

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION OF THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF THE LAMBI FUND OF HAITI

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INTRODUCTION

The Lambi Fund of Haiti contracted INFODEV, an indigenous for profit evaluation firm founded in 1998 in Haiti, to conduct an evaluation of the first ten years of work done by the Lambi Fund. INFODEV's basic mission is to contribute to strengthening the human resource capacity of Haiti, both in rural and urban settings, and to provide high-quality professional services in the area of development project management. This executive summary was distilled from a 150 page report compiled by INFODEV and provides an overview of the evaluation, key findings and recommendations. The evaluation's mandate was to:

- Appraise the strategy used for the organization's work during its first ten years of existence.
- Evaluate the relationships between Lambi Fund and its beneficiary organizations.
- Evaluate a sample of 11 projects, financed by Lambi from 1993 to 2003, that represent the three project categories and that took place in Lambi's geographic areas of focus.
- Appraise the results of Lambi's on-site work.
- Appraise the impact of Lambi's work on the beneficiary organizations and their communities.
- Evaluate the viability of Lambi's approach.
- Evaluate the institutional performance of Lambi.

METHODOLOGY

To reach these goals, all of Lambi's records were consulted and analyzed. Next, structured interviews were conducted with all the technical and administrative departments of the organization. A formal evaluation was organized in each of the home communities of the 11 local organizations that ran the projects.

The data collected was rounded out by the results of the prior external evaluations of four other projects. Next, the assembled results of these 15 projects were compared and cross-checked with an analytical table completed by the Haiti staff based on the records of the 86 other projects previously evaluated internally by Lambi and the implementing (or "partner") community organizations. Therefore, this evaluation covers all 101 projects financed by the Lambi Fund during its 10 years of operations.

EVALUATION RESULTS

The main findings of this evaluation can be classified into the following basic categories:

1. The adequacy of Lambi's mission vis-à-vis its approach and the functioning of its technical and administrative structures.
2. The supported projects and their impact.
3. The institutional analysis of the groups and the projects' impacts on these organizations.
4. General recommendations that can provide both the orientation and the prospects for the next decade.



THE LAMBI FUND OF HAITI

Supporting economic justice, democracy and sustainable development in Haiti

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I. THE LAMBI FUND: ITS MISSION AND APPROACH

As a result of the solidarity between the Haitian and American people, the Lambi Fund, a nonprofit foundation, was created in September 1993 by a group of Americans and Haitians living in the US. The organization's goal is to provide direct support to democracy in Haiti by giving financial assistance to grassroots organizations engaged in economic development and the struggle for social justice. This mission has evolved with the course of the political and socio-economic situation in the country. Lambi continues to aid grassroots organizations that are working to fulfill their communities' socio-economic needs by emphasizing protection of the natural environment and democratic institutional functioning.

The Lambi Fund has a four-piece organizational structure with two entities in the US and two in Haiti:

- A Board of Directors (USA) – governs the entire organization.
- A US-based staff – raises funds and awareness of Haiti in the U.S.
- An Advisory Board (Haiti) – functions as a grant-making committee and advisors to Haiti office
- An Executive Office in Haiti – directs all program functions in Haiti; primary liaison to grassroots groups in Haiti.



A symbiosis between the inductive method of popular education and a “bottom-up” relationship with the grassroots communities dominates Lambi's overall approach. This system allows community organizations to express and defend the needs of their communities and to develop their own project proposals. Lambi Fund then evaluates these project proposals through a system of on-the-ground investigations that verify the legitimacy and feasibility of these projects as well as the institutional capacity of the organizations involved.

Next, the projects are further developed according to the principles of “participatory planning” involving both the Haiti staff and the grassroots organizations. Finally, both the Haiti Advisory Board and the US Board of Directors approve the projects.

In general, Lambi's approach is a modern one that was inspired by the lessons learned by the founders and the staff during their prior experiences in other working environments. This approach provides several important advantages which makes it relatively more reliable when compared to other development approaches that create dependency and a mercenary spirit in grassroots groups. The Lambi Fund partners with grassroots organizations in a manner that respects the principles of self-determination. Priority is placed on local realities, the needs of the communities, and the mobilization of groups' internal potential. Before a project starts, Lambi organizes training for the members of the organizations to enable them to manage the project better. Finally, Lambi gives organizations a strategic orientation that is consistently strengthened by systematic reflections on major local, national, regional and even international problems.

II. FUNDED PROJECTS AND THEIR IMPACT

The Funded Projects

From 1993 to 2003, the Lambi financed a total of 101 projects organized into the following program categories: agricultural, food processing, environmental, and community initiatives such as micro-credit unions. These projects impacted over one million Haitians as defined below:

TABLE 1: PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

PROJECT TYPE	BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT SERVICES (in 10 years)			TOTAL NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES
	Number of Project Participants	Members of Families	Community Residents	
Agriculture and Environment	52,322	209,288	523,220	784,830
Food-processing	13,741	54,964	206,115	274,820
Community Initiatives	10,833	43,332	108,330	162,495
Grand Total	76,896	307,584	837,665	1,222,145

These three project types were initiated over time in response to the needs expressed by the organizations themselves. Lambi did not choose the projects or the organizations. The organizations solicited the support of Lambi and identified their own projects. Conversely, the projects were approved through eligibility procedures based on certain pre-established criteria.

Geographic coverage of projects

The Lambi Fund supported development projects for the last ten years in the 9 geographic departments of the country to varying degrees. The Artibonite with 32.67% of the projects financed (33 of 101

projects), the South with 29.70% (30 of 101) and the West with 15.84% (16 of 101) were the three principal zones of Lambi's work. The lower Central Plateau and the Nippes Region are a second group, each benefiting from 6.93% (7 of 101) of the projects. The regions with the least number of projects are the North (2 projects), the North-East (1), the North-West (2), and the South-East (3).

Thus, a seemingly unplanned focus was placed upon three departments. According to the Haiti staff, the tendency to focus on these groups can be explained by the intensified demand for projects coming from the first groups and the exchange of

information among those groups and others. The presence of Lambi Regional Monitors (locally-based staff agronomists) in the Artibonite and the South, as well as the location of the central office of Lambi in Port-au-Prince, also reinforces this tendency.

Unlike the tendency of many development organizations in Haiti to support geographically dispersed projects, Lambi tended to form "Project Concentration Pockets" (PCP) in its primary geographic regions. There are two PCPs in the Artibonite (Gonaives/Gros-Morne and Perrin/Petite-Riviere-de-L'Arbonite), one large PCP in the South (Camp Perrin/Maniche, Torbeck/Cayes) a PCP in the Lower Central Plateau (Belladere/Lascahobas/Savanette), one PCP in the West (Porte-au-Prince/Delmas) and one in Nippes (Miragoanes/Anse-a-Veau).

Integrated Approach (Projects Clusters)

An integrated approach was taken into consideration for certain groups that would benefit from two or more projects together. This is called a Project Cluster, or an ensemble of projects that benefit one single group. One example of two such integrated projects directed at improving food security is "The Credit for Planters Project" and "The Community Farmland Project" of APCE of Chemin-Neuf in the Ennery area.

Organization of regional training conferences for the grassroots organizations

During its second five years of existence, Lambi organized 16 regional training conferences for current grantees covering the following topics: pig husbandry, sustainable agriculture, project planning and management techniques, organizational development, food security and agricultural production, and cooperative grain storage.

Additionally, Lambi coordinated training programs specifically for women. This

effort augmented the capacities of 177 women on the following topics: problems facing women and women's organizations in Haiti; problems in community organizing and mobilization; the environment and solar energy; and organizational development.

PROJECT IMPACT

The members of the projects surveyed indicated the following impacts.

Economic change

From a socio-economic standpoint, all project categories contributed to the improvement of the standard of living of the beneficiary families. The projects enabled their beneficiaries to more easily pay for the education of their children, to procure health care and to improve their food security. These improvements in their economic situation are the result of the following changes:

- Increase in harvests and in associated revenue
- The increased prices attained with the processed products and *the rebate that members were given in food processing projects*
- The economic profits in micro-enterprises.

Reduction in emigration

The irrigation, mechanization, and grain storage projects allowed the farmers in the communities to stabilize themselves in their home areas. Instead of mortgaging their agricultural endeavors to go into the large cities searching for a better economic situation, they chose to pursue better living conditions within their home communities by improving their agricultural enterprises.

Changes in the production system Thanks to the agricultural projects mentioned above, farmers reduced the amount of time their fields remained uncultivated. The number of harvests increased because of the availability of irrigation and agricultural inputs which

led to a 50 to 75% increase in agricultural production in these communities. This also encouraged diversification of agricultural production. The food-processing projects also led to an increase in the agricultural production by affecting the size and number of fields under cultivation compared to the situation before the project

Availability of food in project areas
The results show that before Lambi's intervention, a storage project would increase the number of months food was available to 2.5 months per year but after Lambi's intervention, food availability was increased by 4.3 months per year. The population of this community has also indicated a net increase in the availability of grain and vegetable seed.

Political impact

One example of political impact is the irrigation project in Duvivier (KRD), which led to a considerable decrease in the amount of political pressure exerted on farmers in Duvivier by certain Port-au-Prince families. These families were claiming ownership of land vacated by HASCO (Haitian American Sugar Company). The reparation claims significantly diminished after the group

received training in community organizing. With the support of this project, KRD has become an advocacy group and has even solicited the intervention of the National Agrarian Reform Institute (INARA) to make agrarian reforms in Duvivier.

Reduced erosion and improved environment

The evaluators observed an increasing cover crop with the establishment of groves of trees and crop rows planted along contour lines, which had already begun to stabilize the soil.

Former pig farmers return to raising pigs
The evaluators saw former pig farmers return to pig farming after having left this occupation. The income of several farmers increased by 30 to 40%. The value of certain local products was equally improved.

Benefits from water supply projects

The construction of community cisterns helped improve water quality and water supply by:

- increasing the availability of potable water for drinking and household use; and
- freeing up time for family members whose responsibility it is to carry water to the home.



III. INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF LAMBI-FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS AND THE IMPACT OF PROJECTS ON ORGANIZATIONS AND IN THE COMMUNITIES.

The evaluation team noted that the projects had a positive influence on the functioning of the grassroots organizations and their communities:

Democratic Functioning

Only 25% of organizations studied in the evaluation held periodic elections before their collaboration with Lambi. Because of Lambi's democratic training program, this percentage has surpassed 75%, improving the process of installing new leadership in organizations. In all the organizations consulted, people stressed net improvements in member participation in the decision-making processes, both concerning day-to-day operations and also the organizations' futures.

Growth of Organizations' Membership Size

The total membership of these organizations is increasing daily. The membership increased by more than 84% in less than three years in OPG in Guerin, by 30% in APS in Selle, and by 40% in APCE in Chemin-Neuf (source: evaluation focus groups). This is a sign of the population's confidence in these organizations.

Gender Equity in the Organizations

The Lambi Fund supported the development efforts of 68 community organizations, of which 16 were women's organizations (23.52%). The rest, or 76.47%, were organizations including both men and women. The number of women members has also increased considerably over time. A prime example is AFKB, which, having only 3 women in its membership in 1996, had 30 women at the time of the evaluation – a 900% increase.

Along with the sheer number of women in beneficiary organizations, it's important to stress their integration and their participation in all aspects of the organizations. Women are the primary beneficiaries in the food processing projects. In these projects, they occupy high-level management positions and take part in the decision-making process. In the grain storage projects, women play a primary role in the selling of the grain.

Female participation in the project-specific and regional trainings was vital. Women comprised 36% of the participants in the pig husbandry training. The regional conference that Lambi organized for organizations on sustainable agriculture included more than 24 women out of approximately 99 participants.

Management Capacity

More than 50% of the organizations in the sample made enormous progress in:

- the application of management tools for the projects;
- the management of information through use of a methodical organization system;
- the use of accounting tools (accounting books, recording daily transactions, inventory books, estimates, invoices); and
- the application of eligibility criteria for the admission of new members.

Organizational Resources

The evaluators noted an evolution in the availability and efficient use of organizational resources (physical, local, human, and financial). These are strengths that can

be used to manage future efforts, thus continuing to benefit the communities and increasing the confidence of funders who might be interested in funding further projects for these organizations.

Organizations' Investment Capacity

The organizations' investment capacity was enhanced with the help of the projects financed by Lambi. These organizations are beginning to finance micro-enterprises in their areas using the resources generated by the projects.

Strengthening Family Ties in the Local Communities

Several years ago, women involved in marketing grains and other processed agricultural goods left their homes to sell their products elsewhere and were sometimes away from home for several days. This caused conflicts in families faced with this situation, especially in the Bayonnais area. With the grain processing projects, women were able to regain stability at home because they were able to find local or nearby mills. A farmer in Bayonnais commented, "Thanks to the local mill, our

wives don't have to hang around on the roads or buses; they can come home at night. Because of this, we are less worried. The children are better taken care of."

Increased Solidarity Among Communities

It is interesting to note that some localities, which had no ties of any kind before the projects, now have greatly increased their connections to each other. Training conferences bring them together fairly regularly. The periodic group meetings also build deep relationships between leaders and local groups.

Collaboration between grassroots organizations and other groups

Through the support of the Lambi Fund, the organizations developed relationships with a network of both public and private institutions. This approach enhances the negotiating capacity of the organizations and their chances of accessing financial resources and training opportunities. It also enables them to build of a network of solidarity among these organizations and institutions.



IV. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EVALUATION

1. Making the most of the Showcase Areas

At this ten-year mark in Lambi's existence, many localities with successful projects that have continued to function (Bayonnais, Duvivier, Nan Mack, etc) have been identified as Showcase Areas. We recommend using these showcase areas for marketing and fundraising for other projects, by organizing visits to these areas for potential funders.

2. Making the most of the Project Concentration Pockets

Project Concentration Pockets have been identified in the South, the Artibonite, the West and the Lower Central Plateau. We recommend that the Lambi Fund use these PCPs to:

- a) create a network of organizations that will share social and economic services
- b) promote integrated projects with a regional scope

3. Developing the available social capital (grassroots organizations)

The Lambi Fund has contributed to the institutional strengthening of 68 diverse organizations. We recommend that Lambi meet with these organizations and reflect with them on a strategic plan to develop this social capital in order to benefit local communities further.

4. Developing inter-institutional relationships

The Lambi Fund has developed relationships, some formal, some informal, with local institutions, including training centers, coalitions, public institutions, private institutions, international institutions

and socio-professional institutions. On the basis of the experiences gained and the lessons learned from these institutions, we recommend that the Lambi Fund consider opportunities for formal partnerships with some of these institutions to benefit from a variety of available activities. These include fund-raising opportunities; sharing of experiences; coordination of on-site activities; and *integration of coalitions*.

5. Systematizing internal policies and processes

For the upcoming decade, the Lambi Fund should revise its internal policies and processes to update them and to adapt them to the current context of the institution. In a detailed manner, Lambi should formalize its description of its internal organizational regulations and should prepare a financial and administrative procedures manual.

6. Systematizing initial investigation of projects

The Lambi Fund should improve and systematize the methodology used up until now to conduct project investigations. This methodology should enable Lambi to assess the status of the fundamental indicators targeted by the project objectives. In order to improve project investigations, during the last 5 years Lambi has asked for assistance from other institutions or technicians, therefore they should add the cost for investigations to the budget.

7. More formal structure for project follow-up

The Lambi Fund should formalize more its system for doing follow-up with approved projects that have begun operation.