In 2008, a powerful string of hurricanes - Fay, Gustav, Hanna and Ike -- brought total devastation to Haiti, especially in its rural communities. Although the impact of hurricanes and tropical storms has been severe in the past, never before has destruction been so expansive and crippling, for these four hurricanes systematically hit every region in the country.

The economic situation of the peasantry was already difficult when the recent hurricanes hit the Caribbean.

The degradation of the environment contributed to the damage. Waters gushing from the severely deforested mountains carried mud and debris and flooded the valleys and towns of Haiti. Gonaïves, Haiti's fourth largest city, was under two meters of water for several weeks. Reports are still coming in and the assessment is that damage incurred has reached catastrophic proportions.

The flooding from the hurricanes caused hundreds of deaths, and loss of crops, homes, micro-enterprises and animals. The devastation has left the Haitian government overwhelmed. Roads are impassable and many communities remain inaccessible. The country’s agricultural harvest estimated at about $200 million was lost. Crops were flattened by mud, leaving farmers and peasants with no food to sell and no food to eat.

Families in remote areas are seeking shelter in schools and churches, their villages cut off by washed out bridges and roads. A million people remain homeless. At least 800 deaths have been reported, with more expected as the waters recede.

Today 98% of Haiti’s forests are gone, leaving no top soils to hold rain. Since it lies in the pathway of tropical storms and hurricanes originating in the Atlantic, Haiti stands vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

The heavy torrents of water, mud and debris which rage from mountains through villages and into cities, stand as a stark reminder of the consequences of Haiti’s deforestation.

The loss of life, property and the destruction of infrastructure which characterized the impact of recent hurricanes in Haiti are relatively new phenomena resulting from the country’s rapid deforestation.

While more frequent and violent hurricanes are affecting the Caribbean basin as a whole, their impact on a treeless Haiti is exponentially more devastating.
Organization Profile: 
Women-Run Community Micro-Credit Project

The organization Asosyasyon Fanm Devwe Lakos (AFDL) was founded on January 6, 2002 by a group of 12 women living in the Lakos area. They wanted to have a space of their own to discuss women’s difficult living conditions, their needs and their interests in the community.

Today, AFDL has 37 members living in “bitasyons” and 18 more recruits in training waiting to join the association. The goals of the organization are to give women, particularly in the Lakos area, the opportunity to be fully conscious of the situation of women in Haitian society. They encourage solidarity among women as a means to improve their socio-economic situation.

Each member of AFDL has an economic activity, or is working to establish one that will help her face domestic financial shortfalls. The majority are involved in small commercial activities; they sell a variety of goods, clothes, and agricultural products at the local market.

Over 30 women attended the workshop, which covered leadership, managerial, and business skills.

AFDL members realized that with today’s high cost of living, the women could no longer afford to buy large quantities of merchandise. This meant they could not meet the demands of their clients and made very little profit.

They had to borrow money anywhere they could, and travel more often to buy goods for their businesses. The organization had to borrow money at very high interest rates from credit institutions. AFDL had to gather a group of at least 5 borrowers, just to receive the usurious interest rate of 3% a month (36% a year).

This group lending model made each member in the group financially responsible for the repayment of ALL individual loans incurred by members of that lending group.

This weakened the organization and the women’s businesses as they were more concerned with each other’s ability to repay the loan than about the health of AFDL. Members were consumed with constantly selling goods in an effort to pay off the inordinately high interest.

The AFDL presented a proposal to the Lambi Fund to strengthen their organization run micro-credit

Over 30 women attended the workshop, which covered leadership, managerial, and business skills.

The loans have had a 100% success rate and the micro-credit fund has collected more than $5,000.

Community Micro-Credit Fund

The AFDL presented a proposal to the Lambi Fund to strengthen their organization run micro-credit...
program. The Lambi Fund agreed to add $2,875 to their existing $342 micro-credit fund that had been collected by members. This allowed about 35 members to borrow between $40 and $100 twice a year at 2% interest a month.

**Training Seminars**

AFDL members were invited to attend a training workshop for organizational development. Over 30 women attended the workshop, which covered leadership, managerial, and business skills.

The second training focused primarily on managing a micro-credit fund. Here, 32 women defined management, discussed the different elements of management, and mutual solidarity.

AFDL members were very satisfied with these training programs and even expressed that they were going to apply the knowledge acquired to not only the organization, but to their personal lives.

**Project Impact**

The micro-credit fund is running well and members point to a number of benefits. Members have:

- Become more dynamic and engaged in the AFDL’s activities
- Access to low-interest, affordable loans
- An increased capacity for leadership and managing projects

The loans have had a 100% success rate and the micro-credit fund has collected more than $5,000.

Capital gained from interest alone has totaled $309. This capital earned stays within the organization and goes towards providing more credit for future loans, strengthening members’ savings funds, and a mutual aid fund which is set up to assist members with financial emergencies.

Ultimately, this approach strengthens not only the organization and its members, but the community as well.

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**Member Profile: Wislene Dely**

Member from Asosyasyon Jen Sel (Youth Association of Sel)

My name is Wislene Dely. I am a member of AJS (Asosyasyon Jen Sel/Youth Association of Sel). I am 20 years old and live with my family in Sel, but I go to school in Rivye Blanch.

I decided to join this organization for many reasons. Both my mother and father are AJS members and I see how membership has benefited them. My mother is a vendor and my father is a farmer. Their active membership in AJS has given them opportunities to improve our family’s lives and learn about ways to benefit the community.

I am very thankful to AJS for having encouraged my parents to allow me to pursue my education. Many of the girls my age in my community are no longer in school. They have to help with household chores.

My mother attended many Lambi Fund leadership conferences where women discussed the importance of attributing to their daughters the value they deserve. For this, I am grateful to AJS and very grateful to the Lambi Fund for helping me achieve my educational goals.

I am on track to becoming a teacher once I have completed my studies.

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**Travel to Haiti**

Join us on the delegation to Haiti next March. See firsthand some of the grassroots organizations partnering with Lambi Fund. Email us at info@lambifund.org to get a delegation application.
The Priorities for Hurricane Recovery

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The issue of food insecurity preceded the havoc wreaked by the hurricanes. In April 2008 protests rocked Haiti, caused by the rising costs of food and the inability of Haitians to afford traditional staples such as rice, corn and beans.

A treeless terrain causes greater incidence of soil erosion, which lowers the productivity of the land, worsens droughts and eventually leads to desertification. Deforestation in this context represents one of the greatest threats to food security.

In Haiti, the health of forests has an impact on the quality of life for women and girls living in rural communities. The combination of poverty, rigid gender roles and the impact of deforestation and climate change severely limit the potential of women and girls.

As in many developing countries, rural women in Haiti are responsible for obtaining food, water and energy for cooking. Deforestation and the impacts of climate change cause women to work harder to secure these resources. Women have less time to get an education, take care of families or earn an income. When the supply of potable water is contaminated by flood waters, young girls must miss school and sacrifice their education in order to walk long distances to fetch clean water. As such, deforestation has a disproportional negative impact on women and girls in Haiti.

In conjunction with economic development projects, a continued focus on reforestation will help with disaster prevention when future hurricanes hit. Trees help reduce the loss of crops, food, livestock, human lives, and households because flood waters are mitigated. Trees help maintain quality water supply since they help absorb flood waters, making them less likely to contaminate potable water systems.

It is clear that the destruction caused by the hurricanes must be addressed. Houses must be rebuilt, communities must be stabilized, and roads and bridges replaced. Haiti, however, cannot address infrastructural issues without confronting the root cause of its problems. Haiti can thrive with sound environmental policies which place reforestation as one of the most pressing priorities.

Environmental policies must offer solutions to eradicate poverty, gender inequity, and food insecurity. The destructive forces which have flattened Haiti’s fields and uprooted its trees have given the Haitian government and civil society an unprecedented opportunity to make the restoration of the environment one of the most critical priorities in Haiti’s reconstruction. The time to act is now. You and I must support Haiti’s efforts to reduce its vulnerability to natural disasters, protect its watersheds and support its farmers in sustainable reforestation.
New Projects

Your donation will help bring these projects to life.

Hurricane Fund

The Hurricane Fund will help rebuild grassroots projects destroyed by recent hurricanes.

It will:

1) Help members of peasant groups get food and essentials for their families to re-establish their lives.

2) Recapitalize micro-credit funds run by peasant organizations so that people can replenish and continue their small businesses.

3) Buy seeds and tools for the farmers whose fields were destroyed so they will be able to replant crops. Beans are fast growing so they will be one of the first crops replanted.

4) Plant more trees. Reforestation is important because trees create natural barriers to flood waters. Continue partnership with Green Belt Movement.

5) Help peasant organizations buy goats, pigs, and chickens to replenish livestock. A few animals will quickly reproduce and provide offspring for animal husbandry projects.

6) Repair rainwater cisterns so people will have a nearby supply of safe drinking water.

Food aid is critical for immediate survival after a natural disaster. But long after the food aid trucks have gone, the Lambi Fund of Haiti will still be working side by side with Haitian peasant groups helping to rebuild sustainable communities.

Million Tree Campaign

Lambi Fund is helping build a grassroots reforestation movement that will:

1) Raise awareness about root causes of deforestation

2) Educate communities about ways to address the problem

3) Mobilize and support local communities to collectively plan and implement reforestation solutions.

Rice Mill

The 76 members of the God is All Powerful Organization of Gilgo (ODTPG) want to increase their sustainability with a community-run rice mill. Lambi Fund will purchase the materials needed to build the mill and provide training on mill operation and business management. Members will provide the labor to build the mill.

They will run the mill themselves. Processed rice brings more value at the local market. The revenues earned from grain mill fees will improve the local economy.

Motorized Tillers

The 125 active members of the Small Farmers Association of Dunes (GPTD) are rice planters.

They can increase the amount of rice produced with the use of motorized tillers, resulting in increased sustainability. Lambi Fund will purchase two motorized tillers and provide training on tiller operation and maintenance, project management and organizational development. Their livelihoods will improve with increased rice production.
In the News

Welcome Work Study Students

Two work study students from the Graduate School of International Studies at University of Denver are working with Lambi Fund as Outreach Coordinators.

Sarah Leavitt, has a B.A. in Communications and Foreign Affairs and has worked with Haitian refugees in the Dominican Republic.

Andy Clarke has a B.A. in Journalism from Penn State, is a former Peace Corps volunteer, and has experience with International Rescue Committee.

They will be working on outreach to Lambi Fund stakeholders through social networking sites, face to face presentations, website applications and printed and email communications.

Welcome Sarah and Andy! *

Why the Lambi Fund of Haiti Works

The Lambi Fund of Haiti works because of its unique bottom-up collaborative approach that is different from the top-down approach of many charities. The Lambi Fund’s original, grassroots development model succeeds because it relies on Haitians themselves to determine the needs and the most effective solutions in each community. The Lambi Fund’s emphasis on democracy, a community’s actual needs, and peasant-led solutions ensures more successful outcomes.

As a result, we hear positive feedback from peasants. Here is a quote from a member of an organization that developed a community solution to economic sustainability: “This project has taught us how to protect our fields and the surrounding mountains so that we have more crops, cleaner water and less erosion in the future.” —Member of organization with sustainable agriculture project.

Our Programs
- Alternative sustainable development
- Environment
- Organizational and leadership training
- Community micro-credit
- Animal Husbandry

Our Principles
Lambi Fund supports peasant led community organizations in Haiti that promote:
- Non-violence
- Gender equity
- Self-sustainability
- Non-partisanship
- Grassroots democracy

Our Future
- Improved economic conditions
- Increased food availability
- Increase in potable water
- Improved environment
- Increased gender equity
- Improved democratic functioning

*These girls have to travel long distances to get water for their families. If their community had a nearby rainwater cistern, they would not have to walk as far to fetch water and could go to school. By donating to Lambi Fund, you make a difference in the lives of girls like these.*

Haiti Director Josette Perard works with women at leadership training.
Why I Give

By Yvonne Estimé, Esq.

I give to The Lambi Fund of Haiti because I strongly believe in and support the Lambi Fund’s premise that:

“...understand how development is best achieved in their country... and the Lambi Fund follows the lead of grassroots organizations in program and priorities.

The Lambi Fund never dictates to a community organization what should be done.”

The Lambi Fund of Haiti’s commitment to support Haitians determined to solve their own problems is, in my opinion, the most appropriate means of helping the Haitian people to find and implement solutions that will best improve their lives.

As a Haitian-American, I am deeply committed to helping Haiti and the Haitian people. I share the Lambi Fund’s philosophy that we should never dictate to the Haitian people what is best for them, but we should work with them in finding the best solutions.

This philosophy enables the empowerment of the people of Haiti rather than another hand-out.

Furthermore, I find The Lambi Fund of Haiti to be both a pro-active and responsive organization.

Proactively, the Lambi Fund develops cutting edge and practical programs while also being at the forefront in providing assistance during and after disasters such as the recent four hurricanes that devastated Haiti.

After the hurricanes, I decided to host a fundraising event at my home to benefit the Haitians impacted by the hurricanes.

I contacted several organizations including the Lambi Fund to offer my assistance and help with fundraising.

The Lambi Fund, specifically, Leonie Hermantin, was the first to respond to my inquiries and she provided me with all the information and support I needed to host the fundraising event. Leonie was unable to attend the event herself but she made sure that a Board Member in the Washington, DC area was present at the fundraiser on behalf of the Lambi Fund.

I give to The Lambi Fund because I have found their commitment and responsiveness unmatched by others and because of their philosophy to help Haiti help itself.

I want to make a difference for a rural Haitian community!

☐ Check enclosed for $ ___________________
  (make check payable to the Lambi Fund of Haiti)

☐ I want to help grassroots organizations in Haiti on a regular basis.
  I pledge to contribute $ ______ on a monthly/quarterly basis (circle one)

☐ Please charge my (circle one):
  Mastercard  Visa  AmEx

Card number  Exp. Date

Signature  Today’s Date

Phone:

For more information about the Lambi Fund or to make an online donation, go to www.lambifund.org

Return to: Lambi Fund of Haiti, PO Box 18955, Washington DC 20036  Or email us at info@lambifund.org
MISSION STATEMENT

The Lambi Fund’s mission is to assist the popular, democratic movement in Haiti. The Lambi Fund provides financial resources, training and technical assistance to peasant-led community organizations that promote the social and economic empowerment of the Haitian people.