Democracy and Gender Equity Works

The mission of the Lambi Fund is to support the democratic movement of Haiti. One of the core principles of Lambi Fund is gender equity. In this issue we are profiling two organizations that have examples of democracy and gender equity in action.

Democratic Works!

By Leonie Hermantin

In an example of grassroots democracy at work, the president of a grassroots partner of Lambi Fund was elected Mayor of the town of Chato, located in the Sud department.

Joseph Fluto Clairvil, President of Konbit 2004, was elected the mayor of Chato earlier this year. This is an example of how growing democratic leadership through Lambi Fund training is going to change Haiti. The newly elected mayor is planning to bring his awareness of reforestation needs to the government by pushing for more enforcement of the “no tree cutting” policy and more governmental support for reforestation.

Konbit 2004 is a peasant organization from the South’s Piko region (Chato). Founded in 1989 with more than 600 members, the organization’s main objective is to improve its community’s social and economic conditions.

The community of Chato has not been spared from the harsh economic conditions which have affected most of Haiti’s rural communities. Konbit 2004 has worked since its inception at addressing the economic challenges faced by Piko’s residents. Several years ago Lambi Fund helped the organization develop a micro credit program which allowed members and local merchants to pool their resources in a mutual fund used to generate loans.

Konbit 2004’s micro credit program is still meeting the needs of its peasant farmers and merchants.

In 2005, members of Konbit 2004 approached the Lambi Fund with another project which focused on environmental as well as quality of life concerns. Today, residents of the region are facing two major problems: the lack of potable drinking water and the devastating impact of deforestation. To address this problem, Konbit 2004 proposed to build 10 rainwater cisterns as a reliable source of potable water by area residents. Additionally, Konbit 2004 addressed the problem of erosion with a comprehensive reforestation project which includes the production of 100,000 seedlings to be planted strategically in their region. Lambi Fund agreed to support the project with the financial resources and the training programs needed to ensure the project's success.

continued on page 2
Activities Accomplished:

• Construction of Five Cisterns
While Lambi Fund contributed funds and training opportunities, Konbit 2004 agreed to secure the land for construction and to contribute local materials such as rocks, wood and water. To date five cisterns have been built. They are 18 meters long and each have the capacity to hold 4500 gallons of water.

• Benefits of the Cisterns:
As anticipated, the benefits of cisterns went beyond the much needed provision of potable drinking water. Traditionally women and girls have the responsibility to carry water, walking far to get to the source. This division of labor affected the girls’ ability to go to school, as carrying water usually took hours. The construction of potable water cisterns within the community considerably reduced the amount of time dedicated to carrying water. It allowed girls to go to school with greater frequency and freed women from such arduous tasks.

• Reforestation Project
The nurseries were built close to the cisterns. To date there are five nurseries. Once the cisterns were built, Lambi Fund hired an Agricultural Technician to increase Konbit 2004 members’ ability to build and manage nurseries and practice sustainable agricultural methods. To complete the task of building the nurseries, Lambi Fund has given the organization funds to buy tools such as wheelbarrows, shovels, hoes, and rakes necessary to construct the nurseries. So far over 50,000 seedlings have been produced and are ready for transplanting once they grow to a height of two feet.

• Training Seminar
Seminars have ranged from building and maintaining cisterns and tree nurseries to management training.

continued on bottom of page 4

Gender Equity Works! Member Profile

My name is Anaise Alcena Saintius. I am the president of the Association for the Development of Kasis (ADZK). About a year ago, my organization approached the Lambi Fund with a project we developed to help us improve our condition. We wanted to increase the number of pigs we raise because having pigs is like having money in the bank. The Lambi Fund agreed to fund the project and offered great seminars to members of ADZK. I participated in the Lambi Fund women’s training seminars, and I am here to give testimony about the way these gatherings changed my life.

I was born to a peasant family in Kasis, strong hard working, but knowing that as a woman my duties were exclusively those of wife and mother. When I was given the opportunity to meet with other women to discuss the need for us peasant women to take greater leadership roles in our communities and within our organization, I knew that I had what it took to be a leader. I had been one all my life. I just never applied those skills within the organization. When I came back I did not waste any time and became more active with ADZK. I applied the same work ethic I use running my farm and raising my children, empowered by the administrative skills I had acquired through the Lambi Fund’s skill building workshop on project management.

I was recently elected president of the organization, the first woman ever in Kasis to hold such important office. While I am respected for my administrative skills and my ability to manage the project, one of my proudest accomplishments, is that I am encouraging and mentoring other women members to become more active in the organization and seek leadership positions as well.

I can say that I am still a good mother and a good wife, but I am also doing things that are important to me as a woman and a member of my community.

Help other women like Anaise become leaders in their communities. Donate now to the Lambi Fund Women’s Leadership Training programs. *
First Visit to Haiti
By Matt Kaiser

The U.S. Lambi Fund Staff recently returned from a visit to Haiti to learn about and meet with the grassroots organizations that are successfully running sustainable development projects in their communities. This was my first visit to Haiti.

Green mountains gave way to white sandy beaches where the Caribbean’s deep blue waters spilled against the shore. The Haitian countryside was stunningly gorgeous from the window of the small plane we took from Port-au-Prince to Les Cayes.

The first stop was Konbit 2004 near the village of Chato. Currently Lambi Fund is working with the members of Konbit 2004 on a water cistern and reforestation project. The organization has built five cisterns and plans to finish five more. For each cistern, members are planting 10,000 seedlings to reforest their community for a total of 100,000 trees.

In the village of Nava, the members of the Cooperative Association for the Development of Nava (KADN) are working with the Lambi Fund to create a fish farm to provide a source of protein in their diets and income for their community. Our delegation met with the group and heard of the difficulties members had to overcome in digging the basins that will hold the fish. At first they thought they could have individual ponds for each member but soon realized it would be a lot of work and required a community effort. So they worked together to build four adjoining fish basins. The members of KADN indicated that Lambi Fund’s trainings were very helpful and expressed the desire for more training. The hope in the member’s comments was contagious as they looked toward the future. One woman emphatically commented, “We want those fish because we are going to sell them at the market!”

After a brief stop to see an impressive waterfall near So Maturin, we drove down Haiti’s rocky roads to meet with the Association for the Development of Kasis (ADZK). In 2006 Lambi Fund provided ADZK with funding for 27 pigs, a veterinarian, food, and technical and management training for the project. At the time of our visit, four of their 15 sows had 25 piglets that the group will distribute in the community and sell to provide income for their organization. The group grows the feed locally and has set up a veterinary pharmacy so they do not have to travel into town if the pigs become sick. A member of ADZK stated, “Pigs allow us to live, that is the way we take care of our kids and all of our needs.” ADZK also had the distinction of having recently elected its first woman president, which is a rarity in male-dominated Haiti. This ground breaking move is a direct result of the gender equity and leadership training provided by Lambi Fund.

Organization of the Good Samaritan (OBS) was the last organization we met with near the village of Torbeck. In 2003 Lambi had provided OBS with the funds to purchase a grain mill. Members of OBS fired up the mill and gave us a demonstration by milling a sack of corn. The president of the group shared how the mill has affected their diet saying, “We were in a difficult situation...because of the mill we are able to eat beans and have corn meal with it.” The organization also shared other benefits they have experienced as a result of the mill, stating that they no longer had to spend as much
time and money taking their grain to a mill in another community.

Our trip to Haiti concluded in Port Salut with some of the same stunning scenery we first saw from the window of that small airplane. Clear blue waters, white sandy beaches, and palm trees were our surroundings as we swam in the Caribbean on the final afternoon of the trip. We left with confidence and hope that someday this island in the Caribbean will become a safe and stable democratic society where people everywhere can have the opportunity to experience the incredible surroundings, culture, and people of Haiti. Go to www.lambifund.org/news_haititrip07.htm for more photos of the recent trip.
Faith and Hope: Haitians Helping Haitians

By Matt Kaiser Faith Based Outreach Coordinator

Tabernacle of Bethlehem Mennonite Church is located in Opa Locka, Florida. Pastor Dieudonne Brutus welcomed me to their evening services on a balmy summer evening last fall.

The service opened with several hymns sung in Kreyol and accompanied by clapping, tambourines, and guitars both Pastor Brutus and I were playing. That Sunday evening, as my English words about the Lambi Fund were being translated into Kreyol, I felt unsure of how my message came across to my listeners in a different language. Then, as I spoke of how Lambi works from the bottom up, listens to the needs of Haitian communities, and funds and trains Haitians to work on their own development projects, eyes lit up, my message was affirmed with enthusiastic shouts of “Amen!” and “Wi! Wi!”

Then it was business time. Pastor Brutus later translated for me that their congregation had to stop paying their organist because they couldn’t afford to pay rent, keep the church doors open, and give money to Haitian refugees that came to their church…and here I was asking them to give some of what little they had to support peasants through the Lambi Fund! Despite their financial situation Pastor Brutus and the people gathered agreed and were excited to take a collection for the Lambi Fund of Haiti because they believed there is hope for change in Haiti through Lambi Fund’s bottom-up approach of partnering with peasant organizations.

It reminded me of the following passage.

“And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

—Mark 12:41-44.

A few weeks ago I returned to visit Tabernacle of Bethlehem for a Sunday morning service. The congregation took an offering for the Lambi Fund to support our brothers and sisters in Haiti. They apologized because they did not have much, but they looked in their pockets and put in everything they had. The congregation’s humble gift was enough to help support a project that will make an immense impact in the lives of Haitian families!

If the tiny Tabernacle of Bethlehem can make a difference, so can you. If your congregation would like to make a difference in Haiti contact Matt Kaiser (620) 242-3387 or email to matt@lambifund.org!

Training has provided them with the skills to create the organizational structures needed to manage and sustain the projects. Project direction is provided by a managing committee, a technical committee and a quality control committee.

Conclusion and Recommendations
Konbit 2004, is poised to undertake the challenge of planting seedlings and constructing five more cisterns. Members of the organizations exude with the confidence acquired from the successful construction of the first five cisterns, the nurseries and the production of over 50,000 seedlings. They are very well aware of the challenges that lay ahead, as they prepare to plant and nurture the growth of those seedlings. They have expressed satisfaction with the training and feel they have acquired the confidence and skills to manage even more ambitious projects in the future. Said one Konbit member, “At first we were without direction. In the training we learned how to manage the cistern and tree nursery projects. We learned how to organize our project with increased knowledge. We have improved our organizational capacity and have leaned how to manage a larger enterprise.”
New Projects

Here are some examples of new projects that Lambi Fund is planning to support in 2007. Continued funding is needed to complete these projects. Please give generously!

**Women’s Micro-credit**
The Women’s Association of Lakos wants a micro-credit fund to enable them to start their own businesses and become self-supporting. Lambi Fund will seed the micro-credit fund for 37 members and provide micro-credit management and organizational development training to ensure project success.

**Rice Mill**
The 76 members of the God is All Powerful Organization of Gilgo want to increase their income 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.

**Motorized Tillers**
The 125 active members of the Small Farmers Association of Desdunes are rice planters. They plan to increase production of rice with the use of motorized tillers, resulting in increased income. Lambi Fund will purchase two motorized tillers and provide training on tiller operation and maintenance, project management and organizational development.

**Potable Water**
The Women’s Association of Tet Kole – Northwest (KTFK-NW) is one of the largest and best organized women’s groups in Haiti. They want community cisterns in five communities to increase the supply of potable water, thus decreasing water borne disease and improving the health for children. Lambi Fund will supply the materials for five large cisterns and provide training on hygiene, water management and project management skills. The members will provide the labor to build the cisterns.

**Grain Storage**
The Tet Kole Peasant Organization in Belade wants increased control over their livelihood by establishing a community-run grain storage center. This will allow the farmers the ability to store their grain and get better prices at market. Lambi Fund will provide funds for the storage facility, two donkeys to transport the grain, seeds, and farming equipment. Lambi Fund will also provide training on project management and storage techniques.

“...rice planters ... can increase production of rice with the use of motorized tillers, resulting in increased sustainability.”
New Deputy Director
Leonie Hermantin was named Deputy Director by Lambi Fund of Haiti, where she will be responsible for outreach and education in North America. Formerly the Director of Research and Strategic Planning at the Santa La Haitian Neighborhood Center in Miami, FL, Hermantin was one of two Haitian Americans cited by the Miami Herald for special recognition as up and coming leaders in South Florida. She has a Juris Doctor from University of California—Berkeley and over ten years of non-profit management experience. She currently serves on the board of Little Haiti Housing and Accion USA—Miami and has received numerous awards for her activism and civic contributions. A resident of South Miami, she can be reached at leonie@lambifund.org

Video on Haitian women
Long-time supporter of Lambi Fund, Mark Schuller, is working with award-winning filmmaker Renée Bergan on *Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy*, a documentary in the final stages of production and a concrete attempt to honor the strength of Haitian women and to present a realistic, yet hopeful, picture of Haiti. Visit www.potomitan.net for details on how you can help make this film a reality. All of the film proceeds will go to support Haitian women and their grassroots groups.

In Memoriam
Several longtime Lambi Fund supporters recently passed on and remembered Lambi Fund with planned gifts or requests for memorial gifts in lieu of flowers: Ray Giraud, Liliane Fombrun and Paul Laraque. All were incredibly gifted people whose legacy is continuing with contributions in their honor supporting grassroots organizations in Haiti. What a beautiful way to honor the memory of a loved and valued supporter of Haiti! *

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
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

Name: ____________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________

City, State, Zip: ___________________________________

E-mail address: ____________________________________

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
Why I Give
BY DR. JEFF MASTERS
Director of Meteorology, wunderground.com

As the hurricane expert for the Internet weather website wunderground.com, I am very familiar with Haiti’s vulnerability to catastrophic flooding from hurricanes and tropical storms. I realize that the most important way for Haiti to reduce loss of life from these storms is to restore the natural forest cover that has almost entirely been lost. So, I give to the Lambi Fund, knowing that they are working hard on reforestation efforts. Someday, I hope to fly over the island and see it once more swathed in green, thanks in great part to the efforts of the Lambi Fund of Haiti.