

CAPACITY BUILDING

Each project that the Lambi Fund supports involves a training component. For example, peasant organizations that receive funds for animal husbandry projects receive training on project management and organizational development. Agricultural organizations receive training on organic farming and reforestation techniques. Alongside our routine technical and management training programs, Lambi Fund provides organizational and leadership development training programs for peasant organizations and women's associations.

Training

Lambi Fund offers two types of training for grassroots organizations:

Local, specific training based on the needs of each of the peasant organizations and

Regional training conferences where participants can share and collaborate on a wider, regional basis.

Since Lambi Fund generally seeds or improves an existing project, we expect the projects to become self-sustaining after a few years. This requires considerable training of folks who have a tremendous amount of indigenous wisdom but due to illiteracy, often lack the technical and management skills to effectively manage a large project. Project management and organizational development training are provided to all groups.

Knowledge Is Power

Training Seminars and Conferences in Lambi Fund Projects:

When you give to the Lambi Fund of Haiti, your contribution not only provides Haitian grassroots organizations with vitally important agricultural inputs such as plows, farm animals and grain mills; it also provides their members with the knowledge they need to make their projects successful!

At a Lambi conference, this peasant leader learned how to make more nutritionally balanced pig feed, sold by his organization to members and to other husbandry projects.

Most Haitians are hungry to learn, yet most have not had more than a few years of formal education, due to the high cost of tuition and the lack of decent schools. As adults, they have virtually no access to institutions where they can acquire new technical or leadership skills.

In order to run projects successfully, participants need new knowledge. The Lambi Fund addresses that need in each project through two distinct kinds of training: technical and administrative.

Each project involves equipment, such as irrigation pumps, or activities, such as animal husbandry, that require special training to run. The Lambi Fund covers all the costs of that training, including hiring technicians to teach the procedures, and providing food and lodging for the participants during the seminars.

Appropriate Technology

Technology Programs Appropriate Technology In Lambi Fund Projects

At the Lambi Fund of Haiti, we focus on supporting Haitians who are determined to solve their own problems. Members of grassroots organizations identify local needs and submit proposals to the Lambi Fund to address those needs. Instead of imposing outside solutions, as so often happens, Lambi Fund staff members engage in dialogue with the local groups about the proposed projects. Together they develop solutions that take into account the specifics of their local environment and situation.

In other words, we ensure that the projects use appropriate technology. By this we mean: the tools and methods fit the culture, resources and infrastructure of the people using them.

PIGS: Haitian Peasants' "bank accounts"

The slaughter of the Creole pigs by the Haitian government in the 1980's, spurred on by U.S. concerns over swine flu, is a classic case of the use of inappropriate methods. After destroying animals who were the only investments poor peasant farmers had, the government made some ineffective attempts at replacing the well-adapted Creole pigs with high maintenance American breeds. Unlike the Creole pigs, the foreign pigs couldn't survive on table scraps, and needed little shelters to live in; farmers who could barely afford to feed and house their own children could in no way provide for these pigs. The government project was a complete disaster.

To ameliorate this situation, the Lambi Fund works with peasant organizations in pig husbandry projects that provide peasants with pigs suited to the local conditions. These heartier breeds quickly adapt to the food available to them, and can then provide a source of meat or income for the farmers. After only two years, 36 pigs in one project produced nearly 300 piglets which were distributed among members of the organization running the project.

The right tools for the job: Tills and Plows

What is "appropriate" can differ even within rural Haiti. For example, Lambi has funded motorized tillers for some grassroots organizations, and funded traditional ox plows for others. With both kinds of tools, peasants are able to prepare larger amounts of land in less time than with hand tools, thus increasing their crop yields. They also save money by renting the machinery from their own organization instead of from local wealthy landowners. This means greater economic empowerment for the rural poor.

Ox CartIt might seem strange that the Lambi Fund provides some groups with more "modern" gasoline powered tillers while other groups receive old-fashioned animal-driven plows. The reasons for using both types of technology lie with the needs of the local community. Haiti is a very mountainous country, and the land is often shot through with rocks. In many areas, a motorized tiller could never work the soil. The members of the organizations know they will work more efficiently with plows, and will receive the added benefit of free fertilizer from the use of oxen. In other areas, the motorized tillers are completely suitable. While they can't be used on rocky or hilly land, they are ideal for rice cultivation in the flat lowlands.

However, without proper training, the machinery would soon break down and become useless. No matter what the project or equipment being used, the Lambi Fund provides extensive training and access to technicians to ensure success over the long term.

Women Milling

Milling Grain and Turning A Profit:

Other examples abound of this principle at work in Lambi-funded projects. In some places, local women's groups have requested and been granted numerous hand-powered mills to process their small corn harvests; these mills were placed in several villages throughout the countryside, providing accessible, easy-to-run equipment for their use.

As an added bonus, the women placed pens of chickens beneath the mills to eat the grain that falls to the ground, providing an extra source of protein for the women's families. In another area, Lambi covered the costs of providing one large diesel-driven mill, housed in a permanent structure. In each case, we made use of local Haitian expertise to assemble the mills in ways that fit the local geography, and took into account the local population and the amount of corn to be milled.

Technology for Justice

In a world dominated by high tech innovations, it's easy to overlook what really is appropriate. Because we emphasize partnership and dialogue with Haitian peasants, the Lambi Fund is able to support their initiatives in ways that fit their reality and will continue working over the long term. Your gift to the Lambi Fund empowers our Haitian partners on many fronts: to better feed themselves and their families, to improve their standard of living, and to defend themselves against economic and social exploitation.

Please join us in ensuring that these small scale but highly effective development projects can continue!

Consider your donation towards appropriate technology, a powerful way to generate, above all, social justice.

Managing Well

Equally important is the administrative training, at which participants learn how to effectively organize the division of tasks and maintain precise records.

For example, an organization running a grain depot must keep track of all the grain that is purchased, stored, and then resold at planting time. Data collected through this bookkeeping enable the organizations to do cost-benefit analyses, so they can set prices correctly and ensure a profit for the organization. The data also help to measure a project's overall success.

Moreover, this record keeping helps to ensure transparency. Any member can see the figures for a project and can be assured that nothing is being hidden. Reinforcing this trust among members is crucial to the success of any project and to the continued vitality of the organization.

Learning From One Another

Along with the training included in each project, the Lambi Fund also organizes and funds regional training conferences. These meetings bring together members from different grassroots groups to focus on topics relating to their community work.

Some gatherings focus on technical aspects of the development projects. One such conference assembled people involved in Lambi-funded pig husbandry projects, to learn more about animal nutrition, breeding practices and veterinary care. Another series of conferences explores sustainable agriculture, that is, agricultural practices that protect the natural environment over the long term. The participants acquire

new knowledge and hands-on experience in farming techniques that protect the soil and ground water, while increasing yields.

Bookkeeping

Other conferences center on organizational practices and leadership development, building on the guidance Lambi staff members give to each project individually. Topics include how to animate a group, how to run effective, democratic meetings, and how to ensure that information circulates among members (and in rural Haiti, this means without the use of telephones or a postal system!).

Lambi has organized many conferences specifically for women, to discuss the particular challenges women face. For example, when in a co-ed group, women have to work to ensure that the male members really trust them and value their participation. By meeting together, women share strategies and encourage one another.

How these conferences are run reflects their aim. By using popular education methods — educational games, songs, role playing and small group discussions — the training shows that everyone's participation is valued. This is democracy in action, the cornerstone of the Lambi Fund's mission. Participants then carry these methods and ideas back to their organizations.

The Bigger Picture

Speaking in Groups:

As participants are made aware of each others' activities, they build personal and organizational relationships. Groups from the same area can connect and start supporting each others' projects through their patronage of, for example, a neighboring community's grain mill or storage project. These steps strengthen the national peasant and women's movements in Haiti.

This is, ultimately, one of the Lambi Fund's most crucial goals. As important as individual projects are, change has to occur at the macro level as well in order to uproot the causes of poverty in Haiti. That change will require continued organizing at a national level.

To that end, along with the technical and organizational information, participants at Lambi conferences learn about the broader socio-economic and political causes of the problems that their projects address. Together they analyze governmental and corporate policies made within their country and at the international level. They recognize the negative effects of globalization as well as economic injustice stemming from within Haiti. Most importantly, they discover new strategies and new energy to counter those effects through their own self-determined efforts to increase national production.

Knowledge, it is said, is power. By supporting the Lambi Fund and our training seminars and conferences, you help to increase the knowledge and the power of people at the grassroots in Haiti. Your contribution enables them to continue strengthening democracy in Haiti from the ground up.



Conferences on Sustainable Agriculture

In addition to organizational training for specific Lambi Fund projects, The Lambi Fund convened four regional conferences in 2009, two on sustainable agriculture and two on gender equality.

Peasant leaders from the Artibonite Valley and the South received training in sustainable land management, tree planting, tree nurseries, and agro forestry practices. Livanie Claude the treasurer of ODTPG, attended and says, "These workshops are important because we get to come back and educate and train people in the community. We understand that there is strength and opportunity in education." She explains that, "Lambi Fund is a staunch advocate for the environment and they help train women to understand how to be better stewards of the environment. We sometimes take what we have learned and offer these as services to other organizations."



Gender Equity Conferences

Two additional regional conferences on gender equity provided male and female organization leaders with the opportunity to explore issues of gender justice in their communities, organizations and families. These meetings had the focus of strengthening organizations to better influence and implement community change.

As a result of attending the gender conference Livanie and other women in her community formed a women's organization. She explains that, "Women meet and talk about their lives and rights in Haiti as peasant workers. Lambi Fund workshops helped us realize that we as women can work together. So, we started a communal garden, we grow, roast and sell coffee, and we also sell butter in the local market now. This women's group improves our lives and helps us take care of each other's needs and families."

At these conferences, local leaders are empowered with the tools they need to teach and impact positive change in their communities.