

Network of Cooperative Associations for the Production and Commercialisation of Lower Artibonite (RACPABA)



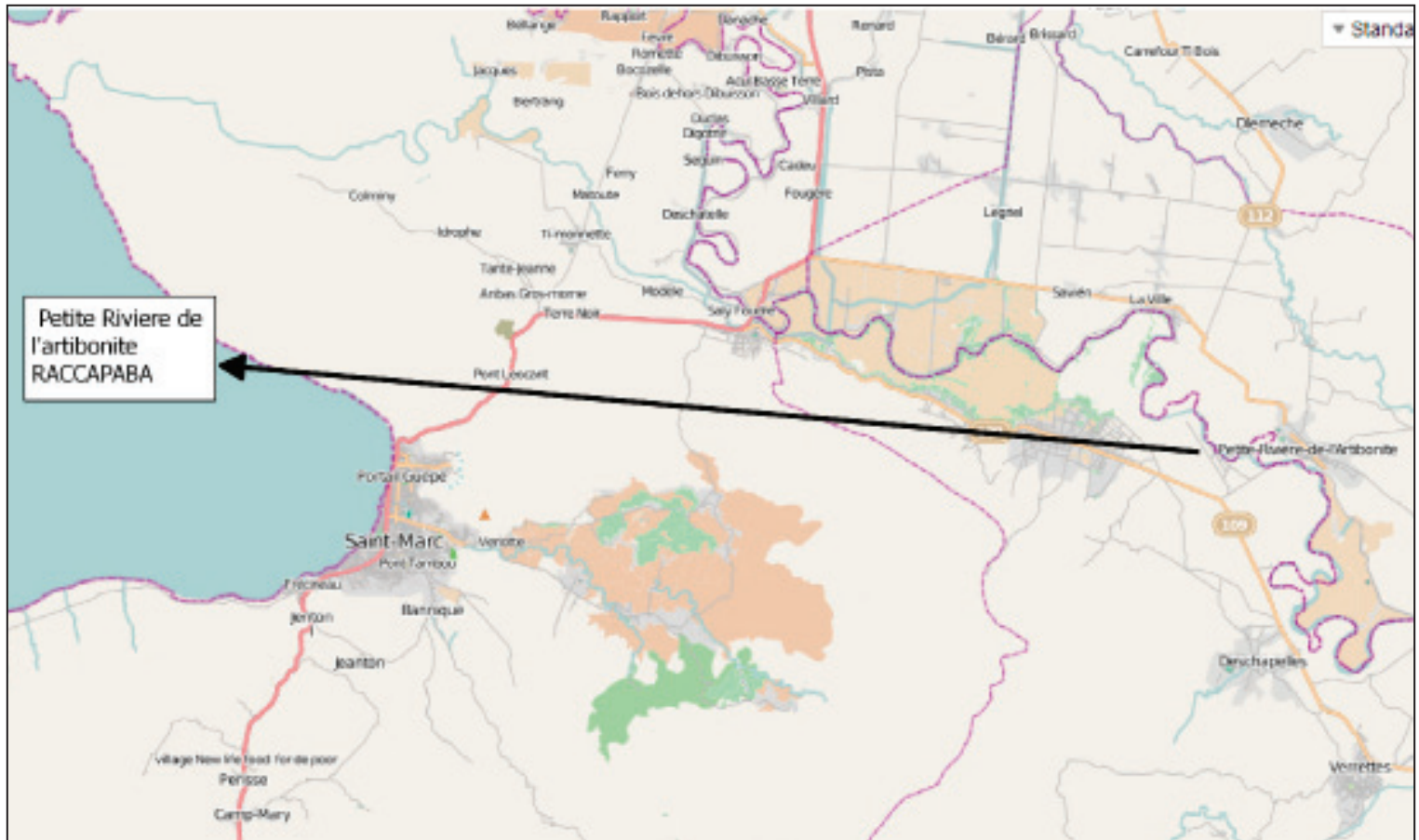
Department: Artibonite

RACPABA is a network of agricultural cooperatives in the Artibonite Valley, a fertile area of the Artibonite Department, which has historically produced a significant portion of rice in the country. The objective of the Network is to improve the livelihoods of the farmers through in-kind-credit and technical assistance.



What can other communities learn from RACPABA?

- * Processing and commercialization of rice
- * Managing networks agricultural cooperatives



History of the organization

The organization was formed in 2001, after a group of young agronomists observed the low productivity of the rice plantations in the Artibonite Valle: one hectare only yielded 2 tons of rice. The agronomists decided to start their own experiments, to see what truly needed to be done to increase the productivity of the rice fields. After 2 years of experimentation, they felt they had learned enough lessons to start teaching their fellow farmers.

Summary of the work

RACPABA is a network of 7 different farmer's cooperatives across all 6 communes that make up the Artibonite Valley. It provides a number of services to the cooperatives in the network: first and foremost, they provide extension services, giving trainings and providing field follow-ups to make sure that farmers are using the best techniques. One of the most important objectives of the organization is to shift farmers from an older model of planting (i.e. planting haphazardly in the fields) to a modern model of farming (i.e. planting in rows), while still preserving what is effective in traditional agriculture. RACPABA also runs multiple demonstration sites, each showcasing the strategies that they feel will increase the yield of the rice. It recently concluded an experiment between organic compost and chemical fertilizer, demonstrating to their members that there was no difference in yield between the two.

RACPABA also responds to the lack of quality seeds by producing its own seeds. RACPABA also provides various forms of credit: to farmers participating in demonstration sites, it provides cash credit just to ensure that the farmer is comfortable with the risk that s/he is taking. For other farmers, RACPABA provides in-kind loans of training, seeds, and inputs that the farmer in turn pays back with seeds or grain.

RACPABA has a modern processing station in each commune for farmers from each commune to mill, sort (to get rid of stray particles and rocks), and package the rice. They sell the rice in depots across the Artibonite Department and increasingly in Port-au-Prince.

What can other communities learn from RACPABA?

RACPABA has become a regional expert in rice planting techniques that will maximize the harvest and the profits for a farmer.





It has also become an expert in the processing, transformation, and commercialization of Haitian rice, that could be beneficial to struggling rice farmers across the country.

As a network of multiple cooperatives, RACPABA also has experience in managing its network and ensuring they all maintain high standards of quality. RACPABA also has a great deal of practice in running agricultural extension networks, demonstration sites, and making evidence-based decisions.

RACPABA has received assistance from Oxfam Intermón, Oxfam International, and Oxfam America.

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