Deforestation and Rainfall, A Costly Combination:
Flooding Sweeps through the South

In October of 2011, the Lambi Fund of Haiti’s board and staff members planned to spend three days in Southern Haiti to visit grain mills, sheep farming and ox-plowing projects. The plan was to stay in Les Cayes and travel daily to different project sites located in neighboring rural communities.

Unrelenting rains offered visitors a unique opportunity to understand how accelerated deforestation affects the realities of partner communities and Lambi Fund staff. The first site visit to The Organization of Good Samaritans (OBS) was a suspense-filled journey as board and staff traveled on flooded roads, apprehensively watching the water levels rise as they moved further inland. The visit to this thriving grain mill (first funded by Lambi Fund eight years ago) had to be curtailed because of the risk posed by rapidly rising waters.

Staying in Les Cayes, a town of about 100,000 citizens, did not prove more comforting. Following three days of steady rainfall, cresting rivers and swollen ravines flooded the city and its surrounding rural communities. Waist high flood waters in both rural and urban areas drove home the point that deforestation impacts Haitians on a regular basis.

For Lambi Fund staff, especially the regional coordinators, visits to project sites have become increasingly risky propositions, particularly during the rainy season. Roads become impassable at a moment’s notice, and journeys quickly turn life-threatening for staff traveling by car or motor bike.

So how does deforestation impact flooding? While statistics vary, most agree that tree

Back on Track and Moving Forward:
Lambi Fund Launches Eight New Projects

Stalls, roadblocks, and hurdles - these are all common adjectives when it comes to describing rebuilding progress in Haiti. Thousands are still living in squalid conditions in tent cities throughout the country, cholera continues to infect just as many, and little in the face of “Build Back Better” remains to be seen.

Amid this environment of stalled progress, it is very easy to look at this mass of inefficiency and think that nothing has been done and no progress is being made. For the Lambi Fund of Haiti, 2011 has been a year committed to moving forward. Every project that stalled due to earthquake relief efforts has resumed, and an additional eight projects were launched this summer.

These new projects are larger in scope and exemplify Lambi Fund’s efforts to implement projects that are comprehensive and make deeper impacts:

One is the start of a Community Credit Fund with The Organization of Farmers from Dikòs (OPD). Since this will be a community managed fund, as farmers successfully repay their affordable loans, the fund grows and even more loans will be available for farmers in the community.

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Training Workshops Provide Valuable Skills

Haiti's Future is in Education
Lambi Fund Executive Director, Marie Marthe Saint Cyr, discusses how education will help shape Haiti

In today’s world, there is more than enough technology and resources available to harness the strengths of rural Haitian farmers so that they may be productive agricultural producers. With the right investments, Haitian farmers could easily ensure that their first market, the local people’s food needs, is met. This will be achieved by strengthening education and training programs throughout rural Haiti.

The infectious enthusiasm generated at recent Lambi Fund regional conferences should serve as an indicator that the demand for education is strong.

When Lambi Fund’s Board President, Max Blanchet, asked members of Tet-Kole Bedo on a recent site visit what their immediate needs are, they resoundingly responded that they want more training, leadership and educational workshops.

Members did not say they need more sheep or a new grain mill motor, but that they want an expansion of knowledge to assure that there is an improved standard of living in the years to come. Not only do children need to go to school, but after completing the primary years, they need vocational school and technical, specialized training. Beyond that, Haiti’s youth need work and sensible job opportunities that will keep the rural areas desirable and reduce the drain of local communities to urban centers.

Haiti’s great threat to food security is not only severe environmental degradation, but the dying world of opportunities for farmers to be productive and to generate incomes which assure the community’s survival.

Education that is crafted to meet the needs of local residents has the ability to transform Haiti. Honing and adapting farmers’ skills will strengthen crop outputs. While teaching basic accounting to small merchants will increase business savvy.

Progress cannot be achieved in isolation though - locals must urge the mandate of a national plan to develop infrastructure - like roads, watershed management, and rural communication, that can sustain a growing agriculture industry.

Because we do not believe that successful projects alone can facilitate the shift for rural Haiti, Lambi Fund desires to match rhetoric with alternative options to ferment new realities. Haitians need to break from the culture of crisis-oriented responses to one that integrates preventative and long-term solutions. This means breaking from food aid and moving towards food production.

As proper provisions in education and vocation are made responsible citizens who prioritize the restoration and respect of their rights will arise. The returns will be innumerable as citizens begin demanding and working towards the rights they deserve to ensure a better Haiti.

Training Workshops Strengthen Communities

In September, a handful of specialized workshops and regional conferences convened throughout Haiti. Each of these training sessions which ranged from two to five days long, required a great deal of organization and coordination.

Training on livestock breeding and management took place in the South and a Gender Equity Conference convened in the Artibonite Valley.

In the past 17 years, one of the most critical components of the Lambi Fund’s strategy has been to offer training workshops to members of partner organizations.

Creation of Project Management Committees

When an organization is funded to implement a project, the first step subsequent to its launch, is to create project management committees.

Facilitation of Workshops

Participation in specialized workshops comes next. Multi-day workshops are offered in the community where the project is taking place. They are conducted by facilitators, who are experts in the field and vetted by the Lambi Fund of Haiti.

The facilitator must not only be knowledgeable about the specific subject (how to run an ox-plow service or manage a grain mill), but must also understand the rural context in which the workshop is conducted. About 57% of the population faces challenges with literacy, so workshops cannot rely exclusively on written materials. Other realities must be considered as well:

- Oftentimes, the trainers are also recruited from partner organizations who have received previous Lambi Fund training. These groups have proven experience and skills.
- Members of Tet Kole-NW recently provided training on grain mill

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New Beginnings Bring Opportunity

Continued from Page 1

The second is a Sheep Breeding project in the South with Bedo Peasants Together (TKB). Members are partnering with Lambi Fund to purchase 44 sheep and attending trainings to learn about sheep breeding, veterinary care and the importance of caring for the environment while raising animals.

Third, a Sugar Cane Mill is being built in the Gwomòn area with members of The Partnership for Change in Ravin Olyann (ACH-VRO). Sugar cane production is an important crop because it is hearty and drought resistant, yet locals currently have no way to transform it into higher valued syrup. Thus, the construction of this mill, along with training in small business enterprises will provide members with new opportunities.

The fourth new project is an effort to build a Grain Storage Unit in the Artibonite Valley with members of The Association of Peasant Groups in Roji (AGPR). This unit will store goods like peas, corn, and peanuts - which will provide the community with food and seed access during the off-season.

Lambi Fund’s fifth project is in partnership with the Coffee Cooperative of Peasants from Gwomòn (KOKAPEG). They want to make Coffee Production in the Gwomòn area more economically viable by increasing coffee production and modernizing their processing plant.

Updated equipment and 20,000 lbs. of coffee will be purchased and 130,000 new coffee trees will be planted in the area. The coffee bought from local growers will be processed, stored and then sent to sell in international markets.

Starting a Community Credit Fund with The Small Church Committee - Oscar Romero (TKL-Oscar Romero) is the sixth most recent project. This credit fund will provide members with access to affordable loans, allowing them to cultivate more land, purchase more seeds and produce more food for the region.

The seventh project is an effort to launch an Ox-Plow Service and Community Credit Fund with The Major Movement Fraternity (MFM) in Southern Okay. MFM members want to increase crop yields and efficiency by starting an ox-plow service and an agricultural credit fund, which will ensure members access to funds needed during the planting season.

A Goat Breeding initiative with The Peasant Organization of Bige (OPB) in Gwomòn is the eighth new project. By purchasing ‘improved’ breeders (strong goats with desirable traits), opening a veterinary pharmacy, building pens for the goats and receiving training in modernized goat breeding practices, members will improve their goat breeding capacities.

Getting each of these new projects up and running has been quite an undertaking, yet the foreseeable outcomes are most certainly worth the effort.

The best part of Lambi Fund’s work is partnering with grassroots organizations throughout Haiti to implement the changes they desire. Stay tuned as these projects move from their beginning phases to maturity, with the ultimate goal being sustainability. More updates are sure to come.

Member Profile

Ficien Maritane
Coordination Committee, KFTK-NW

Ficien Maritane is a member of Tet Kole – Northwest (KFTK-NW), who alongside her husband serves on the Coordination Committee. To Ficien’s delight, Lambi Fund partnered with KFTK-NW to open a grain mill in her community.

“This mill brings many advantages to my family and my community,” Ficien stated. Because of the nearby location of the mill, Ficien finds it more convenient to transport her grain to and from her home, making life much easier for her and her daughter. Ficien also says the mill has allowed her profits to increase. She explains, “This mill has helped me to support my family financially because I do not need to rent animals to help me transport the grain to and from a faraway mill.”

Ficien remains certain that the opening of the mill will also increase the good reputation of KFTK-NW and its activities, as more people discover the usefulness of community organizations.

“My family is very supportive of my role in KFTK-NW. They have encouraged me to remain an active member in the organization because they can see the benefits that this partnership has brought us.” Married with eight children, Ficien is also delighted that the nearby grain mill has freed up time in her schedule. She affirms, “Now, I have more time for responsibilities around my home. I now have more time to dedicate to my work with KFTK-NW, and I have more time to enjoy my family.”

Ficien has also noticed other benefits of having a grain mill in her community. She has observed an increase in the number of people, both men and women, who have joined the community organization.

“This grain mill has helped to unite us by demonstrating the value of our community joining and working together.”

Transporting goats to the project Site

Ficien Maritane
Raising Sheep in Haiti Sustainably

Project Update:
Tet-Kole Bedo Peasants Together

The grassroots organization Tet Kole – Bedo Peasants Together (TKB) is a diverse and lively group that works to facilitate change in their community. TKB was founded in 2006 and is an organization with bold objectives: bring together the disadvantaged, help improve conditions of life, help members overcome familiar conflicts, shine light on peasant injustice and find the means necessary to improve the lives of people in need.

Members of TKB live 5km from the city center of Cavailon. Their community faces a plethora of problems: lack of potable water, poor roads (especially when it rains), little-to-no electricity, insufficient public latrines (every 5 homes has 3 latrines), no health clinic nearby, and no educational centers; all children must journey to Cavayo for school.

In the face of these tough realities, Tet-Kole Bedo is working with Lambi Fund to launch a sheep breeding enterprise. To prepare for the launch of the project, TKB contributed land and labor to build three pens, three pastures and one community garden. Work groups cleaned and enclosed lands for grazing and tilled and planted land for the sheep to forage. Members participated in training sessions that discussed sheep breeding, veterinary care and the importance of caring for the environment while raising animals. After purchasing 44 sheep and setting up a veterinary pharmacy, sheep breeding commenced. So far, 20 offspring (lambs) have been born!

Jasmine Yogane, said of the project, “We don’t like how people are raising animals in the area. With our sheep, we create a space for them to sleep, plant their food, keep them in a special area during the day, and pen them up at night. Around here, people allow their animals to graze openly, and this is destroying the environment.”

Today, TKB has 45 members (21 men, 24 women) and three sub-committees that each meet once a month. These sub-committees allow the members to have more autonomy and say in day-to-day decision making. One such committee is comprised solely of youth members (5 men, 9 women) who told Lambi Fund:

“As young people, we wanted our own group. The older folks don’t necessarily think the same as us. Because we know this, there are points of conflict likely to arise due to different points of view. We don’t want to stall the work of the large group…but still want to do work differently as youth. We have our animals, and sometimes we take care of them differently. We hope they see our energy and adopt some of our strategies.”

As TKB works to strengthen their sheep breeding efforts, Clermont Enold explained, “We expect, within the next two years, that each member will have at least one sheep. This project will help us increase the funds available to organize. It will help us address issues in our community…we’ll have the funds needed to improve our community and lives.”

“[This project] will help us address issues in our community...we’ll have the funds needed to improve our community and lives.”

LEFT: Sheep grazing in a fenced in pasture

ABOVE: Clermont Enold discusses his committee’s plans at a meeting

Youth member, Jasmine Yogane, shares how her group is breeding sheep and caring for the environment at the same time
Planting Trees to Mitigate Flooding

Continued from Page 1... cutting has reduced Haiti’s tree coverage from 1-4%. The resulting erosion of Haiti’s mountains has destroyed an estimated two-thirds of the country’s fertile farmland. This loss of trees has meant that arable soil, anchored to the land by their roots, is quickly washed away during the rainy season.

Consequently, without any soil and roots to hold water, a normal amount of water are not absorbed. As such, rainy seasons have turned Haiti into a landscape of overflowing rivers – carrying with them valuable top soil and causing immeasurable damage.

While the world holds its breath when forecasted hurricanes approach Haiti, not much attention is paid to the impact of the rainy season on farming communities.

For Lambi Fund’s partners, deforestation has transformed the rainy season from a much awaited source of irrigation to a season fraught with danger, one engendering unanticipated losses and devastation.

This was witnessed in the recent visit to the South, where some organizations lost 50% of their crops and about 80% of pastures for sheep were destroyed. This means that farmers, who accessed credit from the community-run mutual credit funds, will experience great hardships. Their repayment plans often hinge on the anticipated sale of crops. Meanwhile, sheep growers’ profitability is jeopardized since they will be forced to reinvest in the purchase and preparation of animal feed.

As this vulnerability becomes more apparent, appreciation for Lambi Fund’s reforestation efforts has grown. Partners have responded by participating enthusiastically in training workshops offered on reforestation and seedling cultivation. Members of organizations work collectively to build nurseries, care for seedlings, and replant young trees on their lands and in vulnerable watershed areas.

For the past ten years, Lambi Fund has been steadfast in its comprehensive, grassroots-driven reforestation efforts.

In addition to including a reforestation component in all funded projects, Lambi Fund has incorporated environmentally safe practices in other programmatic activities, most notably animal husbandry. Free grazing has been identified as a significant cause of deforestation and environmental degradation, particularly when goats and sheep are allowed to feed on young trees. Continued on Page 6

FAMAB Members Drop-by for a Visit

It was an early morning in August and Lambi Fund staff members were just settling into their work for the day when 54 members of FAMAB (The Organization for Brave Women) dropped by for a special visit. Now, keep in mind the Lambi Fund office in the heart of downtown Port-au-Prince is a small space – it was quite a squeeze trying to fit everyone in!

Members of the women’s organization, who are dedicated to making microcredit funds available to poor women so that they can launch their own small businesses, arrived at the office around 10 a.m. They greeted staff members with open arms and informed everyone that the purpose of the visit was to say thank you. Members expressed their gratitude for the fact that almost a year ago, in the aftermath of the earthquake, the Lambi Fund of Haiti helped its 100 members with an emergency grant. This support enabled the women to recapitalize their small businesses and pay the fees needed to send their children to school. One FAMAB member said, “The emergency assistance was a tremendous lifesaver - not just for me, but for each woman here.”

They then provided an update on how members of the group are doing today. Of the group’s 100 members, just 20 remain living in the tent cities. FAMAB members continue to struggle financially though, as they deal with the increased costs of goods and the day-to-day demands of raising children. The women expressed that their concerns were mounting as schools were set to reopen and class fees would need to be paid and school supplies purchased. They then discussed how the ever-increasing cost of supplies has considerably decreased profits.

Nine members of the organization were very young – in their late teens. These young Haitian women discussed how they are in school studying subjects like information technologies, cosmetology, and secondary studies. In order to pay for these classes though, the women said that they started getting involved in vending activities. They see the organization as an opportunity to improve their futures and increase opportunities for incomes.

Given these tough realities, Lambi Fund is working to provide the women of FAMAB with a follow-up emergency relief grant. This grant will help provide critical funding for women to purchase supplies and products to supplement their vending activities. In keeping with Lambi Fund’s model, members will receive the training needed to grow their businesses.
### In The News

**Lambi Fund Discusses Climate Change**

On July 13, 2011, the Lambi Fund of Haiti’s Executive Director, Marie Marthe Saint Cyr, spoke at the International Human Rights Funders Group Conference in New York.

She spoke on the panel *Climate and Seedlings.* As a result, all Lambi Fund supported animal husbandry projects build enclosures where animals are kept. The offered workshops show farmers how to grow and preserve the forage needed to keep their animals well-fed and healthy even during the dry season.

Over the course of 10 years, Lambi Fund partners have prepared over 1.5 million seedlings and have planted 1.2 million tree saplings. It is estimated that 60% of these trees survive, meaning that about 720,000 trees have matured in communities throughout Haiti.

Lambi Fund also has plans to hire an agronomist with expertise in agro-forestry who will oversee all reforestation projects. In addition, staff members are exploring the use of grassroots-friendly GPS technology to better document the impact of Lambi Fund’s reforestation projects. Mapping reforestation progress will better allow Lambi Fund to see the strengths and weakness regarding tree planting efforts – allowing staff to enforce and adapt strategies as needed.

In spite of the daunting challenges presented to farmers by deforestation, they are not losing hope. Clermont Yogane Enold, a twenty-something farmer of the Association of Youth from Tet-Kole Bedo, summarized it most eloquently. When asked what they would do to address the losses sustained in the floods he replied: “We cannot give into despair, we will work the land, plant trees and grow our crops once again...”

### Justice and Rights: Funding Resiliency in the Face of Disasters

and discussed how climate change is affecting peasant communities in Haiti - increasing numbers of natural disasters means crops and animals are lost at a greater frequency.

Thus, efforts to mitigate these effects on the environment are of the utmost importance. ✭

### Make the Long-Term Commitment to Haiti

Consider making a monthly donation to the Lambi Fund of Haiti. By doing so, you are making a lasting investment in its people.

Rebuilding Haiti is going to take several years and Lambi Fund will be there working alongside our partners, through the good and the bad.

By providing Lambi Fund with a reliable source of income, you allow the organization to support larger, longer-term projects that have the ability to revolutionize entire communities. **On the donation slip on the next page, be sure to check the box that says, "I would like to make this donation on a monthly basis" or donate online at www.lambifund.org and set the ‘frequency’ of your donation to monthly. ✭**

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**Continued from Page 2** operations to members of MOPDAD in the Artibonite. APS, an organization located in Gwomon also provided training to farmers in AGPGM on the PIF technique – a method for rapidly reproducing plantain trees.

Following this model, completion of these workshops proves that members are not only retaining valuable skills, but teaching fellow Haitians how to manage and operate successful business enterprises in their communities.

**All Organizations Receive Three Types of Training**

1. **Project management workshops** help organizations strengthen project management skills and offer specific skill-sets for the specified project - like managing a community credit fund.

2. **Reforestation workshops** educate the community about the impacts of deforestation and how to manage local tree nurseries.

3. **Organizational capacity building workshops** focus less on project implementation and more on strengthening the organization’s ability to manage the project, grow its membership and increase its members’ sense of civic engagement.

**Workshop Impacts**

In spite of ongoing challenges in Haiti, Lambi Fund has offered over 30 workshops to 10 organizations while convening two regional workshops in the last year and a half. A total of 520 participants have benefited.

While the tendency is to look at project outcomes, a project’s educational components should not be ignored. Workshops provide organizations with the tools needed to sustain a project and grow an organization.

Time and again, education proves a worthy investment. Organizational capacity building is creating a network of strong civically engaged institutions in an environment where government presence is weak. As Haiti is poised to begin rebuilding, it is indeed critical that historically muted voices be provided with the tools needed to be heard. ✭
I want to make a difference for a rural Haitian community!

Why I Give

Giving Where it Counts

By Esther Powers

I am a retired, senior citizen and do not have much money to spare, so I give to the Lambi Fund of Haiti. When I first heard about Lambi Fund, I was instantly drawn to the way they operate. Their work is principled in the old parable, "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will have fish for a lifetime."

With limited means to give, I want to make sure my gift makes the most impact as possible - and Lambi Fund makes this happen.

I love knowing that a family will get a goat for milk and at some time may have a whole herd of goats, all because of my gift. Hard-working families in Haiti get so much more than just a hand out for a day. Families and communities are provided with the resources and training they need to change their everyday realities. To me, that is the greatest feeling there is.

Helping a family become self-sufficient and make an honest living is exactly what I want to do with my donation. ☑️

Return to: Lambi Fund of Haiti, PO Box 18955, Washington DC 20036   Or email us at info@lambifund.org
Lambi Fund’s mission is to assist the popular, democratic movement in Haiti. 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.