



INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION IN
AGRICULTURE (IICA)

CENTER FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND
HORIZONTAL COOPERATION



BEST PRACTICES BANK

*Successful experiences in horizontal
cooperation*



PRO-HUERTA PROGRAM

HAITI

Contributing to a healthy diet and environmental protection through training for the implementation of agroecological practices in family, school and community gardens and farms



CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

The Pro-Huerta Program in Haiti, an adaptation of the Pro-Huerta Program in Argentina, was a food security initiative aimed at small-scale agroecological production of fresh foods requiring significant involvement by the target population. The program moved under the umbrella of South-South and Triangular Cooperation through alliances between Haiti, Argentina, Canada, Spain and international organizations.

The Program was implemented across Haiti and involved over 37,656 families (almost 260,000 people), 75 schools and 913 community organizations, all of which were provided training and constant technical assistance in establishing vegetable gardens and farms. To that end, a network was established of 4,728 local volunteer advocates (of which 40% were women), through which the amount of food consumed, especially vegetables, and the frequency of eating were increased. Each family was able to grow between 10 and 15 species of horticultural crops, thereby diversifying their diets. Every USD dollar invested into the program yielded USD 4 in food.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Project name: Pro-Huerta Program

Countries involved: Argentina and Haiti

Supported by: IICA

Executing entities: Ministry of Social Development (Argentina), National Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA-Argentina), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship (Argentina), Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR-Haiti) and the National Coordination for Food Security (CNSA-Haiti)

Status: Finalized

Period: 2005-2016

IICA PROGRAM

Territorial Development and Family Farming

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE

Gender and Youth

IN SEARCH OF A SOLUTION

The Pro-Huerta Program, a public policy spanning over 30 years, was implemented by the Government of Argentina through the Ministry of Social Development and the National Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA, in Spanish) to benefit vulnerable families and producer organizations, promoting food security and sovereignty through access to healthy foods and an adequate diet.

The Pro-Huerta Program in Haiti was based on the experience of Argentina. Cooperation between INTA, the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of the Exterior (Argentine Fund for Horizontal Cooperation) made implementation possible, in addition to the coordination of the IICA Delegation in Haiti and Haiti's Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR).

The main objective was to promote community food production through the coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture, its departmental offices and community organizations, including schools, orphanages, training and education centers, farmers and women's associations, professional centers, parishes and churches of different denominations, in addition to community leaders.

Upon conclusion of the pilot phase, other programs and agencies active in Haiti joined the initiative, including the National Democratic Institute, the PWOTOKOL Project (by the Delegation in Haiti and Kellogg Foundation), the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation, Artibonite (2006-2008), the Fresh Food Project and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The second phase included adjusting operations, coordinating activities with new partners and learning from their experiences.

Upon completion of the second phase, the cooperation was consolidated with the Canada-ACDI-Argentina-Haiti-IICA joint project (the most relevant of the process) in five departments, the Spain-AECID-Araucaria project in the South Department and the UNASUR-PNUD Project. In the third phase, the parties agreed on the design and execution, as well as on monitoring and evaluation activities.

Within the framework of the Program, the Argentine cooperation contributed specialized knowledge, training, technical assistance (with *in situ* specialists) and biological inputs (seeds); IICA facilitated local coordination, logistics, infrastructure and complementary technical assistance; and the partners provided the funds for the different operations and to hire and transport local human resources.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



[PROGRAM LINK](#)

Serious difficulties were faced during program implementation, including extreme climate events (hurricanes, tropical storms and droughts) and catastrophes (the earthquake and cholera outbreak in 2010), despite which the activities on the ground continued. Moreover, challenges were faced in unifying the intervention criteria of the cooperating partners to ensure a more effective cooperation and to reconcile a large number of stakeholders—an arduous task that required the dynamization of communication channels and coordination between the different Program collaborators and executing entities.

To navigate these difficulties, the Program was flexible and adapted to each one. For example, after the hurricane and tropical storms, the logistics were adjusted to deliver seeds to the most affected areas in order to replant their gardens. After the earthquake in 2010, special containment activities were carried out with local specialists and advocates/families in the most affected areas and Program components were modified, adapting them to the new context. In response to the cholera epidemic, coordination efforts were made between the country's health system, the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization to provide special training on early alert, “safe water” and fresh food production in that context.

Thanks to the Program, 96% of the beneficiary population improved their diet (per a survey conducted by Haiti's National Coordination of Food Security in 2013). Moreover, the country's population living in food insecurity was reduced by 5% through the agroecological production of green vegetables in almost 40,000 gardens (according to data from the United Nations Development Program in 2016). Finally, the food expenses of participating families, which amounted to 67%, was reduced to 33% in 2013.

A number of different agroecological practices were shared and applied successfully to the production of new fruits and vegetables for family consumption (the most unique case was Swiss chard, whose consumption became widespread due to the Program). Likewise, local production was initiated of new species of horticultural seeds and the quality of locally valued species was improved (*Pwa Congo*).

The social capital was increased thanks to the coaching of 4,828 volunteer advocates—training the trainers—of which 40% were women. Additionally, 37,656 families were trained and aided in establishing agroecological gardens and another 5,060 families in implementing poultry farms, as well as 75 schools and a network of 913 community organizations across 140 intervention areas. Likewise, during the project's development, training was provided to more than 70 Haitian agricultural professionals in agroecological food production with an emphasis on food security and the active involvement of local organizations.

The Program in Haiti was finalized in 2016 as planned; however, some collaborators have expressed an interest in resuming this initiative. For this reason, contact is maintained with the Haitian specialists who took part in the program, who affirm that advocate groups continue to operate and horticultural and poultry activities continue in different areas of Haiti. Moreover, the seeds provided by the Program continue to be multiplied in those areas.

The success of this experience led to a number of cooperation agreements and similar pilot projects in Guatemala, Mozambique and Honduras, among other countries.

Based on the experiences in Haiti and Argentina, over 200 agricultural specialists and authorities from across Latin America and the Caribbean, Mozambique and Angola were provided training in Argentina together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

For this initiative to be repeated, the involvement of the target population is key, as well as the participation of community organizations that operate in the intervention areas. Dialogue and fluid coordination with the principal actors of the Triangular Cooperation are essential, as well as with all levels of the local government.

The Program's flexibility in terms of organization and implementation is essential to ensure its continuity and even for its adaptation to natural phenomena, such as earthquakes, epidemics,

hurricanes and tropical storms, as well as to changes in presidents and the heads of local ministries. To that end, forming a unified team of local specialists and representatives from the different cooperation agencies involved is fundamental.

RELATED RESOURCES

| Resource | Title | Year | URL |
|-------------|---|------|----------------------|
| Publication | Pro-Huerta Haiti: South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Food Security and Sovereignty | 2015 | Link |