

Occasional Paper N° 5

Robert Earl Maguire

*Bottom-Up
Development
in Haiti*



**Institute of Haitian Studies
University of Kansas**

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Bryant C. Freeman, Ph.D.
General Editor

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- N° 1 - **Konstitisyon Repiblik Ayiti, 29 mas 1987.** September 1994. Pp. vi-106. Haitian-language version (official orthography) of the present Constitution, as translated by Paul Déjean with the collaboration of Yves Déjean. Introduction in English.
- N° 2 - **Toussaint's Constitution (1801), with Introduction.** October 1994. Pp. ix-20. In French. Introduction (in English) places Constitution in its historic context and analyzes salient features.
- N° 3 - **Bryant C. Freeman, Selected Critical Bibliography of English-Language Books on Haiti.** February 1995 (Updated). Pp. 21. More than 150 entries, with brief description of each; special list of "Top Ten." Introduction and text in English. Updated periodically.
- N° 4 - **Strategy of Aristide Government for Social and Economic Reconstruction (August 1994).** December 1994. Pp. iv-9. Official document setting forth recovery plan for Haiti. Introduction and text in English.
- N° 5 - **Robert Earl Maguire, Bottom-Up Development in Haiti.** January 1995. Pp. iv-63. Keynote: develop people rather than things, with case study as carried out in Le Borgne. Introduction and text in English.
- N° 6 - **Robert Earl Maguire, Devlopman Ki Soti nan Baz nan Peyi Dayiti.** February 1995. Pp. v-71. Haitian-language version of N° 5, in Pressoir-Faublas orthography. Introduction in English.
- N° 7 - **Samuel G. Perkins, "On the Margin of Vesuvius": Sketches of St. Domingo, 1785-1793.** March 1995. Pp. vi-75. First-hand account by an American merchant living in Saint-Domingue during onset of the Haitian Revolution. Introduction analyzes strong and weak points of narrative. Index of Proper Names.
- N° 8 - **Official Spelling System for the Haitian Language.** April 1995. Pp. 27. Text of official Haitian government edict of 28 September 1979, in Haitian. Editor's remarks in English on subsequent contemporary usage and brief pronunciation guide. Eleven pages chosen to illustrate good usage of official system, plus brief examples of the three major preceding orthographies. Introduction traces development of the four major systems.
- N° 9 - **Organization Charts of the Haitian Judiciary and Military.** May 1995. Pp. 10. Two charts of Haitian judicial system - one in French and English, other in French only. Three charts in French of Armed Forces of Haiti (1993) and one of Port-au-Prince police; officer and enlisted ranks with insignia (in French and English). Introduction in English.
- N° 10 - **Tèt Kole Ti Peyizan Ayisyen, Dosye Chèf Seksyon: Chèf Seksyon - Yon Sistèm Ki Merite Elimine.** June 1995. Pp. vi-52. Detailed, scathing account of the institution of section chiefs as of March 1991, compiled by a leading Haitian peasant group. Much exact information. Introduction in English, text in Haitian (official orthography).

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BOTTOM-UP DEVELOPMENT IN HAITI

This is the fifth in a series of documents concerning Haiti to be made more readily available through the University of Kansas Institute of Haitian Studies. We feel the present study, although conceived more than fifteen years ago, to be as timely now as when first published, and probably even more so.

With the return on 15 October 1994 of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and the massive amount of foreign aid which has been pledged - never before equaled in Haitian history and probably never to be repeated - Haiti is at an historic crossroads. It has never been and will probably never again be in so favorable a position to rise above its dismal economic past and to graduate "from misery to poverty, with dignity" (Aristide). To say that it is essential that the most must be made of this opportunity is an understatement. Thus it appears to us that, in order to help avoid mistakes of the past, now is an appropriate time to republish one of the most penetrating papers on development aid in Haiti. Developing people rather than things, consulting the people actually targeted rather than often self-interested bureaucrats far removed from rural reality, in other words, the "bottom-up" approach rather than the "top-down" approach, is the essential message here. Obviously developing things rather than people is far easier, far more rapid, and can be far more readily exhibited to visiting inspection officials, but does this constitute *true* development? The subject here is cosmetic change, as opposed to real change.

Certain statements are worthy of special note. Contrary to what one so often hears, "Peasants are not automatically against innovation" (p. 26). Other basics are "local solutions for local problems" (p. 59), and the importance of *konbit*, or communal work teams, for forming a nucleus of more extended peasant action (p. 38).

Although Liberation Theology is never directly mentioned, one could well posit that its very essentials are inherent in the ideology and work as described here. But agents of social change can only be perceived by those in power as a threat, as so dramatically evidenced by the events of the past three years. And one can well see the candidacy of an Aristide as the logical continuation, on the national level, of the grass-roots program of conscientization so eloquently set forth in this study.

Bryant Freeman

N.B. A reminder of acronyms important in the text:

BCA - Bureau du Crédit Agricole (Bureau of Agricultural Credit)

CARE - Cooperative Assistance for Relief Everywhere

HACHO - Haitian American Community Help Organization

IAF - Inter-American Foundation

IDEA - Institut Diocésain d'Éducation des Adultes (Diocesan Institute for Adult Education).

IHS - Institut Haïtien de Statistique (Haitian Institute of Statistics)

**MODECBO - Mouvement pour le Développement de la Communauté du Borgne
(Movement for the Development of the Community of Le Borgne)**

UNDP - United Nations Development Program

(US)AID - (United States) Agency for International Development

BOTTOM-UP DEVELOPMENT IN HAITI

By Bob Maguire

The Inter-American Foundation

**Patrick Breslin, Editor
October, 1979**

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Bottom-up Development in Haiti is the first in a series of papers on Latin American and Caribbean development issues. These papers will offer some perspectives on Latin Americans' and Caribbeans' self-help efforts to cope with and solve the problems of underdevelopment.

Robert Maguire is a Foundation Representative for the Caribbean. Before coming to IAF in May 1979, Mr. Maguire was doing doctoral fieldwork in southern Louisiana. He is a Ph.D. candidate in geography at McGill University, Montreal. The main thrust of his research is socio-economic cultural change in black creole communities in southern Louisiana.

This paper is published by the Inter-American Foundation, an independent US Government corporation created under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1969. The goals of the Foundation, as stated in its creating legislation, are to strengthen the bond of friendship and understanding among the peoples of this hemisphere; support self-help efforts designed to enlarge the opportunities for individual development; stimulate and assist effective and ever wide participation of the people in the development process; and encourage the establishment and growth of democratic institutions, private and governmental, appropriate to the requirements of the individual sovereign nations of this hemisphere.

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INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION
1515 Wilson Boulevard
Rosslyn, Virginia 22209

INTRODUCTION

On the road to the village of Belladère in the north of Haiti--a road once paved as part of some long-forgotten development effort and now mostly potholes--high on a knoll overlooking the countryside, sits a relatively large, abandoned, cement building, the remains of a school built in the 1950s by a non-Haitian development assistance organization. Despite the obvious need for improved formal education in the area, this building stands empty, rapidly deteriorating in the tropical climate.

Such scenes are common in developing countries. Abandoned schools, disintegrating roads, half-finished or decaying monuments to good intentions, to frustration, exhaustion of funds, lack of planning. But in most cases, there is an underlying reason for these scenes--the failure to involve local people in the effort. The school in Haiti stands empty because the people of the area did not feel a part of the physical mutation that simply appeared in their midst. Perhaps they would not have identified this building as a first priority. They were probably never consulted.

The frequency of such failed efforts indicates that participation and involvement by the people affected is critical to the success of any development effort. But how exactly can that participation and involvement be encouraged?

During its 8-1/2 years, the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) has funded groups in Latin America and the West Indies that work for grassroots social and economic change. In many cases, either because groups do not exist in a community, or because of the need to transcend the limited constituency a community-based group may effectively cover, the Foundation has channeled its development funding through local private development organizations, called "facilitators," as a more effective means of effecting social and economic change.

In order to better understand how a facilitator can enable a development process to occur at the grassroots, IAF has sponsored several case studies of local private development organizations it has funded. By understanding how a facilitator functions successfully, IAF hopes to become a "better" funder, to be able to identify more clearly the characteristics essential for a facilitator to promote development beneficial to the broad base of a community. It hopes, also, that the lessons learned may be of interest and utility to other organizations engaged in the struggle for development.

In this case study, the facilitator organization works in peasant leadership training programs in the north of Haiti. The Institut Diocésain d'Education des Adult^es (IDEA) has been active for some five years in a number of communitⁱes in that region. This study of its efforts reveals insights not only into IDEA's methods and achievements, but into the dynamics of underdevelopment in the Haitian countryside, and the efforts of other organizations to promote change there.

The Inter-American Foundation sees development as a process that begins with people, not with things. The results of this process are measured not in terms of physical or technological change, but rather in the change in an individual's or group's relative standing within the given social, economic and political system.

Traditionally, "developmentalists" have argued that technological and physical change will result in human development. The Inter-American Foundation believes rather that gains in social development give rise to conditions where the underdeveloped themselves identify their needs and then organize to satisfy them. Given the dearth of capital resources in underdeveloped communities, the Inter-American Foundation assists by supplying people at the "base"--or a facilitator--with modest amounts of capital.

Development efforts assume that underdevelopment exists. In the specific case of Haiti, where 94 percent of the rural population lives in absolute poverty unable to afford what is considered the minimum consumption of food, and other basics, such a condition clearly exists.

When the majority of a people of a particular region, zone, or state live in extreme and persistent poverty, their control over and access to the resources needed to meet basic human needs are severely restricted. Those resources--land and capital in an agricultural society--are in the hands of a tiny, powerful elite. The inability of the underdeveloped majority to effectively manage their own future results in perpetual dependence on this elite group and in persistent poverty. In Haiti, specifically, the peasant producers of the country's wealth exist at subsistence levels and are strongly dependent on a small group of economic power brokers who control both basic productive resources and the production itself.

In such a situation, then, efforts to promote a process of development should address the fundamental problem of changing human relationships that enable greater peasant access to and control over resources.

Development strategies can come from outside the milieu in which they are imposed--the "top-down" approach, or from within that milieu by the people concerned who then put them into effect--the "bottom-up" approach.

In several studies where Haitian peasants have been asked to identify their needs, the most common responses have dealt with very concrete physical infrastructural change (Zuvekas: 1978a and Gow: 1977). Needed irrigation systems, roads, schools, and health clinics, along with improvements to agricultural infrastructure in areas such as provision of fertilizers, pesticides, and agricultural credit were commonly identified. Whether realization of these physical or technological changes result in actual improvement in the productive capability of the peasant and his relative standing within the social, economic

and political system of the society in which he lives, however, is doubtful. Change in physical conditions do not necessarily lead to human development. Rather, they can very well result in mere mutations of the surroundings that do not change the critical factor of underdevelopment--social and economic relationships--at all.

But not all the development needs identified by Haitian peasants are physical, infrastructural, or technological changes. In its ongoing survey of peasant needs in the north, IDEA has found that peasants always place justice, rights, and the need to gain control and ownership of land high on this list of priorities. These desires suggest the need for changes in social relations. An understanding of how development efforts facilitate the achievement of these needs, and hence changes in social and economic relationships, is basic to any attempt at development.

HAITIAN UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Haiti's unfortunate status as the least developed country in the Western Hemisphere has been well-documented in a number of reports, by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the World Bank, the United Nations, and others.

The health situation is the worst in the hemisphere. Infant mortality rates are 150 per 1,000 and the average adult life expectancy is 47 years (Gow: 1977). Mortality rates for children under five is ten times that of developed countries (USAID: 1977). Three percent of Haitians have tuberculosis; malaria and illnesses due to malnutrition are widespread; and there was only one doctor to every 13,210 people, one nurse to every 7,460, one hospital bed to every 1,370 (World Bank: 1975).

Sixty percent of all Haitian children suffer from malnutrition, almost 25 percent of them from second and third-degree malnutrition, and the average daily caloric intake of 1,700 is well below the Haitian minimum requirement of 2,214 (Zuvekas: 1978b). In 1974, of 129 developing countries, Haiti was 127th in per capita daily caloric consumption and 129th in protein consumption.

Some 80 percent of the adult population is illiterate. The government spends about \$1 per person per year on education. Only 26 percent of all rural children aged 6-12 attend school (Zuvekas: 1978b).

An estimated 87 percent of the employed population receive less than US\$240 annually. Income in rural areas is estimated at \$55 annually. Two-thirds of the rural population have annual incomes below \$40 (World Bank: 1975).

These are the grave living conditions of the rural poor. An examination of man-land relations, land tenure and distribution, and of the concentration of power and deep divisions in Haitian society show why they exist.

The Land

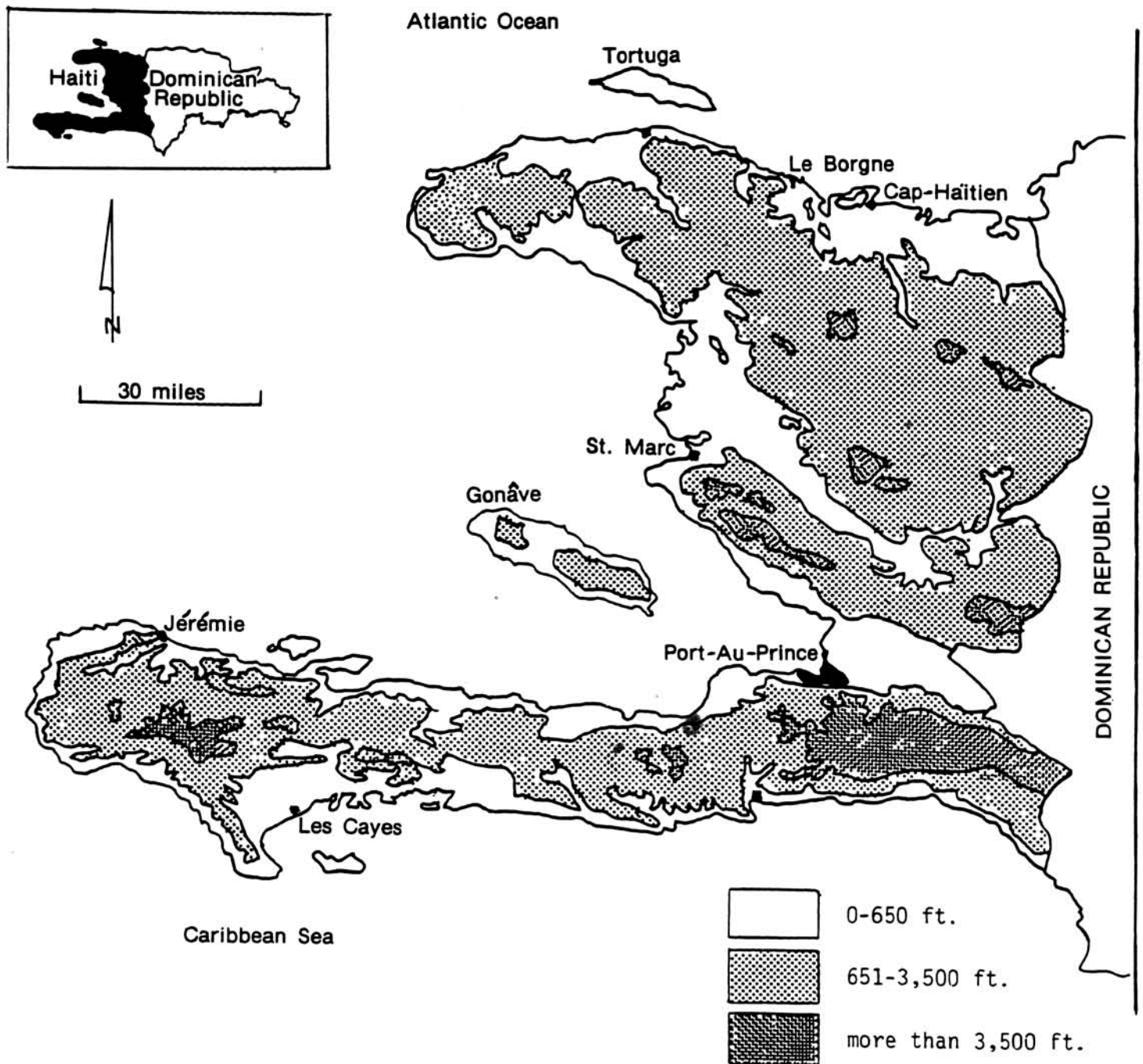
Haiti is a country of peasant farmers. Roughly 80 percent or four million of Haiti's five million people live in the countryside. Given Haiti's small size--roughly that of Maryland--this means an average population density of 470 people per square mile. The intense pressure on the land exists everywhere in the countryside, not just in small, isolated pockets. The problems are ubiquitous as well.

Haiti has a wide variety of land types, from valley and coastal plain to plateau, but the dominant type is mountain range. About four-fifths of the country is laced with mountain ranges and hills. Almost half the total land surface consists of mountainous land with a slope greater than 40 degrees, and only about one-seventh of the total land surface is flat or sloped at less than 10 degrees (Zuvekas: 1978a). Land with a 40 degree slope is hard to stand on without falling off, hence not at all suitable for intense cultivation (See Figure One).

With so much marginal land, and very high density, the people either squeeze onto the good land or try to use the marginal land as best they can. With virtually all optimal agricultural land already in use or under control, the steeply sloping land suitable only for grazing, forest, or perhaps tree crops is increasingly brought under cultivation and the results are predictable--and grave. Massive soil erosion and other forms of environmental degradation are increasing constantly, posing a grave threat to Haiti's future. Deforestation not only is destroying the land, causing gullying, droughts, and floods; it also threatens the main Haitian fuel source--charcoal. The UN predicts that the charcoal industry will not be able to satisfy demand for more than ten years, resulting in a nation-wide crisis (Conservation Foundation: 1977).

The mountains that so dominate the Haitian landscape produce isolation. Transportation and communications networks are weak. Only 15 percent of the nation's 2,328 miles of roadway are paved.

Figure 1: Haiti



Market places are served by either poor roads or no roads at all. This inaccessibility and isolation are barriers to development although they are resolutely overcome by those who covet the countryside's resources.

The basic resource is the land. Given the high population density, one would expect that average land holdings are small, and such is the case. Microfundia, defined as farms of less than 3.19 acres (one carreau), account for 71 percent of all farms according to 1971 census figures. But that covers only 32.5 percent of the total farm area. If farms up to 6.4 acres are included, the percentage jumps to 88.9 percent, and the total farm area covered rises to 58.6 percent. Only five percent of all Haitian farmers hold more than 9.6 acres (See Table One).

In 1971, the average farm size in Haiti was 3.5 acres. While Haiti, unlike other Latin American countries, is not dominated by large land-owners, an important latifundia of sorts does exist. Farms of 25 acres and over, although comprising only 4,835 holdings, or 0.8 percent of all holdings, cover 180,522 acres, or 8.4 percent of the total farming area. And this appears to be a very conservative estimate of larger land holdings. While these data support the contention that latifundia does not dominate the countryside as it does in other Latin American countries, a deeper look is needed to understand the real impact of control over land.

First, with regard to the number of large land holdings and their size, "there is little doubt that the [census] data understate the number of large landholdings and the area they occupy. The 1971 census, for example, shows no farms of more than 15.50 carreaux (49.4 acres) in the West [Department]; but one does not have to drive very far out of Port-au-Prince to see visible evidence to the contrary. [Also] some large sisal and sugar plantations [in the north] clearly were not counted" (Zuvekas: 1978a: 96). Hence, the domination of the latifundia is greater than census figures show.

TABLE ONE

LAND DISTRIBUTION IN HAITI (1971)

Farm Size (Acres)	No. of Farms	% of Farms	Cumula- tive %	Area in Farms	% of Area	Cumula- tive %
.032-.27	16,820	2.7	2.7	2,712	0.1	0.1
.28-.51	36,050	5.9	8.6	14,339	0.7	0.8
.52-.8	107,480	17.4	26.0	87,438	4.1	4.9
.81-1.21	28,485	4.6	30.6	32,602	1.5	6.4
1.22-1.6	104,890	17.0	47.6	162,834	7.6	14.0
1.61-2.5	68,260	11.1	58.7	157,171	7.4	21.4
2.51-3.2	76,010	12.3	71.0	237,926	11.1	32.5
3.21-4.94	65,920	10.7	81.7	286,175	13.4	45.9
4.95-6.39	44,340	7.2	88.9	272,171	12.7	58.6
6.40-7.43	9,260	1.5	90.4	67,500	3.2	61.8
7.44-9.60	27,370	4.4	94.8	239,282	11.2	73.0
9.61-12.34	8,440	1.4	96.2	95,923	4.5	77.5
12.35-12.76	4,300	0.7	96.9	54,709	2.6	80.1
12.77-16.00	7,810	1.3	98.2	118,668	5.6	85.7
16.01-24.9	6,440	1.0	99.2	125,399	5.9	91.6
25-32	2,660	0.4	99.6	72,126	3.4	95.0
32.1-47.9	1,285	0.2	99.8	49,381	2.3	97.3
48-63.8	590	0.1	99.9	32,729	1.5	98.8
More than 63.8	300	0.1	100.0	26,286	1.2	100.0
Total	616,710	100.0	100.0	2,135,370	100.0	100.0

Second, because of the mountainous terrain, optimal agricultural land is a scarce commodity. Of a total land surface of 5,898,851 acres, one report says only 1,914,000 acres are suitable for crops. Of this figure, an estimated 1,100,000 acres (57 percent) are in mountainous areas and are marginal for annual crop production (LeBeau: 1974). Another report estimates that of the total land area, only 1,722,323 acres is land with slopes less than 10 degrees. Much of this good land is under the control of the large landowners. Most of it is either underutilized, extensively used for cattle raising, or planted in export crops such as sugar cane or sisal, or in rice.

Although the nation's land is divided among most of Haiti's people--some 60 to 80 percent of all farmers claim they own their land--the division is not at all equal. While many peasants work on land not well suited for cultivation, the elite group controls significant quantities of prime agricultural land and marginal land as well. The State also plays a significant role in land holding. It is not clear just how much land the State owns, nor how much of it is suitable for agriculture, but the State is perhaps the biggest landowner in Haiti (Zuvekas: 1978a).

Hence, Haiti's land is divided among three principle owners--microfundia, latifundia, and the State. Essentially there are four main types of land tenure in Haiti: individual ownership, renting from the State, renting from a private owner, and sharecropping. Although private ownership of land clearly dominates land tenure statistics, mixed forms of tenure are common. There are innumerable situations where owners of one or two small parcels cannot subsist on their marginal holdings and commonly rent additional land, sharecrop, or supplement low earnings with seasonal agricultural wage labor (Zuvekas: 1978a and Gow: 1977).

Even though the majority of Haitian peasant farmers identify themselves as landowners, there is no indication of

how many of them actually have clear title to their land. No cadastral survey has ever been made in Haiti, but empirical data suggest that relatively few hold clear title (Zuvekas: 1978a).

Farmers at least in theory, control their entire harvest, selling it either on the local market or to the local representative of an export agent. Farmers supply all agricultural inputs and manage their land themselves. However, several factors limit the extent to which farmers actually control their harvest, or even their land.

Since renters and sharecroppers have no security on the land they work, investment is discouraged. Instead, they tend to overwork the land to produce a maximum yearly harvest, often at the cost of environmental damage. This lack of security also affects the peasant freehold farmers who rarely have clear title. Facing the very real possibility of appropriation of their land by a gros nèg ("big shot"), farmers are also discouraged from investing in their land, and encouraged to overwork it. There are substantiated reports of land-grabs, of judges bribed to issue competing land titles, of extortion by locally powerful quasi-governmental authorities. The situation of insecure tenure arrangements is the most severe and debilitating constraint to peasant development in Haiti. But there are several other constraints as well.

Neither owner-operators, sharecroppers, nor renters have any control over prices or markets. Their only access to credit is at usurious rates--100 percent or higher. Storage facilities are limited or non-existent, which forces peasants to glut the market at harvest time, when they receive the lowest prices.

Obviously, peasants are at the mercy of forces beyond their individual control. Caught in a vicious cycle of debt they can never climb above pure subsistence. There is little or no possibility of improvement of agricultural conditions by individual peasants. They are at the bottom rung in a situation where access to and control of resources are vested in a select few. One begins to understand not only why peasants identify

justice as one of their needs, but also the extent of the injustice imposed upon them. It becomes obvious why changes in the physical infrastructure--roads, irrigation systems, markets--will not benefit peasants if they remain in their present condition of dependency. Indeed, infrastructural change may actually lead to their further underdevelopment. Any improvements to the land itself, or in access to the land may well "only pave the way for land-grabbing by the relatively wealthy under a cloak of legality" and result in peasant disenfranchisement from the land (Zuvekas: 1978a: 260).

The peasants then are powerless and extremely dependent on those with power. Who are the powerful and how is power concentrated in their hands?

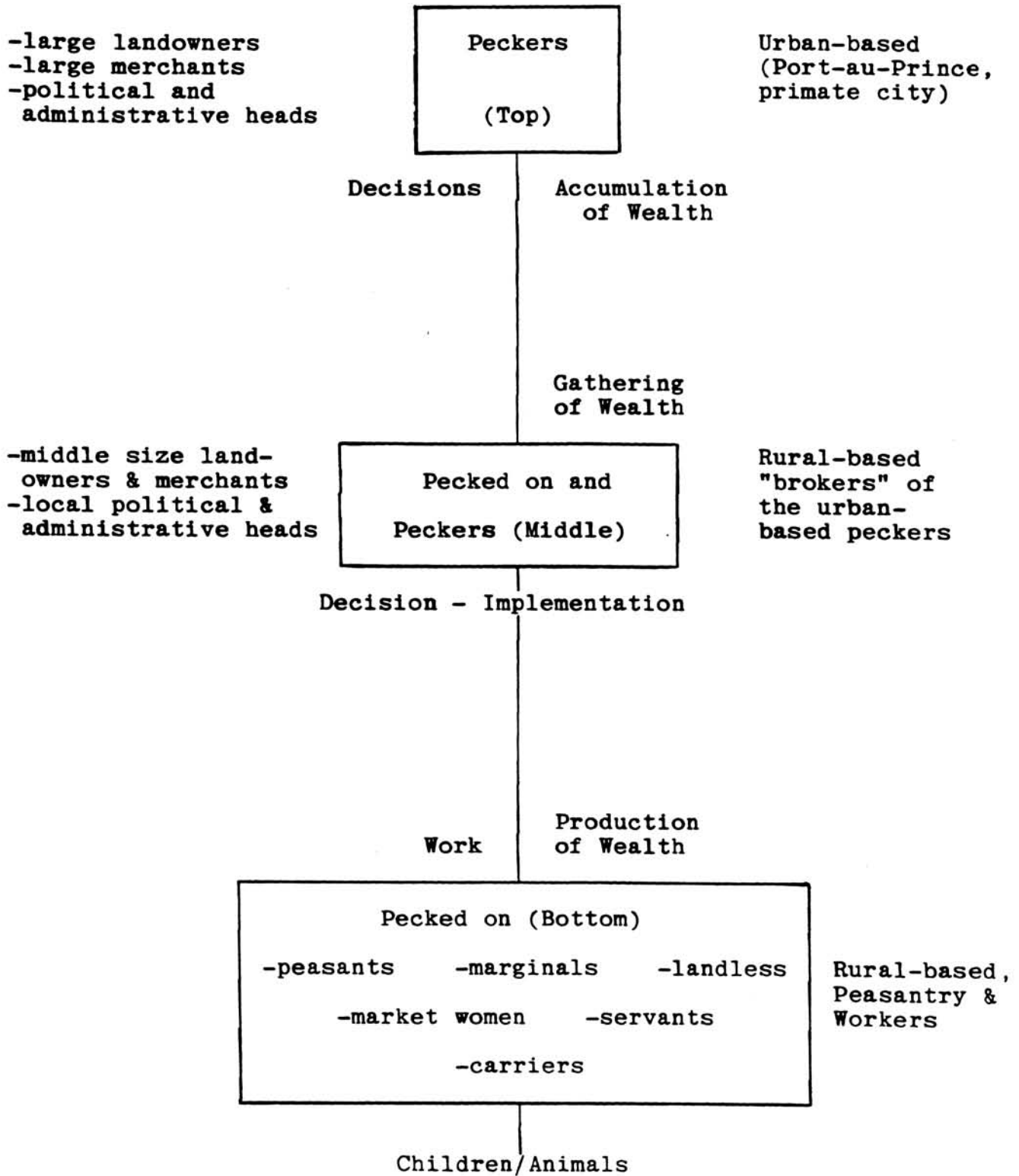
Society

The Haitian class structure is a "pecking order" in which those at the top hold power at a national level--large landowners and merchants, political and administrative heads, a small, elite, and overlapping group. The middle of the pecking order is composed of those with power at the local level--middle-sized landowners, medium-sized merchants and speculators, local minor political and administrative officials, and individuals with specific trades and professions. At the bottom is the great majority--the peasant landowners, renters, and sharecroppers, landless wage and family laborers, market women and petty merchants (Figure Two).

Income distribution in Haiti illustrates the disparities, particularly the concentration of wealth in the urban centers, Port-au-Prince above all. Estimates of GNP and personal income for 1975 for rural and urban areas show vast differences between the two areas. Average urban GNP is \$321 higher than average rural GNP, and urban/rural personal income differentials are \$289. Since 94 percent of the rural population lives in conditions of absolute poverty and two-thirds of that population

FIGURE TWO

PECKING ORDER



has an annual average income of less than US\$40, there must be a small group of rural residents living at relatively high levels. These are the "brokers" of the urban-based Haitian power merchants.

A better notion of the concentration of wealth in Haiti is attained when one realizes that, as of 1976, roughly 5 percent of Haiti's population accumulated more than 50 percent of the national income, and the average per capita income in the highest bracket is 184 times that of the bottom bracket (IHS: 1977).

According to the same source, approximately 7,000 families in Haiti have average annual incomes exceeding \$50,000. Of this group, about 3,000 families live in the Port-au-Prince area and have an average annual income estimated at almost \$100,000 (IHS: 1977).

Additional indicators of the urban/rural dichotomy and the concentration of wealth and power in the urban milieu are found in other statistics:

- Eighty-three percent of Haiti's FY1975/76 expenditures were in Port-au-Prince, which holds roughly only 20 percent of Haiti's population.
- Ninety percent of all Haiti's industrial activities are centered in Port-au-Prince (IHS: 1977).

There is then a classic center/periphery system where the center extracts from the periphery to develop the center. The only re-investment at the periphery is that necessary to maintain or extend the extraction network. For example, building feeder roads in the name of agricultural development may only reinforce peasant underdevelopment by facilitating the further extraction of resources from the rural producers, without any necessary change in their status.

The concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a small elite in the capital gives rise to a centralization in

decision-making that contributes strongly to the underdevelopment of rural areas. Administrative and financial autonomy at the regional or community level is totally insignificant. It only follows that government policies and services cater mostly to the urban sector.

In addition, the highly centralized and concentrated system leaves little room for organization at the local level. There are no formal, legally recognized organizations at the community level which represent peasant interests. Thus there is a lack of initiative at that level. Actions are stymied, talent and resources drained, and a massive sense of fatalism that all decisions are in the hands of others is pervasive.

The urban-rural dichotomy is reinforced by a cultural dichotomy which affects underdevelopment of the peasantry. This dichotomy is between what is "official" in Haitian culture and what is "tolerated." The "official" represents the city, the citadin (townsman) and those with power, whereas the "tolerated" represents those outside the city, the paysan (peasant), and in general, those at the bottom. Thus, French language, the Catholic religion, marriage, and health care in hospitals are parts of the official culture; while Creole, Voudou religion, common law marriage, and folk medicine are "tolerated." (See Table Two). There is a strong correlation between the official culture and the lifestyle and cultural mores of the small, powerful elite; as there is between what is merely "tolerated" and the lifestyle and cultural mores of the peasants, 80 percent of the Haitian population. One can easily imagine the debilitating effects on the collective psyche of the vast majority of the people when they are considered inferior simply for being themselves. This fortifies the peasantry's own belief in its natural inferiority, its acceptance of its poverty, and its inability to do anything about the situation. It also fortifies the assumption that peasants, by virtue of their "inferiority," exist to serve the townsmen, who live in the superior, "official" world.†

TABLE 2

DUALITY IN HAITIAN CULTURE

	<u>Official</u>	<u>Tolerated</u>
language	French	Creole
religion	Catholicism	Voudou
sexual union	Marriage	Plaçage (common law)
health care	Hospital	"Dr. Fèy" (folk medicine)

In today's world, for the majority of Haitians to live in a situation where they believe themselves inferior because of their cultural practices is a blatant anachronism. Eventually, as part of their development needs, it will become clear that the Haitian peasantry seeks to practice its culture and have its majority status recognized. Perhaps the peasant's desire for justice represents, in part, this yearning for cultural legitimation.

This then is the situation of underdevelopment in Haiti, and the structures that enforce it. How have agencies seeking to encourage development, both from within and without Haiti, dealt with this situation?

† Interviews with Haitian peasant leaders have brought out the fact that not only do peasants accept their lot as 'natural', they have come to believe that there is no alternative to it. A supporting example comes from a story related by a member of the urban elite.

After years of visiting the country and returning to town laden with gifts of fruit and other produce from peasants, this individual came to realize that peasants, by offering their precious produce to townsmen, were not necessarily doing so out of the kindness of their hearts or their urge to share and to be generous, as townsmen have been led to believe. Rather, peasants give freely of their valuable produce because, in their eyes and in the eyes of society, they grow up believing that they have to give to the townsmen; this is expected of them, the inferior ones.

DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN HAITI

Starting in the 1960s, a wave of "development madness" began to sweep over Haiti, and it has continued since. It reaches into virtually every isolated pocket of the country with some activity having some kind of impact. In 1976 there were some 146 international, multinational, bilateral, or non-governmental agencies with operations in Haiti (United Nations: 1977), approximately one development agency for every 33,000 Haitians. And this figure does not include the many Government of Haiti development agencies. The vast majority of these 146 agencies were religious or secular service organizations. Ten were international, ten bilateral, and four multilateral.

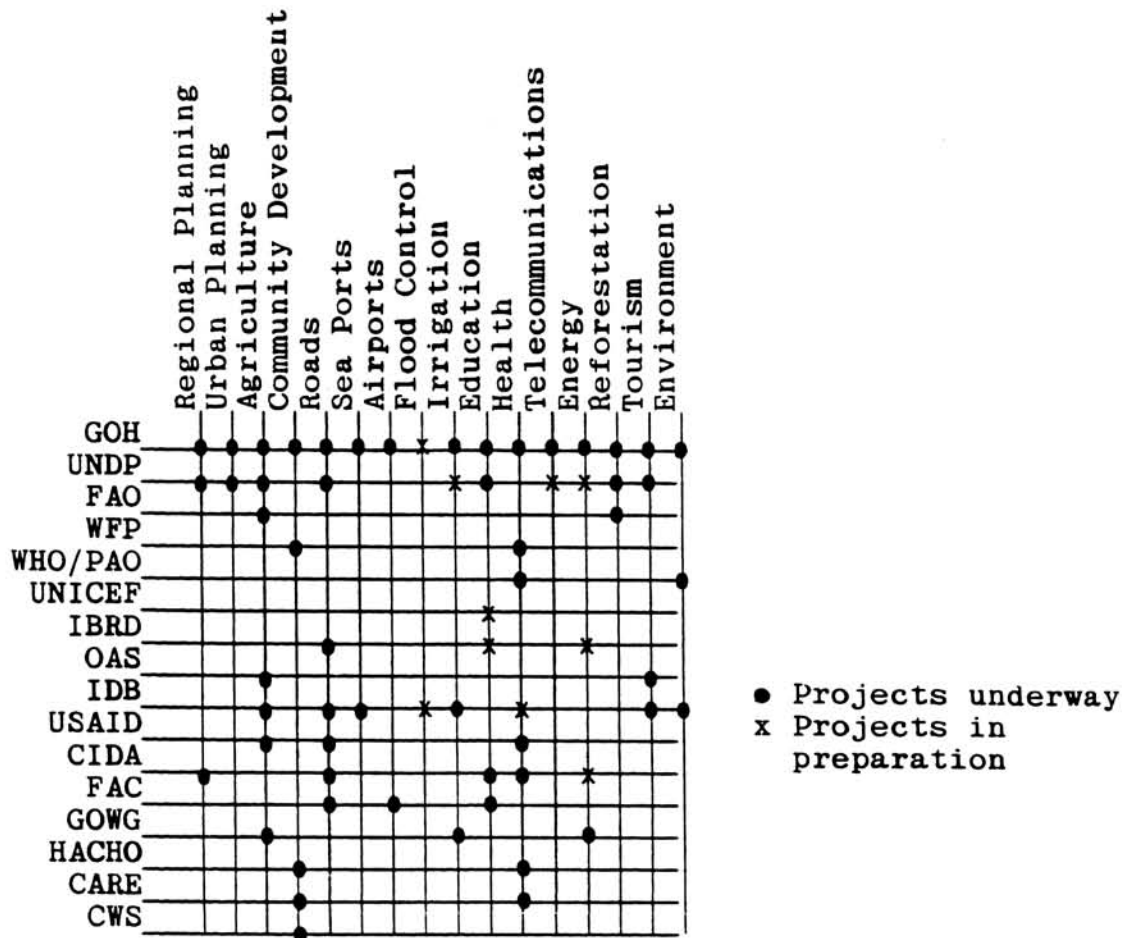
The agencies varied tremendously in size, budget, type and number of projects. United Nations estimates put total multilateral and bilateral aid in 1976 at \$68.7 million, and aid from non-governmental agencies at another \$12.3 million, probably a serious underestimation (UN: 1977).

The activities are as numerous as the organizations. The major development agencies have identified special sectors into which they channel their development budgets, personnel, and activities, and often concentrate their efforts in a particular region or department (See Table Three).

Three development strategies have been followed--the integrated project where several activities are undertaken in a small area; the regional, single-activity project and the national or regional project concerned with one type of activity but set in a very local area. With many agencies pursuing one or more strategies, Haiti today is, as one writer put it, "a veritable gallery of the forms of rural development activities" (Girault: 1977; 4).

TABLE THREE

DEVELOPMENT AGENCY INTEREST SECTORS



- GOH Government of Haiti
- FAO Food and Agriculture Organization
- WFP World Food Program
- WHO/PAO World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization
- UNICEF U.N. International Children's Education Fund
- IBRD International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- OAS Organization of American States
- IDB Inter-American Development Bank
- USAID U.S. Agency for International Development
- CIDA Canadian International Development Agency
- FAC French Aid and Cooperation
- GOWG Government of West Germany
- HACHO Haitian American Community Help Organization
- CWS Church World Services

So many development agencies are active because the UN has classified Haiti as one of the world's 25 poorest countries. As such, it is eligible for the most intense activities of the UN Development Program, and draws increased attention from multilateral and bilateral donors as well as religious and charitable organizations.

What difference do these programs make? Is Haiti becoming "developed"? To fully answer those questions is beyond the limited scope of this monograph, but the discussion in the previous pages suggests a negative answer. To see why this may be so, an examination of the activities of typical development organizations seem appropriate. Two will be discussed: the US Agency for International Development (USAID or AID), a governmental organization working through the Government of Haiti, and the Haitian American Community Help Organization (HACHO), a local non-governmental organization.

USAID

The Agency for International Development has been active in Haiti since 1970, when the U.S. resumed development efforts after a ten-year absence. Currently, AID finances diverse projects and its impact in Haiti is significant. Its 1978 budget there was just under \$16 million. In 1975, when its budget was considerably smaller, it represented seven percent of the Government of Haiti's total expenditures (USAID: 1977).

The Agency's objectives in Haiti are:

to help rural inhabitants achieve a better life by developing local institutions which participate in programs to increase production and income in rural Haiti, and create a framework for government programs to provide essential services in rural Haiti; to strengthen government and private institutions--particularly those involved in rural development and in providing health and family planning services--which in turn will help to create local institutions able to provide essential services and to introduce new ideas to the people of rural Haiti (Zuvekas: 1978a; 322).

As its basic development strategy, AID follows essentially a top-down approach. Projects and activities are identified, planned, and administered by AID officials and contractors and the Haitian government. The assumption is that the benefits will fall upon those for whom the projects are enacted, that is the rural poor. With this approach, the beneficiary of the development intervention plays a passive role. The thrust comes from outside. The process is supported by high capital expenditures often related to some kind of physical change such as the construction of a road or buildings.

Agency activities in Haiti are grouped under five major headings--food and nutrition, population planning, health, education and human resource development, and selected development activities. Most activity is in the food and nutrition area where AID has programs in rural community development, agricultural development, road maintenance, small farmer development, agricultural feeder roads, nutrition improvement, integrated agricultural development, and small farmer marketing.

A look at one example, the Small Farmer Development project, provides useful insights into how AID works. That project seeks to raise the production and incomes of small coffee farmers. Coffee has been the base of Haitian exports for over 150 years. Small farmers are the primary producers. An elaborate system based on speculators and urban-based négociants has evolved to control marketing and export.

In 1974, AID signed a \$6 million agreement with the Government of Haiti for a five-year program to improve coffee production. The program was to modernize the coffee production sector by setting up six centers which would demonstrate modern methods, by building and improving some 38 miles of feeder roads into coffee zones, and by financing the purchase of some 14,000 tons of coffee fertilizer from U.S. sources to be sold to farmers cultivating roughly 13 acres of coffee or less.

When planning the coffee project, U.S. and Haitian officials decided that the modernization of the coffee sector would be best done through a program heavily focused on fertilizer use (Girault: 1977). Of the \$6 million budgeted, \$5 million was earmarked for buying fertilizer. To enable small farmers to buy fertilizers, credit societies (SAC) composed of small groups of peasant coffee producers were to be formed. For the first few years of the program, the fertilizer would be sold at prices below the market value to encourage farmers to take up its use. Progressively, prices would rise to market levels.

The thrust of the project and the way it evolved demonstrate how AID development strategy works:

Needs were identified by various experts, and the project was planned at the top. Participation by coffee farmers in planning and management was minimal. Project actions appeared from the outside--for example, a cadre of technicians moved into selected areas to promote them. To participate in the credit program, a small farmer had to join a group overseen by a Haitian government agency. Government experts directed the project at all levels of management and decision-making.

The first steps were the construction of roads and coffee centers--physical changes on the landscape--with simultaneous efforts to get the peasant beneficiaries to understand the significance of the project so they would then participate. Introduction of technology, i.e., the use of fertilizer, was the keystone of the whole project.

While the project is not yet completed, and a final verdict is therefore impossible, several weaknesses are apparent. One of the coffee centers was located in Thiote, an important coffee area, but one without many penetration roads and with extremely mountainous terrain, making participation by small coffee farmers in the surrounding area unlikely. In addition, the karst (limestone) topography means there is often a serious lack of surface water at Thiote, making it impractical to install a coffee bean depulping and washing operations, both critical to the center's activities.

In spite of these constraints, the center was located in Thiotte, and a good part of the loan for fertilizer went to that zone. Thiotte is the home of the man who was the Minister of Agriculture at the time the decisions on locating the centers were made. He is also a large-scale coffee producer, as are many of his neighbors. American assistance funds destined for the small coffee planters of Haiti were concentrated in the only region of the country where one finds a relatively homogenous group of large planters (Girault: 1977: 18, 21).

Another coffee center was placed "in marginal territory from the point of view of the ecology of coffee, because it is at an altitude too low: 250 meters (roughly 810 feet). But it has been chosen because one finds there a demonstration farm of the Department of Agriculture, although it is in ruins after the passage of a hurricane during the 1960s. . ." (Girault: 1977: 18).

From these examples, it is clear that such projects are subject to political pressures which may skew them away from the overall goals, particularly the goal of benefiting small farmers.

There are additional problems. The fertilizer program is behind schedule for two reasons--the slow and rigid procedures for disbursing credit, and the farmers' hesitancy about adopting the use of fertilizer. The loan program is complex and tangled in the red tape of the issuing agency (the Bureau of Agricultural Credit). During the first several years of the program, farmers have been slow in demanding fertilizer, a common phenomenon given peasant farmers' low-risk agricultural strategies. There have also been some bad experiences with fertilizer-burned trees where fertilizer was applied too intensively, sometimes by agronomists and agricultural agents at the coffee center. Peasants however are not automatically against innovation.

Field surveys in northern Haiti have shown peasants to be generally amenable to taking small risks, providing they understand the possibilities for gain and have decided themselves to take the risk (Maguire: 1978a).

Another drawback to planning from the top is the frequent misunderstanding of peasant reality. In this case, for example, defining a small coffee farmer as one with up to 13 acres in production ignores the realities of Haitian land distribution. Farmers with more than 10 acres of coffee are most likely members of the local elite.

But perhaps the most basic problem with the project is the overall rationale. Girault argues that the attempt to modernize an agricultural sector through massive capital inputs is unlikely to promote meaningful development for small farmers. The fundamental causes of their underdevelopment--the inequities of the social relationships that dominate both the marketing system and the land tenure arrangements, and that keep peasants dependent--are not addressed by the project's activities. Until they are, those on top will benefit from development, while those on the bottom gain little or nothing.

HACHO

The Haitian American Community Help Organization was created in 1966 to furnish technical and material aid to the Northwest, Haiti's poorest region. It seeks to stimulate peasants in that zone to embrace principles of cooperativism and to assist them in their socio-economic development. It started with four employees, now employs some 170 people, primarily Haitians, and has hundreds of workers in rural community development activities in its network.

As a semi-private development organization, HACHO receives funding from several sources, primarily American. AID provides the bulk of the organization's support through its Food for Work (FFW) program. CARE and the Church World Service also

provide assistance. The Government of Haiti contributes small sums of operating capital and some heavy equipment and personnel.

Clearly, HACHO differs from AID in several fundamental ways. Its personnel are active in the field. It is a smaller organization with a smaller operating budget. In principle, at least, it is not tied exclusively to one organization or institution for support or approval of its activities. It is active in one specific region, thus has more direct contact with the community level.

The Organization provides assistance in health, community development, agriculture and education. Roughly one-half of its budget goes into health. HACHO typically works through local community councils, providing them with technical and financial resources to carry out community development projects. The local councils are a relatively recent development in Haiti, created over the last ten years through central government initiatives.

In 1975-76, individual community councils in ^{the} Northwest began to request specific assistance from HACHO. After a year of involvement, however, HACHO felt that the community council-identified activities were not successful primarily because the councils were unable to set priorities and establish cohesive work plans. HACHO addressed this by providing trained animation agents to the councils. According to several sources, this has not worked to expectations in most cases (field interviews and Gow: 1977). There appear to be three primary problems--the structure of the councils, the preparation of the animators, and the way Food for Work is used.

The gravest problem with the community councils is that their leadership, vested in an executive committee, tends to come from the local gros nèg. Executive committee members on the average have a family income more than double that of regular council members (Gow: 1977: 18). The poorest members of a community do not even join the councils.

Peasant participation in identifying and planning programs is therefore certain to be stifled within the councils because of the domination by individuals who exercise power over them. Problems identified and actions taken may even be those that will primarily benefit the gros nèg, and perhaps not benefit peasants at all. One example occurred in a community where the council sought to improve irrigation on land close to a town, land controlled by the same elite group that dominates the council. In this instance, peasant council members worked, through a Food for Work grant made by HACHO, to provide more land with water. But the project did not improve conditions for those peasants who live beyond this small enclave. Nor did it help the peasants who rent this land, since it led to increased rents.

The problem with the animators is that, although they frequently come from the bottom sector of society, for various reasons they often wind up supporting the local elite. This happens sometimes because the animators, not being from the community in which they work, seek economic and personal security, which the local power brokers can most easily grant. In addition, the animators receive a high enough salary from HACHO to immediately place them in a relatively elite position in the community. Anyone with a sizeable, dependable salary in a village--a rare phenomenon--is immediately ascribed gros nèg status, and apparently animators readily accept it. Some of them even become landowners, and rent their land to those with whom they are supposed to be working. Their ineffectiveness as change agents becomes complete when they reach the point where they defend the status quo instead of seek to change social relationships.

Food for Work is a controversial program. All corners of the Haitian development community have criticized it for a potentially strong, negative impact on community development. Under the program, peasants are given surplus food for their participation in some community development activity. They tend

to regard it as payment for work, and thus do not acquire any new attitudes about the possibility of working together for development of their communities. Often, when Food for Work is no longer available, peasants stop working, sometimes even leaving a project incomplete.

From this overview, it becomes apparent that some of the same weaknesses that plague AID efforts affect HACHO. There is a total lack of participation by peasants in the identification of needs, planning of activities, and the management and control of projects. The thrust for development seems to come from outside. Activities aim at changing "things" rather than social relationships. Since changing things often involves massive inputs of capital, technology, and machinery, the activities are beyond the control of the beneficiaries and tend to reinforce the attitude that development is something done for people, but not necessarily by the people themselves.

These development interventions make very little difference to the intended target population--the poorest of the poor. With the millions of dollars of development assistance pouring into Haiti and the myriad development organizations and activities, the people at the bottom are still hungry, still trapped in underdevelopment and dependency.

DEVELOPMENT FROM THE BOTTOM UP

Although their development needs are diverse, for Haitian peasants to improve their productive capability and their relative standing within the social, economic, and political system of which they are a part, human development must come before physical development. The opposite sequence results, as has been seen, in some initial physical mutation, but not necessarily in subsequent human development of the peasantry.

Haitian peasants identify justice as a need they feel. To facilitate a development process that has a chance of attaining increased justice, it is necessary to make that often used term concrete. Clearly, the picture of Haitian underdevelopment demonstrates that peasants suffer grave conditions of injustice. There are several areas where improvements in social relationships are needed. Peasants need, for example:

- greater security on the land and legitimation of their ownership through provision of clear legal titles;
- access to credit at fair interest rates;
- increased access to and control over good agricultural lands;
- legitimation of their lifestyle and cultural mores;
- increased capability to influence decisions, to initiate local activities, and to exercise local autonomy;
- a more even distribution of wealth and services.

To meet these needs, fundamental social and economic relationships have to change. If these changes occur, and the needs are realized, development at the base can take place and injustices can be eliminated.

Before looking directly at IDEA, the facilitator agency working to bring about these changes, a brief overview of one of the settings for IDEA's efforts, the parish of Le Borgne, will be given.

Le Borgne

Le Borgne parish on the mountainous north coast of Haiti consists of the town of the same name and 55 habitations surrounding it. Some 1,765 families, a total population of 8,987 people, live within its 22 square miles, slightly under a third of them in the town itself (Charest & Jean-Baptiste: 1976). The population density of the parish is 408 people per square mile, lower than the national average but still indicating intense pressure on the land.

Le Borgne was chartered by the King of France around 1760. It was a seaport of significance, exporting locally grown produce, first in colonial times, and again some 35 to 40 years ago, during a banana boom. Coffee and cacao were the dominant colonial crops but today there are no signs of large plantation activities.

After the Haitian revolution, French and mulattoes disappeared from Le Borgne and the revolutionary leadership granted land to loyal military officers, thus establishing a local black landowning elite. Peasants probably claimed or at least occupied land on the peripheral areas of the parish. Since the revolution, the town has served as a minor center of commerce for the surrounding habitations. Several local families, presumably those with the most extensive landholdings, emerged as small-scale merchants and assumed roles of local leadership. These families, however, although landowners, tended not to have much operating capital. Hence, their position, while important locally, was not significant on a national or even regional scale.

The parish's leading gros nèg family first arrived in Le Borgne in the late 1890s. Its patriarch was a Port-au-Prince merchant who came to Le Borgne with capital, set up a large store, and began to provide credit to farmers and acquire mortgages. Subsequent natural disasters, bad harvests, or low prices provided opportunities for foreclosure and the merchant

began to accumulate land. He eventually became the parish's largest merchant, largest coffee speculator and dealer, and the only cacao-buying agent by exclusive government license.

The patriarch is now dead, but his grandchildren continue to manage family operations. They buy virtually the entire local coffee crop and ship it to Port-au-Prince in family-owned trucks. The landholdings collected over the years are rented to individual families. Today, this family is the largest landholder in the parish, with the possible exception of the State. Of course there are several other local families with similar operations, but on a smaller scale.

Until recently, Le Borgne was largely isolated from the rest of the country behind the surrounding mountains. Until 1950, there was no direct road link with the outside. All contact with administrative centers such as Cap-Haïtien was either by foot, animal transport, or the sea.

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Le Borgne enjoyed relative prosperity brought on by a brief banana boom. It was around this time that land holdings appear to have been consolidated and the present distribution of land took shape. The boom collapsed shortly after it began, returning Le Borgne to its position as a minor center of commerce. Today the only local product that leaves by boat is people--individuals in small, fragile vessels seeking economic refuge in Miami or the Bahamas.

Le Borgne is representative of underdevelopment in Haiti, replicating the conditions outlined above for the whole country:

- In health, for example, 64 percent of the population of Le Borgne showed evidence of some general sickness, fever, or tuberculosis; 50 percent had symptoms of parasites; 42 percent suffered from malnutrition; potable water was unavailable; infant mortality in rural areas was 26 percent.
- In education, 78 percent of the adults were illiterate; 61 percent never went to school; the closest secondary school is 28 miles away in Cap-Haïtien.

- No data were available on income but the poverty of the vast majority of Le Borgne's people is visible: 65 percent live in two-room mud houses with a sheet iron roof and another 33 percent in even cheaper houses of mud and straw. Only two percent had concrete houses. While 88 percent of all families live on agriculture, only 10 percent of farmers had a hoe, only six percent a pick.

The Land

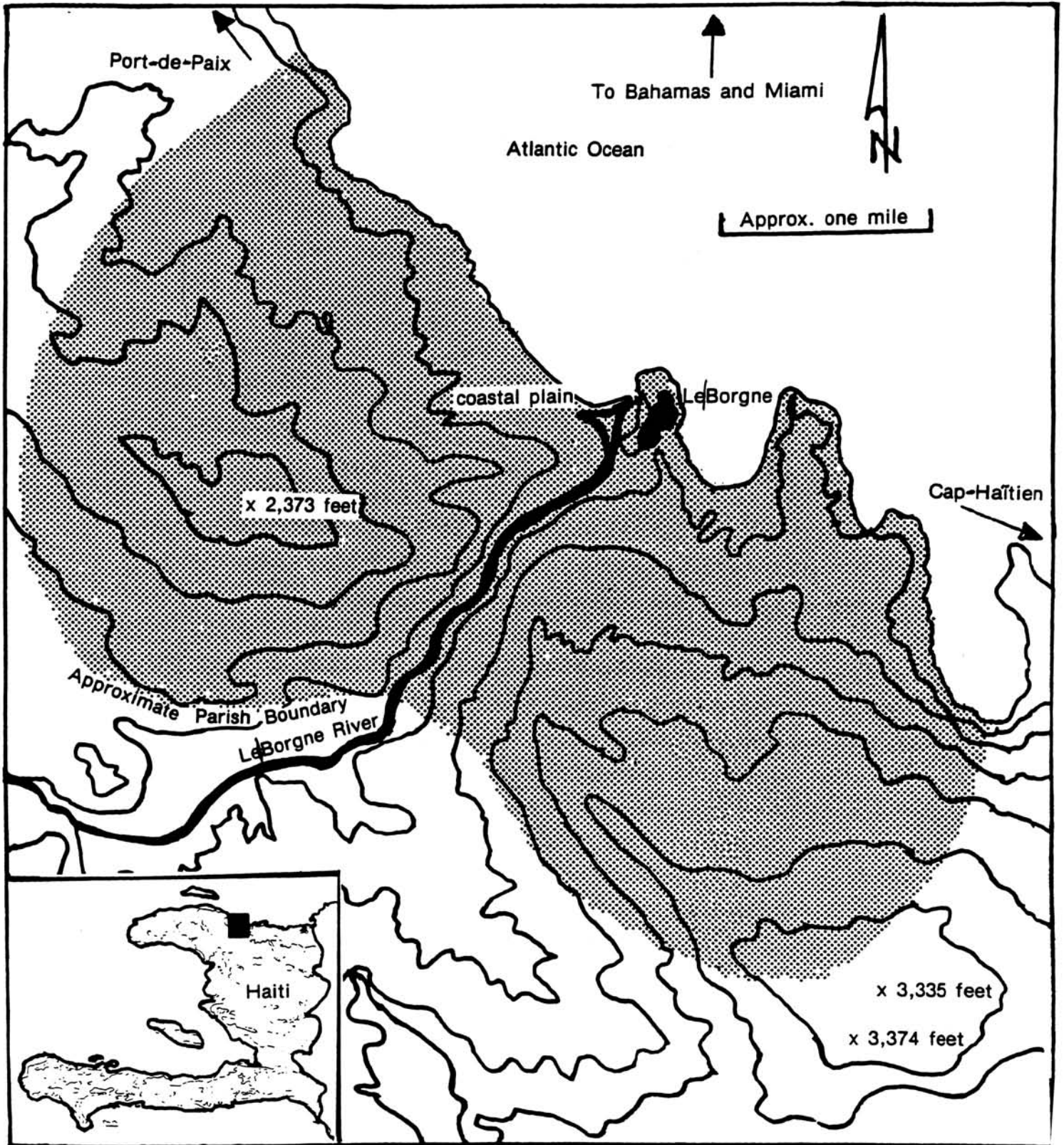
The physical geography of Le Borgne parish is rugged. Mountains rise in most places along the coast, leaving only one small coastal plain west of the village. With 88 percent of the families engaging in agriculture, not only is all tillable land intensely worked, but many marginal areas as well. Peasants farm on precipitous slopes where it is difficult simply to stand. Mountainsides said to have been totally forested 20 years ago now display patches of slashed and burned earth cleared for planting. Farmers seeking new land to cultivate not only climb higher into the mountains, but also cultivate river bottom land during the dry season, hoping to harvest before the waters rise (See Figure Three). As might be expected, such intense cultivation, particularly on sloping, marginal lands, has caused erosion and gullying.

Land Distribution

In Le Borgne, 75 percent of the total population lives on farms from one-half to 9-1/2 acres. The land area this group controls amounts to 52 percent of the total of farm land, a figure relatively high in comparison with national statistics.

Only 14 Le Borgne families have land holdings of 32 acres and over, but they own at least 22 percent of the total land area. The figures are unreliable, and almost certainly underrepresent the actual holdings of these families. During interviews with peasants and town leaders alike, for example, one

Figure 3: Map of LeBorgne Parish



particular family was repeatedly said to hold over 319 acres of land, yet records make no mention of this.

In addition to the microfundia-latifundia division of land in the parish, a small middle group owning from 13 to 32 acres controls 26 percent of the total land area. They tend to be village residents with family land rented or sharecropped by others (See Table 4).

The land title situation in Le Borgne is as vague as it is elsewhere in Haiti. The majority of farmers claim to be freehold owners of their parcels, but possession of clear title is doubtful. As recently as a dozen years ago, farmers in the area were losing their land to outsiders arriving from Cap-Haïtien with papers giving them title.

Often, having taken possession, they would then sell the land back to the farmer, who would have to go into debt to moneylenders to buy it.

Working the Land

Freehold farm parcels are by far the most common type of tenure (See Table 5). Field data indicates that owner-operated plots are clustered mainly in the habitations in the parish's peripheral areas. The owner-operators typically work several family plots, planting garden crops such as corn, beans, yams, and manioc, as well as working some coffee trees. The coffee harvest is sold to local speculators, while the food crops are consumed at home or sold on the local market.

These peasant farmers are among the area's poorest people. They typically own their home and the plot on which it stands, but lack even the basic tools needed for farming. Because of this, they have a difficult time working their land and making improvements. Since they tend to live in the most remote areas, they generally occupy the most inhospitable land. Erosion is a grave problem on many of these plots, even though peasants are aware of it and have begun to take some steps towards combatting it, such as building rudimentary terraces.

TABLE FOUR

LAND DISTRIBUTION IN LE BORGNE (1974/75)

Size of Holding (Acres)	No. of People	No. of Families	Amount of Land
0	1380	326	0
.4	530	126	50
.8	1161	220	175
1.6	1433	259	413
2.4	367	60	144
3.19-6.3	1691	284	906
6.4-12.7	1541	231	1474
12.75-19	498	69	880
19.1-31.9	299	43	690
32-159.5	39	7	233
160-319	28	7	1117
Total	8968	1632	60,680

But the lack of tools and experience inhibits the effectiveness of their action (Charest & Jean-Baptiste: 1976). Clearly, however, these attempts demonstrate a willingness to invest in the land, if only out of sheer necessity.

Land in the parish is rented either from the State or from an individual owner. In principle, State land is leased to peasant farmers yearly for a flat fee. In practice, however, it is commonly rented by blocs of, say 30 acres, to someone from the village who in turn rents small parcels to peasant farmers--at a 100 percent profit (See Figure Four).

Rents must be paid each year. In years of drought or too much rain, peasant producers borrow money at usurious interest rates--100 percent or more--from money-lenders to pay their rent. If they do not pay promptly, their chances of renting good land the next year are lessened. Under this system, it is obvious how peasants are kept in debt and dependent on those with some control over land and capital.

Rents vary according to the size of plot, quality of land, location, and to whom it is being rented, a consideration which indicates the role of favoritism in the patron-client relationship, another factor which helps promote the "chin manje chin" (dog eat dog) relationship among peasants. It is a system of control, and as one peasant said, "We've been trapped in this system as long as we can remember--our fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers . . ."

In spite of this "chin manje chin" situation, however, and contrary to the assumption among most social scientists that there is no strong historical basis for cooperative or communal farming in Haiti (Zuvekas: 1978a: 260-61), research in Le Borgne reveals some types of cooperation. Besides common work by family groups, there are several types of work groups in the parish which come together on an ad hoc basis, either for a wage or for mutual volunteer assistance. Some 35 percent of all peasants work in some form of association or group, which provides a basis for the formation of peasant agricultural groups.

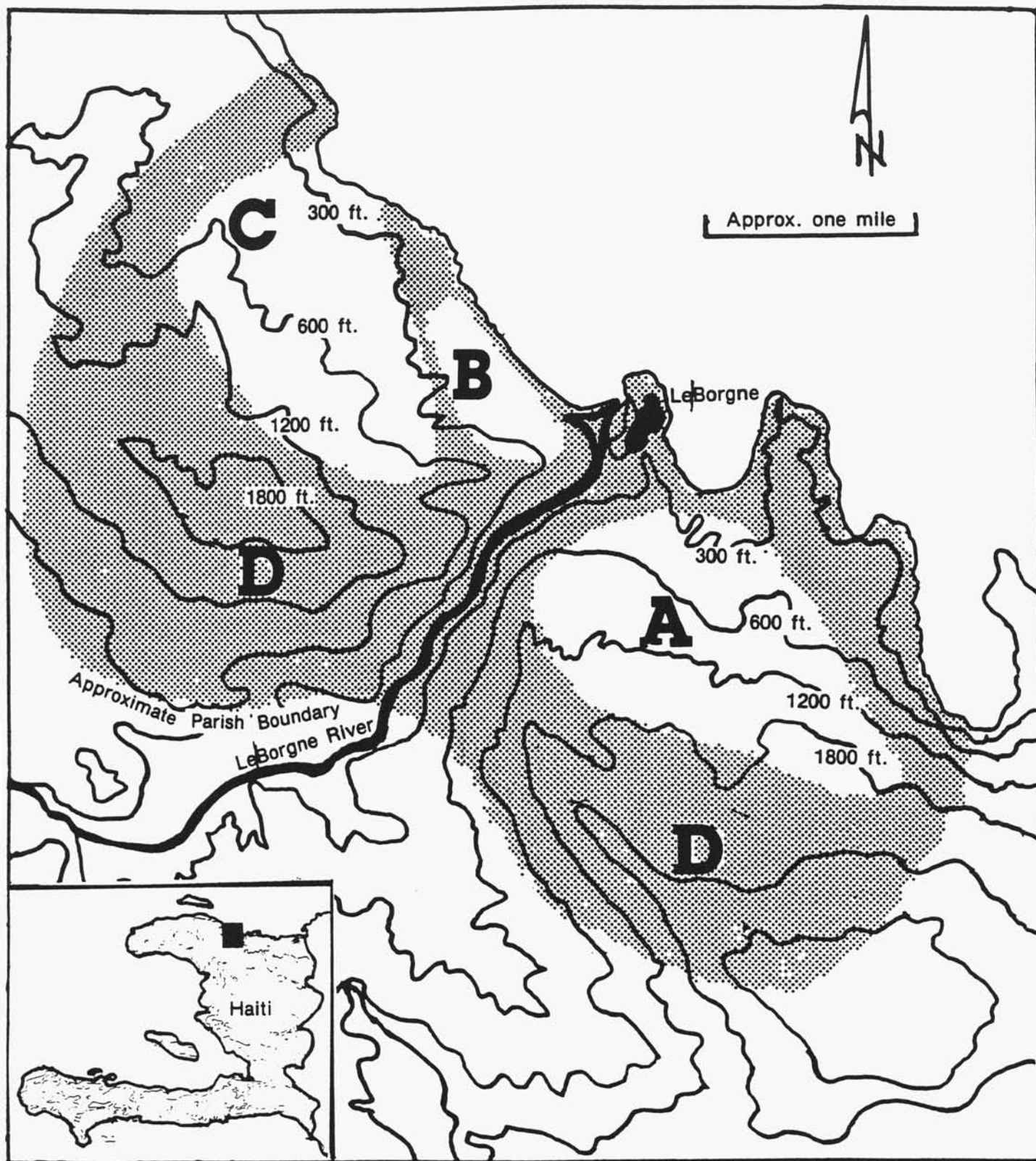
TABLE FIVE

SELECTED DISTRIBUTION/TENURE OF

PEASANT HOLDINGS IN LE BORGNE

Size (Acres)	Number Owned	No. Rented From State	No. Rented From Individual	Landless	Total No. of Holdings
0	-	-	-	10	-
.2-.4	0	0	0	-	0
.4-.8	5	1	2	-	8
.8-1.6	11	2	5	-	18
1.6-2.4	11	3	1	-	15
2.4-3.2	4	0	0	-	4
3.2-4.8	6	1	2	-	9
4.8-6.4	1	0	0	-	1
6.4-9.6	5	0	0	-	5
9.6-12.8	3	1	0	-	4
12.8-16	1	0	0	-	1
16 and over	2	0	0	-	2
Total	49	8	10	10	67

Figure 4: LeBorgne Parish, Tenure Types



Tenure Types (Approximate)

- A. State-owned land
- B. Flat land sharecropped

- C. Land rented from "The" family
- D. Largely freehold "Claimed" land

Le Borgne and the Outside

Le Borgne is isolated at the end of a road impassable when the rains fall and barely passable under good weather conditions. The road link with the outside is maintained so coffee can be extracted and local merchants can procure the few consumer goods they sell. The parish is part of an extraction that starts in the surrounding habitations in the peasant gardens and ends, nationally, in Port-au-Prince. Any wealth concentrated or invested in Le Borgne is there in order to facilitate the operation of the resource-extraction network.

Not only is Le Borgne at the end of the extraction system, and therefore a net loser of wealth, it also sees its human wealth drained away by emigration. Those few local residents who go off to secondary school do not often return home after finishing. In fact, education is an escape route out of Le Borgne. While the parish loses its educated youth to other places, it also loses a substantial part of its skilled and semi-skilled workers to cities in Haiti, or more commonly, to the Bahamas, the U.S., or Canada. Close to two percent of Le Borgne's total population, for example, is now in the Bahamas.

The pattern of highly centralized decision-making in Haiti, even on minor matters, is evident in Le Borgne. Any request or petition for public works by local residents will most likely go unanswered for two to three years as the request works its way up the chain of command and a response--not necessarily positive--filters back down to the people.

Social structure within Le Borgne mirrors the dichotomy between town and country typical of Haiti. Wealth and power are concentrated--relatively--in the town, where there are five distinct groups. At the top of the order are the merchants, large landowners, truckowners, priest, and government officials. Five or six families dominate this group. Even though their decision-making autonomy is limited and largely dependent on outside forces, as local gros nègs they exert considerable influence over the lives of those in the parish.

A second group is composed of local professionals-- school teachers, and tradesmen such as carpenters, masons, and tailors.

The next three groups are made up of those at the bottom--the farmers who live in the town and work their own parcels in the country; the charcoal makers; and all the marginals, the part-time employed, the landless, those who carry things for others.

There are no women at the top level except the wives or widows in one of the leading families. There are a few women professionals, particularly school teachers and seamstresses. In general, however, the vast majority of women--bakers, small-scale merchants, servants, and market women--fall within the same three groups at the bottom as the men identified above.

With the exception of the chef de section, a low-level political figure who often works as agent for the land-owning gros nèg, men and women in the countryside form one rather homogenous group, at the bottom of society's rungs.

Along with the town-countryside dichotomy in the parish, there is also a dichotomy based on "official" and "tolerated" cultural characteristics, although it is not as clearly marked as in the broad national context. In matters of health, for example, the town has no hospitals. Two clinics dispense medicine and treat minor ailments, and they are widely consulted. But the medical institutions which most affect the vast majority of the people of Le Borgne are the "tolerated" ones of the folk doctor, the mid-wife, and traditional folk medicines such as teas, infusions, and sea baths.

As for religion, 88 percent of Le Borgne families are Catholics, but religious practice is weak. Only 33 percent of all Catholics attend weekly masses. Voudou is widely practiced and transcends town-countryside distinctions.

Few data exist on marriage. But in 1974-75 only 31 marriages were registered. Common-law marriage therefore must be widespread.

Nor are much data available on Creole vs. French language use. Interviews and efforts to speak French suggest that very few people in the parish speak it, although many can more or less understand it. In all business, governmental, and religious activities, however, Creole, the "tolerated" language, is used.

The people of Le Borgne fit in that 80 percent of the Haitian population whose cultural practices and preferences are merely "tolerated"--hence in a second-class status. Within their milieu, Le Borgne residents practice their culture comfortably. When outside, however, peasants commonly lose confidence, sink into submissive, withdrawn behavior.

Within their environment, Haitian peasants have devised many strategies and coping mechanisms to survive under conditions of extreme poverty and dependence. They organize in various work groups for some form of economic gain. But in terms of organizations enabling social development, there is little activity. There is a lack of local organizations that serve peasant development interests. In Le Borgne, the only organizations in existence, at the time of the parish survey, were the Freemasons and the Catholic Rosary Society, both dominated by the local elite.

Peasants have important farming strategies to help them survive. They cultivate several parcels, often in different ecologic zones, to increase the diversity of their harvest and to gain some insurance against crop failure.

They manage to get loans when they need them, but as a Haitian agronomist pointed out, it is a strategy which offers only stop-gap solutions to an immediate problem, leaving peasants worse off in the long run.

Migration offers some escape for a lucky few, and perhaps through the remittances they send home, some economic gain for those staying behind. But migration does not lead to human or social change in the parish. In fact, the effects are

negative as the process tends to drain off the more energetic, which must retard the community's development.

Peasants also seek to establish a benevolent relationship with a powerful landlord or merchant. To seek favor of such a patron, a peasant may ask him to be godfather to his children, go out of his way to patronize a merchant's store, or may even pay a landowner more rent than that due. But these strategies, while facilitating survival, do nothing to change the basic relationships that keep peasants dependent and underdeveloped. Hence, underdevelopment among the peasants of Le Borgne parish reflects the general problem in Haiti. Given the conditions under which they live, it is not surprising that Le Borgne peasants, like those throughout Haiti, identify a long list of development needs, including the need for justice. Given the inability of the peasant strategies described above to fundamentally change social and economic relationships, there is no doubt that the situation was ripe in Le Borgne for a facilitator organization to step in and work at the base to begin a process leading to higher levels of justice.

IDEA has been active in Le Borgne, sponsoring various activities that touch the peasantry, for several years. It has given the initial push to a group of animation agents from Le Borgne to begin a grass-roots, parish-wide community development program called the Movement for the Development of the Community of Le Borgne (MODECBO). What follows is a description of this project--its evolution, operating principles, and activities--and an analysis of its impact in facilitating human development in Le Borgne through changes in social and economic relationships. The question is whether this strategy, unlike those followed by the two development organizations described above, can enable peasants to rid themselves of the injustices that keep them underdeveloped and engage in a process of meaningful and sustained development for themselves.

IDEA

IDEA was established in 1973 as an institute for peasant leadership training. It is a Roman Catholic church-supported organization with headquarters at the College of Notre Dame in Cap-Haïtien. Its programs draw participants from over 40 communities throughout the north.

IDEA's staff of about 25 is half full-time, paid employees and half part-time volunteer workers. Virtually all are Haitians, most from the north. The director and founder of IDEA is a Haitian priest who is also principal of the College. Funding comes primarily from the Inter-American Foundation, although IDEA does receive funds from other secular and church-based development foundations. Essentially, IDEA is a local, private, facilitator organization.

As a facilitator, IDEA is not directly involved in community activities. Rather it trains peasants to work as agents for social change and development in their own communities. Hence, although IDEA is active with leadership programs at both regional and community levels, it does not provide resources, material, or technical assistance beyond leadership training. Its main contribution is exactly what the acronym spells--ideas.

IDEA's roots go back to a 1963 College-sponsored summer course aimed at understanding peasant life. Course leaders and students came into direct and intimate contact--most of them for the first time--with the absolute poverty of the peasants. Subsequent discussion among the participants and later, other students, led to an increased collective understanding of underdevelopment and its debilitating effect, but no significant activity. In the early 1970s, however, in a new climate of thought and action in part sparked by changes in certain theological perspectives, the current director of IDEA along with several other persons, some of whom were engaged in community

development efforts, decided that change could best be promoted by focussing on those people who were committed--by choice or necessity--to continue living in the rural areas.

From the start, IDEA's staff tried to provide training that would enable peasants to play an active role. There were already development projects in progress in the north. IDEA's staff felt these well-meaning activities tend to focus on sectoral change, without simultaneous human development. Peasants were involved only as "work-horses" without any real understanding of, or participation in, the projects. IDEA identified the basic need as "peasant formation" through which peasants would acquire the skills and understanding needed to understand processes, identify needs, and work together for change. The goal would be to develop people before things.

IDEA's perspectives were that:

- there was a sharp dichotomy in Haitian society between the dominating and the dominated;
- development meant changes in this basically uneven social and economic relationship;
- efforts at change must come from those who are dominated, i.e., the peasant base; and
- there was a severe leadership vacuum at the base that inhibited change.

Based on these perspectives, IDEA developed a program based on animation, conscientization, and group formation.

Its peasant leadership programs deal with such topics as community health, development, Haitian sociology, cooperation, causes of peasant problems, and agronomy. The trainees gain a new awareness of themselves, of groups and of group process. As they become aware of the cause and dynamic of the domination under which they live, they question their acceptance of their "natural" status of underdevelopment and dependency. By stressing the fact that there do exist community solutions to community problems, a sense of self-worth is instilled.

Training classes stress participation and involvement rather than instruction to be received passively. Creole is used exclusively, and field experience is emphasized. Participants do not receive diplomas because "in our underdeveloped country, people attach too much importance to diplomas, and not enough to the value of the person" (IDEA: 1975).

After the leadership training, the social change agents, or animators, return to their communities to engage in "conscientization." Using the skills and understandings gained, they try to stimulate fellow peasants to understand their reality and become active in changing it. They encourage community members to meet together, discuss problems, and attempt to find ways among themselves to solve problems. As part of this process, peasants are encouraged to form community development groups where individuals can pool resources, skills, and energy. Through membership in these groups, peasants begin to forge new social and economic relationships that give them the ability and the power to make changes.

IDEA offers four leadership training programs--a three-week course, a mobile animation team, a 15-day seminar, and the 10-month course.

The three-week program, held at a training center in the village of Milot, has a full-time staff of five conducting intensive animation sessions with groups of 40 peasants. The peasants come in groups of 10 from different communities. They are selected by a community sponsor, often a community development group or a cleric. After the program, they return to their community where they engage in conscientization with other peasants and serve as auxiliaries to the full-time social change agents.

The mobile team has three trained animators who visit villages throughout the north, stay a week at each site, and conduct animation sessions with community groups.

The 15-day seminars are geared to professionals working in a rural setting. They are conducted by the same staff that leads the 10-month program, and they seek to encourage professionals to support the social change agents in their work.

The 10-month program is IDEA's keystone. Some 30 peasant leaders participate in each course. They come from communities throughout the north, and occasionally from other parts of Haiti. Selection criteria are rigorous, and IDEA works closely with local sponsors to choose candidates who must:

- be 18 years or older;
- read and write in Creole;
- be free from overwhelming family or professional responsibilities;
- be from a community where the sponsor can furnish some support when the animator returns to begin conscientization work;
- have previously been active in community development activities;
- come to IDEA with community, not individual, interests in mind;
- have a "spirit of service;" and
- be in good health.

During the 10-month course, the participant is exposed to several subjects to prepare, not a specialist in any one particular field, but rather someone who can expose a community to a variety of ideas to facilitate group organization and development. The 10-month program includes field work after every two months of classes.

At the time this study was made, over 150 animators had completed the 10-month program and returned to their communities to engage in full-time conscientization and group formation. They are not leaders as such, but rather guides and catalysts, helping peasants identify and plan activities. IDEA has now touched over 40 communities in the north of Haiti with its various programs.

The parish of Le Borgne provides an example of how IDEA works. Four persons from the parish have completed IDEA's 10-month training program. Several groups of 10 peasants from habitations and the town have participated in the three-week course at Milot, and the mobile animation team has visited Le Borgne four times.

IDEA activities in Le Borgne began in 1973 when the parish's Roman Catholic priest agreed to sponsor two persons for IDEA's initial 10-month program. After training, the two returned to Le Borgne in mid-1974 to begin activities that eventually led to the formation of MODECBO--the Movement for the Development of the Community of Le Borgne.

The two animators had to start from scratch. While a third person from the town attended another 10-month program, they planned and conducted an in-depth parish survey, using techniques learned in training. By asking questions on education, family, habitation economics, health, and religion, the animators not only pinpointed peasant problems, but also made themselves visible, their work understood, and thus embarked on the conscientization-group formation process. Significantly, while the survey was being conducted, 22 of today's community groups, with membership totalling 1,150, first formed, evolving out of meetings throughout the parish to discuss the survey and its tentative findings.

By 1976 survey data had been completed and released. The third animator had completed training and returned to the parish, and the mobile team had paid several visits to habitations. Several groups of 10 peasants were selected from the incipient groups throughout the parish to attend the three-week intensive animation session at Milot, then returned to form a link between the animators and the community development groups. In mid-1976, one of the participants in a three-week program left his habitation to attend the 10-month training.

Although IDEA sought to reach the base of the parish and stimulate peasant-initiated development, its first recruits did not come from the bottom of Le Borgne society. The first three animators were all teachers, one of them a nun. The fourth animator, however, comes directly from a rural community group, as do participants in the three-week program and the mobile team programs.

IDEA started where it did because of the lack of able participants from the base. As those first selected were able to "conscientize" peasants and groups formed, IDEA began to recruit directly from the base. Throughout, the parish priest played a key coordinating role.

The result, after three years of activities, was the beginning of a grass-roots development process in which peasants identified needs, formed groups, and began to take action on their own initiative. They began to construct meeting places, deal with the lack of potable water, and discuss future actions. At that point, the animators saw the need for operating capital to enable the groups to enter into a sustained development process. Thus, with the framework established, the animators presented a funding proposal to the Inter-American Foundation in late 1976.

MODECBO

The request to IAF was for a relatively modest (\$62,778) amount of capital. The plan, evolved from development needs identified by peasants during the survey, was to establish an agricultural pre-cooperative and credit union from the nascent community groups. In early 1977, IAF approved a two-year grant to MODECBO. In the meantime, the fourth animator had joined the team, and several more community groups had formed, bringing the total to 27.

Essentially, the community development project aims to enable peasant producers to control the marketing and processing of their production. The first step is the formation of

the agricultural pre-cooperative and credit union based on the community groups. The IAF grant provides funds to:

- establish a land rental fund,
- expand a seed and tool bank,
- construct a storage warehouse, and
- pay the animators an \$80 a month salary as well as the costs of leadership seminars.

The steps in forming the pre-cooperative include setting up community gardens, expanding a savings club, providing an intensive educational program, and developing a storage and marketing capability. The members of each community group divided into agricultural work groups of 10-15 members to lease about one hectare (2.2 acres) of land and farm it communally. Profits were to be used to augment the reserve or land rental fund for the pre-cooperative, for the education programs, and to purchase shares in the credit union. The already existing tool bank was to be expanded.

The savings clubs began with the formation of the groups. At each meeting, members deposited a small sum in savings accounts. With the formation of the agricultural sub-groups or teams, these accounts became part of the credit union.

The communal garden offered peasants an opportunity not only to work together and realize some economic gain, but also to experiment and try innovations without changing their low-risk farming strategies. Successful innovations and experiments can subsequently be tried on individual land without great risk. The communal gardens thus serve as experimental farms for the peasants.

The key to the development envisaged here was group formation and the process of education and conscientization that allows the group to evolve deliberately through various stages. Implicit in this evolution is the gradual assumption of all decision-making and planning by the members. In the meantime, the animators act as catalysts. Ideally, they eventually work themselves out of a job.

With only a little more than a year elapsed since MODECBO received the funding enabling it to activate this program, it is premature to present any full and final analysis of the project. On the basis of the developments of the first year, however, it is possible to begin the analysis of its impact.

First, MODECBO has avoided many of the pitfalls which have afflicted other development efforts. It is an indigenous group. The individuals who comprise its staff of six--four animators, an agronomist and a literacy specialist--with one exception, are not outsiders. They are known throughout the parish, have extensive kinship ties, do not lack a sense of security. They are intimately familiar with the place, its people, and its cultural and socio-economic characteristics.

There are no functionaries or experts over-seeing the program from beyond the parish. The priest, as advisor, is locally-based, and does not have veto power. No one has descended from the outside to impose a structure or implant technology. The only real outside thrust in the project, apart from IDEA, is the operating capital received from IAF, which does not intervene in planning, decision-making, or implementation.

Second, peasant participation is an integral element. MODECBO plays a leading role in the identification of needs, planning, and management. Yet, because the MODECBO team is from the parish, and the evolution of the team's basic development philosophy is nurtured by IDEA, peasant participation is far from neglected. The team members are either directly from the peasantry, or have strong ties to it. There has been a tendency, among team members from the town, to remain somewhat aloof when working with peasants, to act as a leader rather than a catalyst. But team members are aware of this and see it as a problem, which in itself is an important change. Moreover, the presence on the team of people from the peasantry balances this tendency.

Within the peasant groups, identification of needs, planning and management is solely in the hands of the members. Management of savings clubs, formation of agricultural teams, selection of

officers, and implementation are all peasant managed. The animators are occasionally present at group meetings, and guide and advise peasant actions, but they do not make decisions for the members. It is well understood that strong peasant participation is a project goal in itself. Time and again, during meetings and seminars, peasants are urged to participate. Peasant members themselves urge each other to participate, and on several occasions have said that their mere sitting down together to discuss problems is a great improvement over the past when the "chin manje chin" world view kept them separated.

Third, MODECBO seeks change by first initiating change in social and economic relationships. In the formation of groups and subsequent activities such as the election of officers, dialogue among members, participation in savings clubs and agricultural work groups, basic relationships are changed as members work together and pool resources, talent, and energy.

MODECBO's overall objective is fundamental change whereby peasant producers can free themselves from dependence on speculators, money-lenders and négociants by exercising control over their own production. Of course, as part of this changing relationship, there will be changes in places and things. The construction of the warehouse, for example, is one such change. But for MODECBO, the warehouse is not the end, but rather a means to reach the end of greater peasant control over resources, and ultimately of real and sustained development of the people at the bottom.

Fourth, MODECBO activities are not dependent on the introduction of technology. Indeed, a basic principle is to find and use existing resources and technology to solve community problems. Some technology is included however. The tool bank, for example, makes tools available to peasants on a rotating basis. Certainly to most of them, shovels, picks, and hoes are not new technology. But having access to them on a regular basis is unprecedented.

Fifth, the introduction of cooperatives, savings clubs, and a credit union to fulfill peasant needs represents new and abstract ideas that have to be understood by peasants before they can decide to actively participate in them. The MODECBO team as well as peasant group members recognize that this is a slow, evolutionary process achieved through constant and growing participation in the conscientization program.

It appears then, from its plan and from what has happened during its first year, that MODECBO has taken some significant steps. Peasant participation in and understanding of all aspects of MODECBO is already significant and promises to become more so as the project evolves. New relationships within the parish are already being created. Specific activities are beginning to chip away--admittedly slowly--at the structure of injustice and the specific institutions and practices that keep peasants poor and dependent.

The most debilitating constraint to peasant agricultural development--insecurity of tenure--is being attacked indirectly. Because peasant organization and power is only incipient, while that of the landowners is real, there is an obvious need to go slow so as not to be crushed. Progress so far is minimal, but a framework is apparently being built to enable more significant actions in the future. One indirect attack on the tenure problem is a program to train a cadre of literacy instructors, one from each group, who in turn conduct regular literacy classes in Creole with fellow group members. Peasants who are learning to read and write are enabled to combat certain areas of injustice where illiteracy presently leaves them defenseless before the unscrupulous.

A specific example concerns birth, death, and marriage certificates. No longer can exorbitant fees be collected from peasants who read, write, demonstrate an understanding of the rules of the game, and demand that they be treated fairly. Armed with new self-confidence and skills, peasants are now able to overcome at least this facet of exploitation.

The implications of literacy for the land tenure question are great. Written contracts with landlords will be understood and thus can be demanded with greater confidence. Title papers, where they do exist, will be understood and interlopers with false papers more easily repulsed. By reading and writing Creole, peasants are in the vanguard of a movement of Haitian academics and intellectuals to install Creole as the legitimate Haitian national language.

Of course there are limits. A peasant, even if he can read, is still quite powerless. So group formation plays a critical role in the indirect attack against injustices centering around land tenure. In the groups, the ongoing discussion of needs and problems that is part of the conscientization process appears to bring peasant members to new levels of awareness and understanding of the underdevelopment of which they are victims.

Serious and explicit criticisms of landlords by peasants at meetings demonstrate this newly grasped awareness of the exploitative system and the need to change it. It appears that peasants are beginning to place faith in their strength as a group. The agricultural sub-groups, or teams, allow this faith to be put into practice.

Originally, the teams were to lease roughly two acres of land to farm collectively. This had to be changed when landlords, learning the teams had money for rentals, increased the rates to absurd levels, as high as \$100 a year for less than three acres of non-prime land. With the guidance of the animators, the teams created a scheme whereby each member gives over a small section of his own garden to the group, which works it collectively. This innovation was quite recent and so it is too early to judge its effectiveness, but the fact that peasants were actively involved in the planning shows a significant improvement over the past.

At present, the teams are working together and building a sense of solidarity and belonging that will certainly be needed

to change land tenure arrangements, since action in this area must eventually confront established power. The first step in peasant organization is being achieved. When an 18-year-old peasant says, "to me, the group is like my mother and my father; if something happens to me, it will come to my aid," considerable change has taken place.

Almost as debilitating to peasant agricultural development as tenure insecurity is the credit situation. Its exploitative character keeps peasants trapped in the vicious cycle of underdevelopment and dependency. MODECBO is helping peasants break out of this cycle. There is now some capital available to members through the savings clubs. The interest-free loans, though small and not an everyday occurrence, are unprecedented among peasants. They help at least some peasants avoid the money lenders. As the groups evolve to more advanced stages of the agricultural pre-cooperative, more capital will be available through the credit unions.

The use of Creole in the literacy program assists in the legitimation of peasant culture, as do other MODECBO activities. By encouraging group formation and the idea that there are community solutions to community problems, that local technology and resources are useful and valuable, and that the individual is capable of changing his situation, new levels of self-confidence and resolve appear. This is an elusive area to measure but some comments by group members give indications of those high levels of confidence:

". . .The group helps us have pride in ourselves."

". . .We help each other when help is needed and we can depend on the other members of the group."

". . .The authorities today cannot do things as they used to do. We are beginning to insist on our rights."

". . .We were forced to do whatever was imposed on us. Now we decided what we are going to do after having discussed it together. We have meetings with the animators who show us that we are our own problem-solvers" (Lamy: 1978).

Finally, starts are being made on the fundamental question of the distribution of wealth and services:

- the lessening dependence on money lenders and speculators means greater control of resources by peasants;
- the warehouse for crop storage, now built, will enable peasant producers to avoid flooding the market at harvest and to reserve some of the harvest until the time prices rise to their normal levels; and
- the literacy centers built by each group represent the first appearance of educational facilities in the habitations.

In the context of the debilitating levels of underdevelopment and dependency which peasants endure, these seemingly minor advancements represent significant changes. In a situation where peasants never worked together cooperatively except in kin groups or for a wage, the mere fact that they discuss problems in a group is an accomplishment.

There are, however, potentially important problem areas. There is still the tendency, more pronounced in the town than in the country, to think of development in terms of an infrastructure change--digging a canal, clearing a road, building a bridge--that is beyond a group's current capacity and resources. This tendency could lead to frustration and possibly to the demise of a group. Conscientization, if properly practiced, should avoid this problem, since groups are encouraged to look for solutions using local and available resources.†

There is also a tendency for town-based groups to be less active in project activities. If town groups become significantly distinct from habitation groups, the town-country dichotomy so widespread in Haiti will continue, making community development in a real sense impossible.

Summary and Lessons

In Le Borgne, IDEA-trained animators are achieving moderate, growing success in facilitating grass-roots development. Yet the

situation at Le Borgne is far from typical of the universal impact of IDEA's development efforts. At Le Borgne, there were several conditions that helped IDEA's interventions have the impact that led to the creation of MODECBO. The animation team is highly motivated and deeply committed to the parish and its people. The priest and sponsor assumed a supportive role that enabled the animators to function effectively in their capacity as full-time social change agents.

In other instances IDEA has had mixed success in facilitating a grass-roots development program. Some of its animators have been less effective. Several factors can limit animators' effectiveness.

First, the sponsor, whether an individual or a group, is a key factor. IDEA depends on the sponsor to assist in identifying candidates for training programs and to provide support after training. In Le Borgne, this support was crucial in enabling the project to get off the ground. In many cases, however, this arrangement has not worked out and animators are not able to function effectively. Sometimes the original sponsor is no longer present when the animator returns, leaving him or her without material or moral support. In other cases, the sponsor has not supported a returned animator either because of a lack of resources or a change of heart. In still other cases, the sponsor has attempted to co-opt the animator into other tasks. Without effective support, animators have to devote most of their energies to their own subsistence, leaving little time for community development work.

A second key factor is the initiative of the animator. Even with the backing of a sponsor, most animators have gone about their tasks without much material support. To the credit of both IDEA, which instilled the spirit and resolve, and the animators themselves, who persevere and improvise, most seem to work doggedly at facilitating development without much to back them up. Of course, there is a good deal that can be accomplished

without extensive resources, but animators sooner or later reach a stage where, without minimal resources, they are blocked from implementing needed activities.

The nature of the skills animators possess is another factor. Animators receive general training on group process, conscientization, and formation, and a smattering of basic technical skills in agronomy, health, cooperatives, and economics. As catalysts, an in-depth knowledge of a particular skill is not absolutely necessary. Skills existing in the community, and adaptations of local technical knowledge, are sufficient to enable animators to begin the development process. There is a point, however, where the generalist nature of an animator's skills becomes inadequate. Building a solid stone terrace on a steep slope, keeping credit union books, or writing a project proposal for funding may present challenges beyond the animator's skills. Either more specialized training must be available, or animators must have access to individuals with the needed skills.

A fourth factor is coordination among IDEA's programs. The four training programs IDEA offers are designed to complement each other and provide a community with a group of individuals who coordinate their activities. Unfortunately, this coordination is often lacking. Sometimes geographical constraints keep various IDEA-trained individuals from uniting. Petty jealousies and misunderstanding may sometimes separate individuals. There is a clear need for more attention to coordination of programs and people at the community level.

A fifth factor is the strength of the continuing tendency to seek infrastructural change too early. In spite of a training program stressing local solutions for local problems, there remains a strong tendency for social change agents to view a technologically sophisticated approach focussed on infrastructure change as desirable.

A final factor is the nature of what IDEA is attempting, and the inherent fragility of such an attempt. Efforts at meaningful and sustained changes in social and economic relationships challenge the structure of power in Haiti. For facilitators to accomplish their goals, they must be free to function in an atmosphere of at least tolerance, if not support. Each step must be well-planned and taken with care.

IDEA recognizes these problems. In the past, the organization has been able to change its program to cope with other problems and weaknesses. Surely, it is now seeking to design strategies to cope with these problems. If it can do so, its success as a facilitator in development will be greatly increased. Its success to date indicates that the approach IDEA takes to the challenge of development is a valid one. That approach has evolved from certain conditions and is based on certain values. It grew out of a specific milieu, Haiti's north, and deals with specific problems. It is not the answer to all development problems. But to the extent that IDEA has had some success in a country where the problems of underdevelopment are as severe and overwhelming as anywhere in the world, the IDEA approach deserves serious consideration by all those interested in coping with those problems.

† The following anecdote demonstrates the tendency to deal with problems through infrastructural change and almost overlook conscientization as a means of coping with a problem. In one of the neighborhoods of Le Borgne where there is a MODECBO group, there is a communal water spigot. By the spigot is a run-off trough that created mud puddles, causing a general nuisance in the neighborhood. The group decided to take some action; they dug a rudimentary drainage ditch by the spigot. Within a week it was filled in by sediment from the run-off and the situation was the same, so the group re-dug the small canal. Lots of undisciplined energy was expended as group members, without much planning, enthusiastically dug away with any tool that they could lay their hands on. In another week the canal was again filled, and the group was frustrated because they did not have materials to build a "proper" canal. Complacency set in. The canal was an attempt to change the infrastructure and deal with the effects of the problem. The cause of the problem--people letting the water run down into the street--was not attacked. One does not need resources to attack this problem and treat its cause. Only after tooth-pulling discussions did the group members and animators think of attacking the cause. If conscientization works as it should, there would have been no immediate urge to dig a ditch. Rather, the first inclination would be to discuss the problem to identify its cause and see what could be done using the people and resources on hand to solve it. In this case, it simply means conscientizing people not to leave the spigot open, thus allowing the run-off to create a mud-puddle problem.

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