



SUCCESS STORY

In Fond Baptiste, now we have enough to eat and sell!

Improved Yields and Access to Markets in the Matheux Corridor



Thanks to USAID/WINNER, farmers in Fond Baptiste such as Marie Lucienne Joseph have substantially increased their incomes



Road rehabilitated by USAID/WINNER has enabled access to markets and reduces transportation costs

25 years ago in Fond Baptiste, Marie Lucienne Joseph, now 48 years old, abandoned needlework in favor of agriculture. “Last season was so terrible, I regretted my decision,” recalls Marie Lucienne. The county of Fond Baptiste, in the mountains of the Matheux corridor, has dealt with a constant logistical challenge. Year after year, inhabitants of Fond Baptiste were impoverished as they were unable to sell the crops they were producing. With harvest unsold and ultimately rotting, farmers were left with fewer resources to continue their production in subsequent seasons; Some farmers even left their land unexploited. To fulfill USAID’s mission to help farmers increase their revenues, the USAID-funded WINNER project discussed opportunities for collaboration with Fond Baptiste farmers. “When the WINNER agronomists came to us with their interesting proposal, we were very hopeful,” explained Jeannius Delice, head of the largest farmers association in Fond Baptiste.

WINNER agronomist, Buddy Lucien, remembers that in addition to the proposed interventions, which included road rehabilitation, agro forestry efforts, and provision of improved bean seeds, farmers of Fond Baptiste were extremely interested in planting potatoes. The persistent request, “Will you bring us potato seeds?” would come up at every meeting with the two main associations in Fond Baptiste. 4 months and a dozen meetings later, it is clear why these farmers were so adamant about the planting of potato seeds: Prior to WINNER’s assistance, potato production yielded a mere 10 tons per hectare the last time Fond Baptiste farmers had access to potato seeds, roughly 5 years ago. Improved potato seeds provided by WINNER through WINNER’s agricultural supply stores have helped farmers produce more than 40 tons per hectare, a quadrupling of their previous yield. With current market price for potatoes nearing a dollar per kilo and with an average 12 hectares planted, one can expect an associated revenue of 960 dollars for each of the 500 small farmers involved in this planting season.

To complement the improved seed variety, USAID/WINNER also rehabilitated 16 km of road and enabled access to markets, which has also resulted in reduced transportation cost from 15 USD to 5 USD per potato crate. This cost savings further increases the competitiveness of Fond Baptiste’s crops in the market. The area’s two main farmers associations, representing more than 500 small farms, were also included in the partnership agreement initiated by WINNER in which Matheux’s coastal hotels have committed to buy goods from 24 of the corridor’s associations.

In addition to increased revenues, farmers now have access to greater food security. “For us in the mountain, potatoes are the best crop against potential famine,” noted Marie Lucienne. In previous years, crops were consumed by the farmers and their families without substantial surplus or access to markets. Thanks to USAID/WINNER, farmers can also bring crops to market. “Now we have enough to eat *and* to sell!” Marie Lucienne exclaimed, finally content about her decision to pursue agriculture.