cycles and leading to occasional losses despite the adoption of improved practices:
 - Inadequate rural infrastructure, including deteriorated agricultural roads, and lack of storage facilities;
 - The high cost of inputs, including tools. The high costs of inputs has led to ROPAGA buying fewer seeds.
 - Climate instability, including droughts, heavy rains and erosion. Although yields have improved with agroecological adaptation practices adopted, production continues to be affected.
- The transition to agroecology and economic empowerment require long term support to peasant organisations to sustainably consolidate achievements, strengthen local capacities and enable groups to operate in a fully autonomous manner.
- Limitations in mobility and security in certain areas slow down the implementation of activities and reduce the frequency of close monitoring, sometimes forcing the project to rely on community relays.
- Market mechanisms remain fragile and often dependent on project support; the lack of stable outlets outside of the project, storage and formalised contracts exposes producers to price fluctuations and limits long-term profitability.

It is important to note that the project is currently in its third year of implementation and only one year remains before its completion; however, 55% of the planned budget remains undisbursed. The observed constraints appear to be related to the financing mechanism based on the reimbursement of eligible expenses (pre-financing), as defined in the project agreement with the supervising entity, WFP. Key informants suggested that funds instead be disbursed on an advance rather than pre-financing basis.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The PARAGA project shows clear evidence of lifting farmers from extreme poverty mainly through enhanced access to climate-adapted seeds that have enabled farmers to increase their production while ensuring conservation, through agroecological principles. ROPAGA has offered a ready (albeit temporary) market to the farmers, allowing them to increase their incomes; long term stability, however, remains uncertain. Women attest to becoming more autonomous, and with enhanced cultivation techniques and access to credit they have diversified their income sources with off-farm small businesses. Overall, farmers are producing sufficient food for their families while also diversifying and improving their diets.

In order to address the challenges noted, however, the review makes the following recommendations:

- *Allocate additional resources.* To further build climate resilience, the WFP and AA Haiti should allocate additional resources to support resilient agricultural infrastructure, including construction and rehabilitation of storage facilities, irrigation systems and rural roads. For example, the project should explore how it can better equip farmers' groups with rainwater harvesting systems to allow them to irrigate crops during periods of drought.
- *Adopt a clear, long-term, agroecology strategy.* While the project progressively promotes agroecological practices, the project should adopt a clear agroecology strategy, based on the 13 HLPE principles, further encouraging soil conservation techniques, crop diversification, complementary planting, and sustainable water management to improve production and resilience to climate hazards.
- *Enhance ROPAGA's internal governance systems.* While the project has enhanced the operations of ROPAGA, the organisation should continue to improve its internal governance systems by strengthening its financial management and ensuring member participation in decision-making. For example, ROPAGA should hold regular general meetings and document decisions to ensure transparency and build trust within the group.
- *Expand governance training to local members.* To contribute to sustainability, the institutional strengthening provided to ROPAGA should also be expanded to local level farmers' groups (GPAS). ROPAGA should provide targeted support, such as training in governance and collective planning, to its local members to bolster their internal structures and enhance their capacity to make autonomous decisions and sustainably manage their activities in the long term.
- *Empower local organisations to provide technical support.* Further technical training should also be provided to ROPAGA's member organisations and partners (local NGOs) so they can better support and monitor the work of smallholder farmers. This could include training on resilient agricultural techniques, input management, production monitoring, project management and strategic planning.
- *Review financial arrangements.* To address delayed funding disbursements and implementation, WFP should review the conditions of its contract with ROPAGA and AA Haiti, to ensure they are applicable and responsive to the national economic and operating conditions of the project in Haiti. For example, disbursements should be made on an advance, rather than pre-financing, model.

- *Strengthen participatory monitoring.* WFP and AA Haiti should enhance participatory monitoring of project implementation by actively involving producers, women and youth in monitoring activities to timeously identify challenges, inform adjustments in interventions, and ensure greater ownership of actions. This could include, for example, organising quarterly monitoring meetings with local committees to assess the adoption of agroecological practices and collective marketing. Increasing the frequency of field visits and direct support for producers, particularly in the most vulnerable areas, could also assist in addressing challenges and strengthening the adoption of agroecological practices.
- *Develop more formal, sustainable, links with markets:* ROPAGA should explore and establish partnerships with local buyers, trading cooperatives or distribution platforms to secure the flow of products and improve long-term profitability. This should also include improved links with public institutions and local authorities. Further investment should also be made in establishing formal mechanisms for group sales, community storage and negotiation with buyers, in order to stabilise incomes and reduce dependence on intermediaries.

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COVER PHOTO: Focus group discussion participants in Bois-Neuf Malor. (COSADH)

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