

Life stories Rivaldine Belizaire

Rivaldine BELIZAIRE is a dynamic, young, single woman, a high school student and the fourth of six children in a modest family. She lives with her mother, her brothers and sisters in a small town called Nan Bourik, located in the Torbeck municipality of the Sud Department of Haiti.

She is one of the young women who best understands the importance of personal development programs. Passionate about the environment and biodiversity, she allows herself to be guided by educational programs, focusing above all on universal values, and at 21 she is preparing to become a young entrepreneur.

FOPRODER Training project



Rivaldine applied to the vocational training sector of the project and chose to become an agricultural technician. She specializes in agro-processing.

Rivaldine did not have, an easy childhood. She lost her father at an early age and from faced financial difficulties to attend school that were sometimes met by close family friends. For these reasons she was forced to try various income generating initiatives to satisfy different needs. In an adverse political, social and institutional context and thanks to her resilience, she was able to stand up and maintain the patience to move forward.

Her family owns a farm of less than half a hectare of land, 4 goats and 1 cow, depends largely on the uncertain income that is periodically generated by this small agricultural production system composed mainly of maize and okra.

Crop failure and the passage of hurricanes can seriously affect these agricultural operations, as was the case of

Hurricane Matthew in 2016. The devastation caused to this small economic activity only aggravated the level of vulnerability of her family and after three months of the passage of the natural phenomenon, she says, the material living conditions in her family were really difficult.

Basic needs from home were seldom satisfied. The water, food and hygiene relief teams often did not reach their community on time. Other areas were favoured, perhaps because of the proximity to the road, by humanitarian organisations during the distribution of aid. A ray of hope emerged from these innumerable difficulties: the announcement of the FOPRODER training project.

At the end of 2016, through a friend, she found out about the ILO FOPRODER training project and became interested in participating. Two days later, she went directly to the central office to get more information. Convinced that she wanted to participate, she applied to the vocational training sector of the project and chose to become an agricultural technician. She specializes in agro-processing.

During the training cycle, he was able to show courage by maintaining consistent participation. Managing her family

The reopening of classes in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic has represented an opportunity to, in addition to meeting personal and family needs (clothing, food and health), also pay part of the school fees of other children in the family. Many young people in her neighbourhood see her as a role model. Patient, resilient and determined to build her dreams and her future, she has managed to capitalize on the achievements of her time with FOPRODER.



responsibilities and learning at the same time was not easy. Obviously, she made it and was able to graduate.

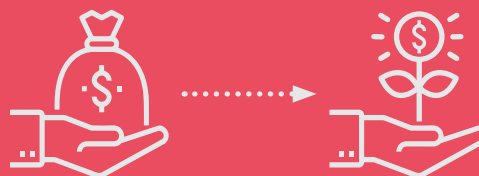
She says, "The FOPRODER project has brought great added value to my life, and my living conditions are beginning to undergo major structural changes. In addition, my family members and some close colleagues have been beginning to enjoy the first fruits for more than 12 months". Indeed, with the skill she acquired in processing agricultural products, in early 2019 she became a self-employed person.

Right now, Rivaldine represents the hope of an entire extended family. Although the repercussions of the socio-political instability (Pays-Lock) and the context of COVID-19 have negatively affected the growth process of a large part of the micro and small companies in the area, hers has managed to grow and as a result improve family food security.

She is one of the young women who best understands the importance of personal development programs. Passionate about environment and biodiversity, and guided by educational programs, at the age of 21 years she has become a young entrepreneur.

However, the biggest limitation remains finding more funds to grow and to be able to build her own certified production workshop (outside the family home). She dreams of moving towards construction of a large eco-responsible and certified company, developing its own quality seal. She even wants to join the preferential national markets of the Sud and up to Port-au-Prince. On the other hand, she hopes to use social media to make himself better known. She considers that the new information and communication technologies represent a fundamental asset for progress.

Ultimately, Rivaldine believes that FOPRODER has significantly changed her life for the better, as have other young people in need who are working in the project's intervention areas. She has acquired leadership that she did not have before. From now on she is a free and emancipated woman, who goes beyond divisions and myths about the role of women in her community, in her region, even in the country. She now has bigger hopes and dreams to achieve.



By family consensus, upon completing her training at FOPRODER in January 2019, Rivaldine invested around 4,000 gourdes of family money (about US \$ 33: obtained from the harvest of family plots of corn and okra) in making peanut butter and production of Crémasse (KREMAS, in Creole), an alcoholic drink with a smooth and creamy texture originating in Haiti with a delicious flavour of rum and coconut that is served regularly at special events. Since then, this business has grown slowly and has become a family business.