



Working with the Diaspora: Enabling Participation and Leveraging Resources to Fund Local Development Projects in Haiti

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In Haiti, where the majority of the population lives on less than two dollars a day, the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), an independent foreign assistance agency of the United States government, has begun to work with diaspora groups and hometown associations (HTAs) in the U.S. to increase and coordinate funding for community development projects.

For more than 30 years the IAF has funded grassroots community and economic development projects presented and managed by community groups, nongovernmental organizations, farmer cooperatives and other civil society entities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. More recently, the IAF, as well as other funders, has become aware that associations of immigrants living in the U.S. and elsewhere, what may be called the diaspora, also are funding similar types of projects in their communities of origin. Therefore, as an extension of its long-standing support of beneficiary involvement and participation, the IAF seeks to explore with diaspora groups ways to enhance, facilitate and expand their role in promoting the development of their communities of origin.

In Haiti, a new IAF grant will enable the Fondasyon Enstitisyon-yo pou Devlopman ki Sòti nan Baz-la (FIDEB) to co-finance community development projects with the Haitian diaspora and provide assistance in negotiating additional public and private sector funding.

What is FIDEB?

FIDEB is an alliance of 15 community groups promoting collaboration among Haitian neighborhood associations, local government officials (*known Kazèks and Meris in Creole*), and the private sector in the creation and implementation of small-scale development projects throughout Haiti.

FIDEB receives requests from community groups. A FIDEB member from the local community, accompanied by a FIDEB member from a different community, reviews the request and visits the community. If the proposed project appears viable, FIDEB helps the proponent organization negotiate support from the local private and public sectors. FIDEB also provides technical advice on project design and implementation. Once the local partners have raised two-thirds of the project costs, FIDEB provides up to US\$1,500 in matching funds. After funding is in place, FIDEB conducts strategic planning seminars, civic education workshops and technical training sessions to prepare these communities to undertake their projects. Meetings also promote dialogue among community development groups, business leaders, local government officials and members, creating the possibility for future collaboration on more, and improved, projects. Once the projects are underway, they are monitored by FIDEB and the IAF to ensure compliance with the standards of both institutions and with initial project goals.



R to L: community leader and Romer Baucicaut, president of FIDEB next to plaque dedicating an irrigation system in Kwa Fè built with help from the Presbyter of Mecklenburg, and renovated with support from FIDEB.

What has FIDEB done?

To say FIDEB has been successful would be an understatement. From 1998 to 2001 with an IAF grant of \$143,480, FIDEB achieved the following results.

- The small project fund supported 85 short-term local development projects in 75 different communities, surpassing the original goal of aiding 60 projects. These projects involved agricultural and agro-industrial endeavors, infrastructure improvements, and small business development.
- FIDEB helped Haitian communities leverage a total of \$240,000 for these small-scale projects.
- Over 85 businesses and local officials have forged relationships with community organizations.



Students at FIDEB-financed school in Kw Fè.

- Finally, 275 civil society representatives, 28 businessmen and 12 local government representatives participated in planning, training and civic education seminars.

What FIDEB offers to the Haitian diaspora.

Since its creation in 1997, FIDEB has a demonstrated history of low-cost, yet high quality, results. Based on this record and the success of this first three-year grant, the IAF is funding a second project in which FIDEB will work with diaspora organizations to select, develop and implement – in partnership with community organizations, municipal governments and businesses -- small-scale development projects in communities throughout Haiti.

Diaspora organizations can ask FIDEB to review a project on behalf of their home community. Alternatively, groups in Haiti, including churches and local development organizations, that have a diaspora association as a partner can present projects to FIDEB. Once FIDEB determines that the local group and the diaspora association are in agreement on the proposed project it then helps to broker support from local government and private sectors and provides technical assistance on implementing the project.

Basic Information Required of Organizations Seeking Funding from FIDEB

NOTE: This information applies to organizations within Haiti. Diaspora and hometown associations in the U.S. must have local organizations or partners in Haiti, which may apply directly to FIDEB for matching funds and project assistance.

- Name and address of organization;
- Date organization obtained legal status (if applicable);
- Description of how organization is governed;
- Brief description of organization's purpose and history;
- Date and amount of any prior grants or subgrants to the organization from the IAF or from FIDEB;
- Amount requested for the current project;
- Copy of project budget;
- Description of project activities and anticipated results;
- Explanation of how the project is related to one of the following areas: economic production, agricultural transformation, marketing, small-scale enterprise development, and community development.



Students at FIDEB-financed school in Kwa Fè.
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