

# THE LAMBI FUND OF HAITI

Supporting economic justice, democracy and sustainable development in Haiti

## Cholera Continues in Haiti's Countryside

Cholera, like most news in Haiti, made headlines and then was placed on the sidelines as other more “newsworthy” events were brought to the forefront. Since the fall of last year, Haiti has been battling this ugly epidemic and it has been particularly devastating in the countryside due a lack of water infrastructure and nearly

from cholera.

The troubling part is that the worst is yet to come. A new study conducted at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and Harvard Medical School predicts that the cholera epidemic could be far worse than initial projections, which had estimated 400,000 cases of the disease

throughout the epidemic. The study is predicting that there could be nearly twice that number – perhaps 779,000 cases of cholera between March and November of this year alone.

Why? How can it be that cases of cholera had not been seen on the island for more than 100 years and now the disease has reemerged as a full

blown epidemic? Simply put, cholera is bacteria spread from person-to-person through contaminated food and water. It causes diarrhea and can be deadly if left untreated (ScienceDaily, March 2011).

Cholera is completely preventable in places where modern sanitation and clean water *Continued on Page 4*



innavigable dirt roads.

Haitians still in the midst of dealing with the tragedy of the earthquake began losing thousands to a once forgotten illness. For many this is an unimaginable new wave of heartbreak and loss. As of March 2011, over 240,000 individuals have been infected and 4,600 people have died

### NEWSLETTER SPRING 2011

Cholera Response	1/4/5
Milling for Tomorrow	1/2/3
New Project Launch	2
Member Profile	3
In The News	6
Donation Form	7
Why I Give	7
Mission Statement	8
Board/Staff List	8
Contact Info	8

## Building Community, One Mill at a Time

The St. Martin Youth Association for Community Development (AJSDC) is a vibrant local organization in the Artibonite Valley of Haiti. This fertile region produces the majority of Haiti's rice and AJSDC has just opened a community grain mill to support these agricultural efforts. Years of hard work and community cooperation has gone into making this grain mill a reality. The group, who formed nearly 20 years ago and has 305 members, has been working together on sustainable development projects for quite some time, but this is by far their largest undertaking.

AJSDC finds strength in its diversity. A good chunk of its members have been with the group since its inception – they provide valuable leadership and wisdom, while a flood of new members infuse AJSDC with youth, vitality and energetic plans for the future. AJSDC's ability to engage the youth has directly strengthened the local organization and revitalized its efforts in community development.

The grain mill opening was a jubilant affair. *Continued on Page 2*

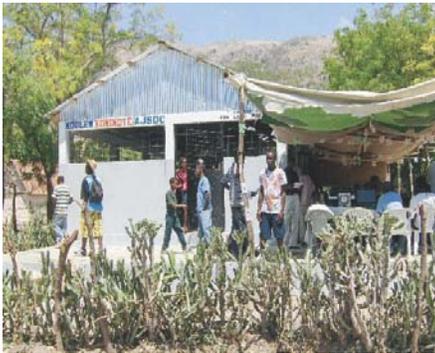


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# New Grain Mill is Opening Doors of Opportunity

## Continued from Page 1

Men, women and children came wearing their finest clothing. Hundreds of community members were in attendance. It was clear by the excitement and pride in the air that this was much more than the opening of a grain mill - it was a celebration of years of hard work and the countless possibilities for



AJSDC's new grain mill

the future.

It was a meticulously planned program, with cultural components sprinkled throughout, with singing,

dancing, speeches, a play and two skits. The older, more senior members opened the ceremony and spoke first about the organization, its history and the work they have done to improve the community. Newer and younger members then spoke about their vision and joy in making the grain mill a reality.

The president of AJSDC, Wilner Pierre Louis, proudly declared, "With the opening of this mill, we can be the masters of our own destiny." He rejoiced in explaining how this mill will allow members to mill their own grains. No more will community members need to walk long distances for milling services. No more will they have to pay exorbitant milling fees. Milling services at this community mill will be at an affordable price and of high qual-

ity. The mill is also a place to prepare and store seeds thanks to a large stor-

“  
.....  
*This was much more than the opening of a grain mill - it was a celebration of years of hard work and the countless possibilities for the future.*  
”

age room. This small detail will allow members to save seeds for the next planting season and to achieve higher levels *Continued on Page 3*

## New Project: Ox-Plow Service

In efforts to expand agricultural production throughout Haiti's countryside, Lambi Fund started the new year by approving several new projects.

The Peasant Movement of Lafrezilyè (MPL), which has 45 members, wants to help farmers in their area increase land productivity and improve food security by providing an ox plow service and credit funds for members at a low-interest rate.

The ox-plow service will be available to community members at an affordable rate. These plows

will help farmers cultivate fields that were previously plowed by hand, greatly increasing productivity and the amount of land that they can work.

The organization will also plant 20,000 seedlings in efforts to reforest their hillsides and improve the local environment.

Lambi Fund will seed the credit fund, purchase four oxen, two plows, tools such as hoes, carts, pick, pumps, and veterinary training for one year. Lambi Fund field staff is ready to begin training on project management, including ox plow operation and animal care, how to manage a



Oxen used for plowing fields

microcredit fund, and tree nursery construction and management.

This comprehensive capacity building will ensure that members of the organization are equipped with the tools necessary to run the project in a sustainable manner. ♪

## Finding Strength in the Community

*Continued from Page 2* of economic security.

The woman [pictured right] was dancing about ecstatically throughout the ceremony because as she exclaimed, “I am so happy not to have to walk far [to have my grains milled] and the kids can go to school now because they will not have to help transporting the grains.”

Members worked hard to ensure that the grain mill meets all of their needs. Along with a motorized tiller, storage rooms and space to prepare the grains, the organization is building latrines near the building. There is also access to water which assists in running the mill and providing clean drinking water.

While members fastidiously thanked the Lambi Fund of Haiti for its assistance in making this mill a reality, Lambi Fund staff could only respond with the utmost respect and gratitude for the hard work and resilience these members have shown in the last year. Staff members thanked them for their perseverance, strength and unity as they have moved forward after the earthquake.

Lambi Fund's new Executive Director, Marie Saint Cyr, attended the meeting and congratulated AJSDC members and the project committee for their long-term collaboration with Lambi Fund as the community works to realize its hopes and dreams.

This building is more than just a building and more than a mill, it is a symbol of community strength and unity. With every brick and piece of mortar, this



*ABOVE: Longtime AJSDC member joyously celebrating the mill opening*

*With the opening of this mill, we can be the stewards of our own destiny.*



*ABOVE: The motorized tiller that will mill grains and rice*



*LEFT: A sign hung in preparation for the celebration reading "Welcome Lambi Fund of Haiti"*

mill is building community. *L*

## Member Profile

*Jean Joanès Cineus*  
Secretary, ODRO

Jean Joanès Cineus is a member and the secretary of the Organization for the Development of Robè (ODRO) in North-west Haiti. At 34 years old, he is also an educator and farmer. ODRO partnered with Lambi Fund to build a grain mill in his community. Jean talks about the opening of the mill by saying, “This project has



*Jean is distributing Phase 2 Emergency Funds to a member after the Jan. 12 earthquake*

changed many things in my life – as an individual and as member of the organization. The mill has encouraged me to

remain in the community [and] I feel less compelled to move to another area.” He also talked about how the convenience of a local mill allows his wife to manage her time more efficiently and to engage in other activities, “[We can] spend more time with the family, since she does not have to walk for 2-3 hours to take our grain to the mill. Because of the mill we are able to process the grain locally and this helps us feed our family with greater ease.”

In the community of Robè there is a great river that crosses it. As Jean explained, “When it rains, the river overflows and it is impossible to undertake any activities, meaning that prior to having this mill in Robè, the members of ODRO were unable to take our grain to be processed until the waters subsided. That caused great hardships during the rainy season.”

“This project encourages me to work the land. The proximity of the mill has made cultivating the land more profitable because it has eliminated some of the transportation costs which cut into our profits. The grain mill is also a chance to expand my opportunities for income as my wife and I sell some of our products to residents of other towns who come to Robè to get their grains processed at our mill. My wife is extremely happy!” *L*

# Lambi Fund is Taking Action on the Ground in Haiti...



*Girls transport clean water back to their homes*



*Rainwater cisterns with enclosed tops like this one, ensure water does not get contaminated*



*These community members living in rural Haiti have received clean water training from Lambi Fund*

**Continued from Page 1** are readily available.

This is not the case in Haiti. Only 1 in 5 Haitians have access to a sanitary toilet or latrines. Of the rural population in Haiti, just 12% have access to sanitation and 51% have access to improved drinking water sources. These dire circumstances create a perfect storm for cholera to grow, spread and continue to contaminate individuals. The devastating truth is that 2010 brought the earthquake which was over and done with in mere minutes. Cholera which arrived just nine months later is not quick. It is persistent and will linger for years given the proper conditions.

And linger it has. Cholera continues to claim lives in rural communities throughout Haiti. A lack of proper water infrastructure and sanitation continue infections, while poor roads and a complete shortage of timely transportation (like ambulances) greatly reduce timely access to immediate care and increase the severity of the illness.

Several longtime partners of Lambi Fund have lost their lives to cholera and every partner has been affected by this deadly infection. Farmers

from the Bige district recount story after story of carrying sick friends and family members on wooden doors across rivers. Four people carry one sick individual as they trudge through mud, fields, water and over hills in pursuit of the nearest Cholera Treatment Center (CTC). Others cart loved ones in wheel barrels, which as you can imagine is a jarring and unwieldy journey for someone who is ill and in desperate need of a hospital bed. Treatment at a CTC in a timely manner is proven to be critical, yet for the majority living in the most remote parts of Haiti, they simply are not close enough to be effective. Even more upsetting, many of these centers have been closed down as officials declare the need is subsiding.

What is being done in efforts to contain and control the rate of infections? The Haitian Ministry of Health has done a good job of launching a prompt and comprehensive awareness campaign. They have launched radio and television ads throughout Haiti that educate citizens on the contamination, spread, and symptoms of cholera, along with techniques for prevention

and care. Educational materials and brochures have been widely distributed to health centers, schools and other public gathering places throughout the country. This campaign has been particularly effective in cities and towns and countless lives have been saved, yet for the rural parts of Haiti much of this information has yet to be received and cholera, not surprisingly rages on, intensifying in new spots of infections.

Disseminating information in the rural parts of Haiti has been particularly difficult. Following the immediate outbreak, hysteria reigned. Due to a complete lack of knowledge of what cholera is or how it spread, community members abstained from organizing or meeting in local spaces. This immense fear made holding meetings to inform locals on the prevention **Continued on Page 5**

## ...and Working Towards a Healthier Tomorrow

*Continued from Page 4* of cholera very difficult.

Getting communities to once again organize and trust one another was the first step. From there, Lambi Fund has been fervently working to share the published information and reinforce the messages and strategies proven safe.

This has been a two pronged approach: first staff are meeting with organizations and providing information and visuals that explain how to prevent the spread of cholera. This includes water purification methods and hand washing.

From there, Lambi Fund field staff are planning training sessions for 2-3 people in each partner organization. These trainees have the role of circulating information regarding cholera prevention to all organization members and their families.

This is a *critical* component as these water ambassadors will work to keep the information *alive*. In order to prevent the return of old habits, they will work with community members to remind them to continue washing their hands and purifying their water long after the scare of cholera has subsided.

In the South, cholera numbers have been steadily increasing. Cholera broke out in the Artibonite region of Haiti, thus most treatment efforts have been focused in this region.

Given this reality, Lambi Fund project monitors are visiting all partner organizations in the southern provinces. During these visits, they are sharing with members how to prevent and protect their families from contracting the cholera bacteria. If symptoms are shown, Lambi Fund recommends keeping individuals hydrated through a serum of water and sugar. This is incredibly important, because these are measures to take before seeking a CTC, which are few and far between in the South.

This health crisis was certainly not one that was foreseen, but Lambi Fund has been doing its very best to mobilize and utilize its resources in an effort to educate the greatest number of individuals in rural communities. Maricelle, an organization member and recipient of Lambi Fund's cholera awareness program said, "We went through the earthquake, Lambi Fund is with us. We went through hurricanes, Lambi Fund is there and now we face the cholera epidemic and Lambi Fund is with us distributing goods and resources. Lambi Fund is with us hand in hand through the tough times."

To be certain,



cholera will not disappear overnight. Josette Perard, Lambi Fund's Program Director emphasized the importance of these education programs stating that, "It is essential that we reinforce the prevention of cholera through education across Lambi Fund's various projects as a means to controlling and eliminating the disease." It is hoped that through this comprehensive grassroots campaign to educate and improve access to clean water, entire communities will benefit from improved health and cleaner environments as a direct result. *L*



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“Lambi Fund is with us hand in hand through the tough times.”  
.....”



*Women using clean cooking methods to prevent the transmission of cholera*



*Community members at a local meeting*

## Lambi Fund Hires New Executive Director

In February of 2011, the Lambi Fund of Haiti announced the appointment of Marie Marthe Saint Cyr as Lambi Fund's new Executive Director.

Ms. Saint Cyr was hired in order to better serve the growing needs of Lambi Fund's rural partners. Born in Haiti, she speaks fluent Kreyol and has a long history of working hand-in-hand with grassroots organizations in the country.



*Lambi Fund's new Executive Director, Marie Marthe Saint Cyr*

Board Chair Max Blanchet states that, "After 17 years of existence, and in view of the current situation in Haiti, we have chosen a leader with local roots, solid management and operations experience as Lambi Fund expands our efforts to address the increasing demands of the Haitian organizations in the rural areas."

Ms. Saint Cyr said she is honored to lead the Lambi Fund and looks forward to working with the board and partners in strengthening Haitian representation. "I am looking forward to expanding the organization and building a more unified and dynamic cohort to better serve rural communities in Haiti," concluded Ms. Saint Cyr.

Karen Ashmore is still with Lambi Fund and will continue to focus her efforts on outreach, development, and administration. *L*

## Lambi Fund Urges Grassroots Involvement on Capitol Hill

Leonie Hermantin, Lambi Fund's Community Liason, attended Haiti Advocacy Day on March 30 in Washington D.C.

This day for advocacy was an important opportunity to urge legislators in Washington to focus on the importance of involving Haitian peasants and the needs of small farmers in plans for rebuilding Haiti.

Leaders of several grassroots organization, like the women's organization KOFAVIV, who advocates against violence and is a Lambi Fund partner, were in attendance. They spent the day telling their stories and prioritizing the needs of Haitian peasants.

The day, which was filled with advocacy sessions and meetings with senators and senior officials was well received.



*Members of KOFAVIV speak to lawmakers on Capitol Hill*

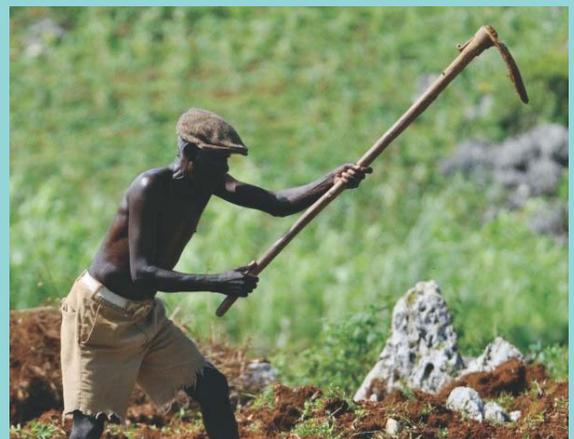
By providing lawmakers with more opportunities to learn about the realities in Haiti, it is hoped that the US will pass policies that positively impact the poor majority and contribute to successful rebuilding in Haiti. *L*

## 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](http://www.lambifund.org) and set the 'frequency' of your donation to monthly. *L*

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

yes!

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For more information about the  
Lambi Fund or to make an online  
donation, go to [www.lambifund.org](http://www.lambifund.org)

Return to: Lambi Fund of Haiti, PO Box 18955,  
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WHY I GIVE

## Bringing Change Through Art

By Pierre Minn

I heard about the Lambi Fund of Haiti long before I met any of its staff or volunteers. The group's reputation as a thoughtful, pragmatic, and truly grassroots organization was confirmed when I heard members of the Lambi Fund's staff present on their work with the Center for Plantain Propagation, a farmer's cooperative in Gros Morne that teaches methods for reducing fungus on plantain trees. Working out of the spotlight and with little resources, the Lambi Fund's passion for supporting the plantain farmers and their cooperative was clear, and the results (stronger and healthier crops and more economic stability for farmers) were outstanding.

When I first traveled to Haiti in 1997, it became clear very quickly

that the key to a stronger Haiti lies in the lives and work of its rural agricultural population. As a graduate student studying international interventions in Haiti, I have seen how many organizations neglect this population and ignore the vibrant cooperatives and associations that sustain and invigorate Haitian communities. The Lambi Fund's approach is unique and has proven results – which can be seen throughout Haiti's countryside.

I have been selling Haitian art as a way to raise funds for Lambi Fund for the last three years. The sale of Haitian art has also allowed me to share a different side of the country and its people than is generally shown in the media. Upon seeing an intricate metal sculpture, a man once said to me, "It's so well made. I can't believe it's from



Pierre Minn with Lambi Fund's Leonie Hermantin  
Haiti!" With all of the images of poverty, disaster and suffering that make up most representations of Haiti, North Americans do not associate the country with talent, resources, and potential – all things that the Lambi Fund celebrates and builds on in its work. *L*



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## MISSION STATEMENT

*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.*

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