

# RESULTS

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RESULTS - October 2005

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## TOP STORY

### **Building Capacity through Evaluative Learning**

*by Peter York, excerpted from A Funder's Guide to Evaluation, co-published by the Fieldstone Alliance and GEO, 200*

Evaluation is a crosscutting capacity-building tool that, when used appropriately and effectively by nonprofit organizations, can serve to improve organizational adaptability, leadership and management, as well as the technical capacity to do the work. Making evaluation a cornerstone of organizational learning and capacity building may require a reexamination of the way one designs, conducts and uses evaluation.

*Evaluative learning* is an ongoing, collaboratively designed, and stakeholder-led evaluation process that has the primary purpose of serving organizational learning by evaluating the whole logic model. Five principles illustrate the concept of evaluative learning. [read more >>](#)

## HEADLINES

### **Harvard Family Research Project's Evaluation Exchange Features Chapter from GEO and Fieldstone Alliance Forthcoming Funder's Guide to Capacity Assessment Tools**

*The Evaluation Exchange* addresses current issues facing program evaluators of all levels with articles written by the most prominent evaluators in the field. In its current issue, the periodical profiles the Marguerite Casey Foundation and the tool its grantees to help them assess their organizational capacity. [read more >>](#)

### **The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University presents Goal-Free Evaluation Seminar, November 10, 2005**

Brandon Youker will present findings based upon a goal-free evaluation of a community youth education program that served as a

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

### **How to Evaluate Social Entrepreneurs**

*by Mark R. Kramer, excerpted from Measuring Innovation, published by Foundation Strategy Group, 2005*

Social entrepreneurship has brought a new vision to the field of philanthropy and, with it, a different perspective on evaluation. A *social entrepreneur* is defined as one who founded and leads an organization — whether for-profit or not — that is dedicated primarily to creating large-scale, lasting and systemic change through the promulgation of new ideas, attitudes and methodologies. Instead of a focus on outcomes and project-related results, social entrepreneurship evaluation measures the growth process and social impact of a particular venture. Foundation Strategy Group has identified several points that evaluators may take into account when assessing the performance of social entrepreneurs. [read more >>](#)

## RESOURCES

supplement to a goal-based evaluation completed for the same program. Youker will discuss goal-free evaluation methodology in addition to the strengths, weaknesses and challenges related to synthesizing and combining the two evaluation approaches. [read more >>](#)

**GEO's 2006 National Conference, "Powerful Partnerships," March 8 – 10 in Atlanta, Registration Now Open to Premium Members**

GEO's 2006 national conference will feature innovators from inside and outside philanthropy to bring a variety of fresh perspectives to the question: How can we best improve our partnerships with grantees? Premium members who join or renew their dues for 2006 will receive 50 percent off one conference registration. Registration is now open for premium members. [read more >>](#)

**Assessing Leadership Learning: The Community Fellows Experience**

*by Viola Barnes-Gray, Community Fellows Program; and Meredith Emmett, Third Space Studio Inc.*

Launched in 1995, Community Fellows is an intensive three-year training program for community leaders. Participants demonstrate a commitment to family support services and a willingness to learn new leadership skills and to apply the learning in their community. In 1999, the Community Fellows program was invited to participate in the Southern Grassroots Leadership Development program sponsored by the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation. This guide documents the partnership's experience with evaluation in the Southern Grassroots Leadership Development program. This guide may help other grantmakers as they work to assess their own leadership development programs. [read more >>](#)

**EVALUATION IN ACTION**

**The Lambi Fund of Haiti**

*by INFODEV, excerpted from Executive Summary of the Evaluation of the First Ten Years of the Lambi Fund of Haiti, 2005*

The Lambi Fund, a nonprofit foundation, was created in September 1993 by a group of Americans and Haitians living in the United States. 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. The Lambi Fund of Haiti contracted INFODEV, an indigenous evaluation firm founded in 1998 in Haiti, to conduct an evaluation of the first ten years of work done by the Lambi Fund. Lambi's grantmaking and evaluation model demonstrates a largely indigenous approach to community development. [read more >>](#)

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RESULTS is published three times a year to share evaluation resources with members of Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. Because GEO's membership represents a variety of grantmakers, we try to present a broad range of relevant resources. Outside resources that are cited in RESULTS do not necessarily have GEO's official endorsement but are intended to help further discussion in the field.

Share your questions and ideas about RESULTS or other evaluation issues. Contact Editor Rahman Culver at [culver@geofunders.org](mailto:culver@geofunders.org) or 202-898-1840. RESULTS is published by Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, 1413 K Street, NW, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Washington, DC 20005. Tel: 202-898-1840; Fax: 202-898-0318; [www.geofunders.org](http://www.geofunders.org). RESULTS is free for all GEO premium members. To subscribe to RESULTS, change your member profile to say you would like to receive content and participate in conversations about evaluation. For membership information, visit [www.geofunders.org](http://www.geofunders.org).

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## Evaluation in Action

October 2005 RESULTS

### The Lambi Fund of Haiti

by the Center for Development Documentation and Continuing Education (INFODEV), excerpted from Executive Summary of the Evaluation of the First Ten Years of The Lambi Fund of Haiti, 2005

The Lambi Fund, a nonprofit foundation, was created in September 1993 by a group of Americans and Haitians living in the United States. 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' socioeconomic 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 United States and two in Haiti:

1. A board of directors (United States) — governs the entire organization.
2. A U.S.-based staff — raises funds and awareness of Haiti in the United States
3. An advisory board (Haiti) — functions as a grantmaking committee and advises the Haiti office.
4. An executive office in Haiti — directs all program functions in Haiti; primary liaison to grassroots groups in Haiti.

Lambi's overall approach to philanthropy comprises a symbiosis between popular education and a "bottom-up" relationship with Haiti's grassroots communities. This system allows community organizations to advocate for 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 U.S. board of directors approve the projects.

#### The Lambi Fund's Evaluation

The Lambi Fund of Haiti contracted INFODEV, an indigenous evaluation firm founded in 1998 in Haiti, to conduct an evaluation of the first ten years of work done by the Lambi Fund. "As a small foundation with limited resources, it would have been easy to say we could not afford an evaluation of ten years of work," Lambi Fund Executive Director Karen Ashmore said. "But our board was clear in its commitment to conduct an evaluation so we could improve our effectiveness." The evaluation's mandate included the following objectives:

1. Appraise the strategy used for the organization's work during its first ten years of existence.
2. Evaluate the relationships between Lambi Fund and its beneficiary organizations.
3. 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.
4. Appraise the results of Lambi's on-site work.
5. Appraise the impact of Lambi's work on the beneficiary organizations and their communities.
6. Evaluate the viability of Lambi's approach.
7. Evaluate the institutional performance of Lambi.

#### Methodology

To achieve these goals, INFODEV consulted and analyzed all of Lambi's records. Next, the evaluation team conducted structured interviews with all the technical and administrative departments of the organization. INFODEV also organized a formal evaluation 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 prior external evaluations of four other Lambi Fund projects. Next, INFODEV assembled results of these 15 projects and compared and crosschecked these results with an analytical table completed by the Lambi staff. The table was based on the records of the 86 other projects previously evaluated internally by Lambi and the implementing (or "partner") community organizations. Therefore, the INFODEV evaluation covers all 101 projects financed by the Lambi Fund during its 10 years of operations.

#### Measuring Grantee Effectiveness

The evaluation team identified several indicators that demonstrated the impact the Lambi Fund achieved through its grantee relationships. This positive influence is reflected in the functioning of the grassroots organizations and the changing characteristics of the communities in which they work.

**Democratic Functioning.** Only 25 percent 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 percent, improving the process of installing new leadership in organizations. In all the organizations consulted, people stressed improvements in member participation in the decision-making processes, both concerning day-to-day operations and also the organizations' futures.

**Gender Equity in the Organizations.** Women's organizations accounted for 23 percent of Lambi Fund grantees.

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— Karen Ashmore,  
Lambi Fund  
executive director

The number of women members in Lambi grantee organizations has also increased considerably over time. One organization that had only three women in its membership in 1996, had 30 women at the time of the evaluation — a ten-fold 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.

***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. With the grain processing projects supported by Lambi, women were able to regain stability at home because they were able to find local or nearby mills. One farmer 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."

#### **Recommendations for the Future**

After evaluating the operations of the Lambi Fund and its working relationships with its grantees, the evaluators identified several key recommendations to increase the impact and accountability of the organization.

***Develop the available social capital of grantees.*** The Lambi Fund has contributed to the institutional strengthening of 68 diverse organizations. The evaluation team recommends 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.

***Develop inter-institutional relationships.*** The Lambi Fund has developed relationships — some formal, some informal — with local organizations, training centers, coalitions, as well as with public, private and international institutions and socio-professional institutions. On the basis of the experiences gained and the lessons learned from these working relationships, we recommend that the Lambi Fund consider opportunities for formal partnerships with some of these institutions to benefit from a variety of potential capacity-building activities. These include fundraising opportunities, sharing of experiences and coordination of program activities.

***Systematize 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 five years Lambi has asked for assistance from other institutions or technicians, therefore they should add the cost for investigations into future project budgets.

"The evaluation was helpful in quantifying our impact, documenting lessons learned and guiding our strategic vision," Ashmore said. "Social change is often hard to measure. The improvements we saw in economic change, gender equity, democratic functioning and collaboration among the groups we fund demonstrated that our holistic approach to grantmaking, capacity building and technical assistance in partnership with the grantees (rather than compartmentalizing grants into a single program area with a top down approach) is effective in creating change."

For more information on the Lambi Fund, visit [www.lambifund.org](http://www.lambifund.org).

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If you found this article interesting, you may also want to consult the following resources in GEO's online content database:

- **Short Changed: Foundation Giving and Communities of Color**, written by Will Pittz and Rinku Sen, published by Applied Research Center, 2004
- **African-American Philanthropy**, published by the Foundation Center, 2002
- **Philanthropy Around the World**, published by TCC Group (formerly "The Conservation Company"), 2001

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