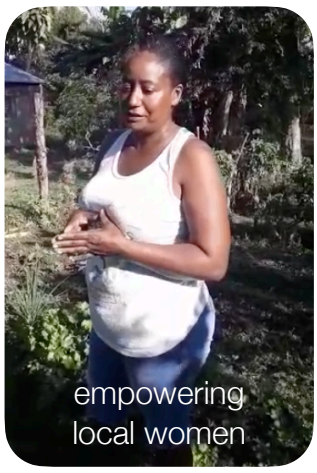
Sustainable Small-Scale Agriculture in Miches

We are turning marine life and ecological problems {massive sargassum stranding} into opportunities {converting it into an organic bio-fertilizer compost}. This compost, recently used by local women and small farmers, has been growing unprecedented quality and quantity organic crops for direct farm-to-consumer.

We believe in empowering these communities with the right tools, to lift a number of them out of hunger and poverty, and to ensure that they thrive for generation to come, by providing them an opportunity to grow more and ultimately to sell their excess to generate income.

Progress Report - April 2020.

turning marine life and ecological problems into an organic bio-fertilizer compost



Sustainable, regenerative bio-intensive farming.

There is a growing awareness and increasing consumer demand for local organic produces. We believe that the future for women and small farmers in Miches stands with revitalizing the severely depleted soils, with a combination of enriching soil and bio intensive culture techniques, in order to increase the fertility and sustainability, with low-cost/high-productivity systems.

Links between protecting marine life and sustainable farming.

Partnered with AlgeaNova, we protect marine life, seagrass, mangroves, corals, marshes and beach erosion by sustainably harvesting sargassum at sea and transforming it into an organic bio-fertilizer compost. Our solution matches the real life conditions of sporadic arrivals of sargassum. Our team has so far been able to contain the large volume of sargassum arrivals, and has been composting sargassum on several acres of land. Our model is scalable, and our operation can be duplicated and expanded easily elsewhere.

Links between sustainable farming and carbon sequestration.

We are implementing regenerative practices that will accelerate carbon sequestration from their agricultural soil. The end goal is to capture several metric tons of carbon dioxide that will generate extra income for those women and small farmers in Miches.

Grogenics

Combines ocean and nature to produce organic inputs helping farmers to grow organic agricultural crops, while safeguarding the environment. Our approach focuses on the entire agricultural value chain. We offer a compost for a more fertile and pest free soil, as well as providing new technologies and science for improved cultivating methods.

Fundación Tropicalia

Established in 2008, Fundación Tropicalia is a non-profit organization that promotes the socioeconomic and environmental development of Miches. With more than 10 years of on-the-ground experience, it has been designing and implementing programs for the local community, and has been promoting high-impact, innovative projects in agriculture, gender equality, education, environment, entrepreneurship and microfinance.

The Ocean Foundation

Supports, strengthens, and promotes organizations dedicated to reversing the trend of destruction of ocean environments around the world. As a leader in advancing “blue carbon” sequestration and storage, The Ocean Foundation explores new ways to finance climate change mitigation and adaptation through the cultivation of a sustainable blue economy.

MISSION: Establish a consistent and active farm-to-table cluster in the Dominican Republic, where local and regional buyers can source from small farmers who grow organic produce utilizing good growing practices and appropriate technology.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE: Empowering small farmers in Miches, particularly women, by enabling them to increase their income thanks to higher productivity from local soil enhancing inputs, improved cultivating methods, and better direct connections to markets with an App.

Miches and small farmers

With a population of approximately 21 000, the municipality of Miches has historically been an isolated community located in one of the poorest regions of the Dominican Republic. 55.6% of the population lives in poverty and 9.4% in extreme poverty. The main economic activities have been agriculture, cattle-raising, artisanal fishing, micro-business services and artisanal crafts. The population has been the socioeconomic challenges of emerging rural communities, such as unemployment, low levels of education and underdevelopment.

Unskilled labourers and farmers represent the largest and second largest proportions of the economically active population, respectively; both segments lack skills and are poorly paid. Climate change impacts, such as stronger hurricane events, have put additional hardship on farmers due to loss of yields and incomes. The lack of applied technical knowledge and vocational skills put more stress on the population, as Miches is slowly moving towards becoming the next big tourist destination in the country. In terms of agriculture in particular, most small farmers lack the adequate tools to properly manage their fields and tend to overlook safer, more ecological practices to treat their soil and crops, mostly due to little conscience of the environmental and health consequences associated. They also face challenges when it comes to organizing to gain better control of the commercialization of their crops and end up selling through intermediaries who keep most of the profit.

Today, resilient food systems are more essential than ever. Small farmers and local women networks have to develop in order to support increasing demand for secure, local supply chain for healthy organic food.

Fundación Tropicalia working with home gardens.

The foundation has been supporting a group of women in the community of Hicaco Blanco {Miches}. The support has established organic home gardens, where these women can grow produce for domestic consumption, share with neighbours and possibly sell any surplus. The support has been complemented by teaching some basics in finance and business such as non-formal training on domestic finances, household budget and management, food handling/processing/security, value-added products and commercialization.

Fundación Tropicalia working with Grogenics since 2019.

The Grogenics's team has travelled to Dominican Republic in order to improve dramatically the crops of the small farmers and local women. We have provided the farmers with our compost for a more fertile and pest free soil. We have also provided new technologies such as provision of hand-held tools to facilitate working the land, some equipment to properly measure and monitor the soil quality, taught the farmers about good growing practices, and the list go on.

Testimonials of some of our small farmers in Miches

Raquel (Associate #6)

is very enthusiastic about our compost. In her eyes, it is like "*if we have given her free food*". Raquel is a cancer survivor and a very active woman. When we first introduced our project to her, she was onboard from the start. She knew that gardening would be something that would keep her busy and get her thinking about other things, other than cancer. Initially, we asked her to use compost on 50% of what she was going to grow. However, as soon as she saw how much larger and healthier the plants were growing, she decided to put compost everywhere in her garden! She was thrilled with the results and with the fact that she was able to put food on the table. She then talked to many women in the city about our project, and many want to follow path and start growing fruits and veggies in their backyards with our compost. Raquel has been so pleased that she didn't hesitate one instant to be part of a homemade video.

Amaury (Associate #13)

is extremely delighted since he started in December 2019 with planting beans in his garden and with compost as its base. In his video, he shows the quantity and quality of the beans he got from his garden, using our compost. In fact, "*he could have sold more*" he said, but he needed to keep some for himself. He is also very impressed on how many flower buds have bloomed on his lime tree, and the quantity of limes that have grown already in so little time since he spread the compost!

Santiago (Associate #7)

has prepared raised beds in the spring and has started seeding in March. As a tryout, he has been growing egg plants, tomatoes and green peppers. So far, he has had incredible results with our compost and is overjoyed with the quality and quantity of his fruits and vegetables.

WHAT WE OFFER

We are providing a vital eco system service that is good for the ocean, for farmers and for the planet.

OCEAN ECOSYSTEM:

We protect marine life by sustainably harvesting sargassum at sea and transforming it into an organic bio-fertilizer compost. It is ecologically produced and environment-friendly. It is safe, natural and sustainable.

SUSTAINABLE REGENERATIVE BIO INTENSIVE AGRICULTURE:

Our organic bio-fertilizer compost reduces water consumption, supports soil microbial life & soil biodiversity, naturally fights major pests and diseases on fruits, vegetables, flowers, leaves, coffee, nuts, grains, etc. and makes them grow faster, tastier and healthier.

EMPOWER LOCAL WOMEN AND SMALL FARMERS:

We provide the small farmers and local women with the new technologies and science. By growing an abundance of healthy food, local economies will positively be striving. It will lift them out of hunger and poverty, and the extra earnings will ensure that they thrive for generation to come.

CARBON SEQUESTRATION:

Our compost aims to eliminate the need for chemicals. It restores living soils by putting massive amounts of carbon back into soil and plants, which in turn generates extra income for the farmers through carbon offsets.

Sargassum Insetting Pilot Project in Miches, Dominican Republic.
The Ocean Foundation Blue Resilience Initiative
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