

SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS OF LOVE A CHILD FALL/WINTER 2021



FARMER JOHN



THE ABATWA (SLAUGHTERHOUSE)

## GWO MACHÉ MIRAK GROWTH

One of Love A Child’s fastest-growing Sustainability projects is the Gwo Maché Mirak, also known as the Grand Miracle Marketplace. It is a place for small, local businesses to create a vibrant economy in the Fond Parisien area. One of the most exciting businesses at the Marketplace is Farmer John’s Abatwa (slaughterhouse/butcher shop), which now provides over 30 full-time jobs and is still growing, adding more services and more customers.

It has become a well-known “brand” of quality, providing sanitarily processed beef, pork, goat, chicken, and eggs from Jeremie in the south and as far away as Cap Haitian in the north and everywhere in between.

The Abatwa (slaughterhouse) buys animals from local farmers every day, who are happy to bring their livestock to sell. Having Farmer John’s slaughterhouse at the marketplace has encouraged more farmers to raise more beef, chicken, pigs, goats, and chickens, giving a real boost to the local economy.

Farmer John’s processes the locally sourced animals, providing high-quality meat to many missionaries, orphanages, restaurants, hotels, and to hundreds of local “marchands” (individuals operating as a business reselling small batches of meat).

Every day over a hundred “marchands,” both children and adults, come to buy little pieces of meat and animal by-products to resell for making soups and meals for many of the families in Miracle Village and surrounding areas.

This efficient market supply chain strengthens the economy and is now a huge blessing for so many.



Last year, Farmer John’s added a chicken processing plant. This new addition to the Abatwa is helping Love A Child’s Poul Mirak chicken farm be more sustainable. Farmer John’s processing plant can now cut and process up to 1,000 birds a day when they are available! While this helps Poul Mirak be sustainable, it also supports 8-10 other local chicken farmers, giving them a fair market to sell to.



The Gwo Maché Mirak and its Farmer John’s slaughterhouse are providing jobs, skills, local markets, and better diets. All of this brings hope by helping Haitians to help themselves, providing jobs and food for life.



Then, around the year 2000, a parasite began to devastate the coconut plantations, greatly depressing the “coconut economy.” However, improved varieties of coconuts can now grow in Haiti, giving coconut growers the ability to have a sustainable livelihood once again.

Wilner, our Director of the Agricultural Training Center (ATC), has started a coconut tree project for us, buying 125 “coconut seeds” (just coconuts to be sprouted) with money provided by a donor who regularly supports our sustainability programs. The coconuts are beginning to sprout now, and we will grow them in containers until they are a size where we can give them to trained farmers to re-establish a coconut economy around Haiti. Many rural people sell mangos in local markets, but there are so many mangos and mango “Marchands” that they only get about 5 gourdes apiece. But a good ripe coconut can sell for 6-7 times that amount. Our new coconut project will provide the basis for many new coconut farmers to have a sustainable income. Donors who give to support our sustainability projects provide a gift that continues giving for generations to come. This coconut tree project is part of our “edible plant nursery,” where we demonstrate how to supply food and income from edible plants... food for a lifetime.

## COCONUT TREE PROJECT

Back in the ‘60s, when Haiti was still known as the “Pearl of the Antilles,” many rural Haitians successfully grew coconuts as a business, selling them for their “tasty meat,” oil for cooking, and beneficial “coconut water.” For these Haitian “businessmen,” their coconut crop was like their reliable bank account, often providing the money needed to send their children to school and keep food on their tables.

## FROM FIELD TO KITCHEN

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, we have been able to continue diversifying the fruits and vegetables we grow at our Agricultural Training Center (ATC) and Edible Plant Nursery. With the guidance of Wilner, our Director of the ATC, and the help of the ATC staff, we are now growing enough produce to supply five of our kitchens. And we also help feed over 160 people within Love a Child Village.

Our Sustainable Agriculture training courses teach the students how to grow a wide array of produce sustainably. From our training classes, they not only learn how to provide nutritious food for themselves and their villages, but they can also sell some of the produce at markets and even increase their income as some fruits and vegetables sell for more than others.

Throughout the year, at our Love A Child and ATC gardens, we grow and harvest several fruits and vegetables, including mangos, papayas, carambola, sapote, citrus, breadfruit, avocados, bananas, coconuts, peppers, spinach, carrots, onions, beets, cucumbers, and sugar cane!

If you know of anyone interested in partaking in a Sustainable Agricultural Training Course, contact Rad Hazelip at [rad.hazelip@lachaiti.org](mailto:rad.hazelip@lachaiti.org). We conduct the courses whenever it is safe enough and whenever we have enough interest to warrant a class. We take up to ten students per course!



## CREATING “BIOCHAR”

Most land in Haiti has been subject to erosion and now is often rocky and dry and not very fertile. At the ATC, we have implemented various practices, like our organic fertilizers, mulches, drip irrigation systems, our tire gardens, and our “arborloo” compost toilets to increase soil productivity. Still, another tactic we are implementing is our use of “Biochar.”

Biochar is made by burning compostable materials in the absence of air; this process is called pyrolysis. After the relatively long procedure, the Biochar can be added to some of our organic fertilizers to help increase the soil’s biological activity, holding moisture and microbes essential for soil fertility. Some of the benefits of Biochar are that it is high in carbon, reduces nitrogen loss, and increases the soil’s ability to retain nutrients and water.

Biochar is especially helpful in areas like Haiti, where the soil is often poor, and our water sources are unreliable. The addition of Biochar to the soil has been shown to increase food security and crop diversity despite the land’s deficiencies. We are always trying to use our resources to the fullest, and Biochar helps us do just that. Using Biochar as a soil amendment is a very sustainable practice for the ATC and its students.

We make sure that our students learn about this important, available resource they can use to make the land richer and more stable in their home communities so that they can rely on a consistent crop as a source of food and economic independence.



**1** CREATE A VACUUM SEALED BARREL

**2** PUT IN YOUR COMPOSTABLE MATERIALS

**3** BURN MATERIALS IN YOUR BARREL AT 300°-750°C

**4** GRIND THE CHARCOAL THAT IS LEFT BEHIND

**5** ADD BIOCHAR TO FERTILIZER AND/OR SOIL

**6** START GROWING!

## NATURAL INSECTICIDES

The best part about working in the ATC is that we are always developing new ways to be resourceful and meet our needs. Like most gardeners and farmers, we deal with pesky insects trying to eat away at our crops, so we use natural insecticides to protect our precious produce.

At our ATC sustainable training classes, we teach the students how to grind and mix ingredients such as onions, garlic, lime, and Neem tree leaves to make the natural insecticide. There are several ways to make homemade insecticide, and it’s not uncommon to use hot peppers, tomato leaves, vegetable oil, dish soap, mint leaves, orange peel, Epsom salt, basil, and more. Typically, you grind the vegetable or leaves, mix it with water, drain out any excess material and then spray on the plants!

We’re not trying to kill the bugs, just deter them from visiting our plants. Bugs play an important role in maintaining a happy ecosystem! In fact, bugs are key! They help aerate the soil, break down decaying materials to recycle nutrients



back into the soil, pollinate blossoms, and burrowing bugs even help create small channels in the soil for air and water. As useful as they are to maintaining our soil, we do want to keep them away from our plants, and that is why a gentle, natural insecticide is so important!



## MILLET SEED PROJECT

Recently, a good donor who teaches sustainability in Galesburg, IL, and often supports our ATC projects by sending good specialty seeds, sent us two varieties of millet seed for us to trial. We want to find sustainable grains that will grow easily so free-range chickens will be able to forage and “feed themselves.”

Between the 1960 to the 1980s, there were plenty of natural trees and plants around the country for birds to feed on, but since that time, deforestation has reduced the rainfall and available food sources from the tree seeds. Even now, you do not see many birds in Haiti because of the lack of available feed. Our millet seed project is intended to demonstrate that we can help villages

grow simple food plots for free-range chickens and other birds to have feed. Wilner’s team at the ATC planted a large area of both millet varieties in prepared beds, as they would use for row crops. We also gave Farmer John some seeds to grow in his area near the slaughterhouse in a broadcast fashion, as we would commonly do here in the U.S. because of having machinery to work larger plots of ground. Wilner’s crop at the ATC garden was very successful and was recently harvested. There was no distinguishable difference between the two varieties as both proved to thrive without irrigation or little other efforts.

The plot at the ATC yielded a good harvest of seed for future planting, and the millet that was left standing will be great forage for the new ATC “local chicken project” and neighboring free-range

chickens. When we provide these seeds to villages, we are confident that they can grow food plots for their free-range local, native chickens and will not have to pay for expensive prepared feed. This project supports our model for encouraging families to have free-range chickens that require very few expensive inputs like built coops, prepared feed, etc. Of course, if a family can afford to provide more management by having a hen house and buying prepared feeds, their output will be higher. But for those cases where that is not affordable, we hope to show that this free-range chicken model will provide some amount of animal protein to local diets. This model was widespread only a few years ago before deforestation caused such drastic changes to the environment in Haiti.



We hope you enjoy seeing what your investments in the future sustainability of Haiti are yielding. Without your support of “Sustainability,” these programs and projects could not take place. We can do so much through your continued gifts. Thank you for recognizing the long-term importance of helping the Haitian people develop their ability to take care of themselves sustainably.

# THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO...YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

## WAYS TO GIVE TODAY:

**Online:** [www.loveachild.com](http://www.loveachild.com) | **Phone:** 239-210-6107

**Mail:** P.O. Box 60063, Fort Myers, FL 33906

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