This year Lambi Fund celebrates its 15th anniversary of working with grassroots organizations in rural Haiti. As with any major milestone, this event offers a unique opportunity for reflection. Haiti country director Josette Perard sat down and talked about Lambi Fund’s humble beginnings and struggles.

Lambi Fund began in 1994 amidst political turmoil and a coup d’état. At the time, Josette Perard and Ferry Pierre-Charles, Lambi Fund’s current field director in Haiti, were the only staff members. They had no office and were working underground given the tenuous political situation.

“It was really quite hard trying to meet with organizations because we would put them in danger if they met us in Port-au-Prince,” Perard said. “We were under a lot of pressure because the military junta was arresting many peasant leaders and members of community groups. "Ferry and I were like mad men and women looking for a place to meet in town.”

As it turned out, Perard and Pierre-Charles would meet with members of organizations anywhere they could—in churches, conference rooms, and cafés. More often than not, Perard and Pierre-Charles preferred to go out and meet with organizations in their villages so as not to endanger their lives.

In spite of danger and fear of arrest, some peasant organizations remained active. Lambi Fund’s first collaboration was with an organization in the department of Nippes in Southern Haiti. Because their needs were so dire, these projects “were about survival, not sustainability.”

Lambi Fund financed four projects in Nippes: a community bakery, a local food store, a women’s credit fund, and a tool bank.

Women at the community bakery would bake bread and sell it in neighboring communities, while the local food store was opened to supply products that met basic needs, which at the time was completely lacking in the

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MOPDAD, a community-based organization from the town of Delann in the Artibonite region of Haiti, was formed in 2000 to improve agriculture in the area. The goals of the organization were straightforward – they wanted to increase crop production and localize grain milling.

With the help of the Lambi Fund, MOPDAD (in English, Peasant Movement for the Agricultural Development of Delann) was able to purchase two mobile irrigation pumps.

These pumps have allowed members of the organization to quadruple their crop production and cultivate crops in three seasons. As a result of their success with staple crops – particularly corn – they have now been able to introduce a range of new vegetables and diversify production. This is not only good for the local diet, it also provides greater security to MOPDAD in the event of a poor corn harvest.

Recently, the Lambi Fund suggested that MOPDAD purchase a third irrigation pump to further increase production. MOPDAD explained that they didn’t need it at the time because the rainy season was coming.

They suggested instead that they use the funds for a farmer’s credit fund so that community farmers could borrow funds and invest in their farms. The profits from this fund will buy another irrigation pump after the rainy season is over.

“This story demonstrates the success of the methodology of collective decision making,” said Lambi Fund’s Project Director Ferry Pierre-Charles.

“If you were less responsive to the needs of the community, then you would say, ‘we have money for a pump, so a pump we will buy.’”

“We sat with them to discuss the strategy, listened to their suggestions, and had the best possible outcome.”

Ferry Pierre-Charles
Project Director
Lambi Fund of Haiti

This situation diminishes the benefits of MOPDAD’s crop production, by making the critical step of milling slow and inefficient. This prompted members of the organization to submit a proposal to the Lambi Fund for the construction of a grain mill for the area.

The experience of the organization in collective project management, particularly with the irrigation pumps and a credit fund, has helped build their capacity to manage projects. Because they have demonstrated reliable project execution, the Lambi Fund has agreed to fund the construction of a corn and millet mill for MOPDAD, which will greatly improve the efficiency of its operations.
A Personal Story from One of Our Partners
Merencia Iljalin
AGKPV Goat Breeding Project

My name is Merencia Iljalin. I am 59 years old. I have a common law husband and together we have six children. Although four of the six children go to school, we cannot afford to send the two youngest ones yet. Things have gotten much harder since my husband fell ill. I am both mother and father, and I bear all the financial responsibilities for my household.

We earn our living from working the land. I grow corn, millet, peanuts and peas. I am also a merchant, as I sell the products that I grow at local markets. I also raise goats through Lambi Fund’s partnership with AGKPV, a local peasant-led organization.

Although I did not have the opportunity to go to school, I feel so grateful to AGKPV’s literacy project which has given me the opportunity to learn how to read and write my own name. I have been a member since 1982 and I have never regretted it. AGKPV’s members helped us save our land. A few years ago someone wanted to steal our land and AGKPV stood firmly with us against this injustice.

Today I know that the AGKPV goat project will also help us improve our lives. I am hoping that once we start selling our goats, I will be able to use the income to send my two youngest children to school. As a woman who grew up without schooling, I desperately want my children to have an education. I know that my goats will make my dreams come true! ☀️

Make a Commitment to Haiti

There are two excellent ways to make a long-term commitment to the future of Haiti, and the work of the Lambi Fund.

Monthly Donations
Monthly donors are critical to our work because they provide the predictable, reliable funds that help us in our planning and preparation. By donating monthly through your credit card, the process is automatic, so you never have to wonder if you’ve given or not. It also saves us paperwork and administrative costs, and allows us to put more of your donation to work.

Donating monthly is easy. Just check the “Monthly” option on the reply form on Page 7 of this newsletter, and return the form with your first month’s donation.

Legacy Circle
For our most committed supporters, there is also the opportunity to leave a lasting legacy for Haiti by including the Lambi Fund in your estate plans.

If you would like information about how to make the Lambi Fund a beneficiary of your will or living trust, or if you have already done so and would like to inform the Lambi Fund, please contact us at info@lambifund.org, or visit our website at http://www.lambifund.org/support_bequests.shtml, or check the item on the donation form on page 7. ☀️
15 Years of Changing Lives in Haiti, One Village at a Time

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Community.

The credit fund was created for women to sell goods at the market. These small loans allowed women to buy and sell products, using the income to send their children to school, and manage their households. Given the political unrest at the time, many men were in hiding and women became heads of households, managing all the needs of their families.

Lastly, a ‘rent-to-own’ tool bank was developed, using four tool banks where villagers could come and rent farm tools at a nominal fee, with the fees going toward the eventual purchase of the tools.

These tools enabled peasants to efficiently cultivate their crops. This was crucial, as many peasants at the time were leaving the community because they didn’t have the proper means to cultivate their land.

Once the coup d’état was over and Aristide returned to office, Lambi Fund was then able to safely establish an office in Port-au-Prince. Peasants’ knowledge about Lambi Fund quickly spread by word of mouth. As a result, peasant organizations were traveling from all over Haiti to partner with Lambi Fund. Around this same time, Perard, Pierre-Charles and the advisory board met to discuss the future and goals of the Lambi Fund of Haiti.

They began to realize that the hardships that communities endured were not caused just by the coup d’état, but by fundamental, ingrained political and economic forces.

After recognizing the problem’s systemic nature Lambi Fund members realized they needed to help craft systemic solutions. A sustainable development model was subsequently implemented, and remains to this day.

As Perard explains, “our method, our philosophy, and our approach to working with communities has remained the same because experience tells us that our bottom-up, sustainability-focused approach provides the best solution to overcoming systemic roadblocks to development.”

While Lambi Fund staff first concluded that these early projects were not inherently sustainable because they merely addressed immediate local needs, an independent evaluation of Lambi Fund’s work conducted in 2004 proved otherwise.

Three out of the four projects are still functioning today.

The bakery is still open and producing, yet locals are using different approaches. Members no longer make the bread. They rent the space and equipment out to other women in the community to bake bread for themselves.

The community store is still open, yet it has shifted from providing goods merely for subsistence to becoming more of a corner store (selling soaps, toothpaste, and common household goods).

The women’s micro-credit fund has grown, and its funds continue to circulate throughout the community.

Given the very nature of the rent-to-own format of the tool bank, the project by design no longer exists. It would be a poor state of affairs if farmers were still ‘renting-to-own’ after 15 years!

It is from these humble beginnings that the Lambi Fund of Haiti has gone on to partner with local grassroots organizations to fund over 175 projects that have impacted over one million lives in rural Haiti.

“When I started listening to people’s stories of crushing exploitation, I knew I had to do something. And when I started relating to them, I saw that these were courageous people who wanted to change their lives. They just didn’t yet have the tools and the support to change their lives,” Perard said.

This exciting model of placing the tools of change in the hands of locals has been a core element of Lambi Fund’s work.
New Projects

Fishing Community

The 400 members of the Organization for the Development of Peasants from Gwo Sab (ODPGS) living along Haiti's Northwestern coast depend on fishing for sustenance and commerce. A new motor boat for the organization will allow the fishermen to go deeper into the sea and catch more fish, rather than struggling with boat repairs. After the men return with the day’s catch, the women sell the fish at the local market. It is a commercial activity where all members of the family are involved, and a better boat and equipment will increase livelihoods. They also want to plant 20,000 tree seedlings to reforest the area.

The Lambi Fund will provide funds for the purchase of the motor boat, nets, rope, fishing equipment and a tree nursery. The Lambi Fund will also offer training on project management, motor boat management, marketing, reforestation and organizational development.

Goat Breeding

The Asosyasyon pou Pwoteksyon Anivyonman Gwomòn (APEG) has 160 members that want to improve living conditions and income for their members through a goat breeding project.

The Lambi Fund will provide funds to purchase 132 goats, materials to build goat enclosures, and veterinary medicine. APEG will also plant 20,000 tree seedlings. Lambi Fund will provide funds for seeds, and materials and equipment for the tree nursery.

Members of APEG will build the pens and tree nurseries. The Lambi Fund will provide training in goat breeding, organizational and leadership capacity, and seedling production.

Grain Mill

The 305 members of the St. Martin Youth Association for Community Development farm corn, millet and rice. They want to build a grain mill in St. Martin, a large community without a local mill, to provide farmers with access to local milling services to increase food security and income.

The organization will also plant 20,000 tree seedlings to reforest the area.

The Lambi Fund will purchase the motorized mill, fund the construction of the mill building and tree nursery, and provide training on organization management, operation and maintenance of the mill, and nursery building and reforestation.

The organization will provide the land for the mill and the labor to build the mill and the tree nursery.

Sustainable Development

The 75 members of the Peasant's Association for the Development of Barye Batan (AGPDB) want to take an integrated approach to assist local farmers. They want to establish a micro-credit fund for farmers to plant beans, corn, and millet, and they want to build a grain storage and seed bank facility.

AGPDB will also plant 20,000 tree seedlings to reforest the area. AGPDB will provide the labor to build the storage facility and the tree nursery. Lambi Fund will provide financing for the micro-credit fund, and purchase seeds for the seed bank and the tree nursery.

Lambi Fund will provide funds for materials to build the tree nursery, the grain storage building, and the seed bank facility. Lambi Fund will also provide training in micro-credit management, grain/seed storage, organizational development, and reforestation.
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

Haitian Author Wins MacArthur Award For Work

Last month Haitian born award winning author Edwidge Danticat received the prestigious John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur “Genius Award” fellowship, which comes with a $500,000 prize.

Danticat made her debut as a novelist in 1994 with Breath, Eyes, Memory. In all, she has written eight books. Her most recent work, Brother, I’m Dying, won a National Book Critics Circle Award. Congratulations, Edwidge!

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

Lambi and Rebecca Are Both 15!

By Rebecca Smith

I am 15 years old and have always loved little children. My mom often speaks of how blessed we are and how poor Haiti was when she visited there many years ago.

So, when my best friend and I completed the Red Cross Babysitting Course we started Angel Keepers, a parent’s night out one Saturday a month at our church. I knew I wanted to give my share of the money we earned to Lambi Fund of Haiti.

Once a month we have a group of about 25 kids and we choose a different theme. We read the children a bible story, feed them a snack and dinner, play games, and make two crafts related to the theme.

I knew the only reason it works is because God is on our side, so I want to give it back. My mom helped me research all the charities that help poor children all over the world, and I chose the Lambi Fund of Haiti because I had heard how poor Haiti was and I thought the children there could really use it.

I hope my work donating to Lambi Fund inspires other youth around the world to do special projects and donate the proceeds to this worthwhile cause.

Lambi and Rebecca are both 15!

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

I would like to make this donation on a monthly basis.

I would like information on how to include the Lambi Fund in my estate plans.

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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

Travel to Haiti

Join us in the spring for the next delegation to Haiti. See firsthand some of the grassroots organizations partnering with Lambi Fund. Email us at info@lambifund.org to get a delegation application.
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.