

# **TOWARD A THREE-PRONGED STRATEGY OF INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR POVERTY REDUCTION AMONG THE “EN-DEHORS” PEOPLE IN HAITI**

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by

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**.ACRONYMS.**

|       |                                                         |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| CAD   | Comité d'Aide au Développement                          |
| CSDI  | Centre de Santé et de Développement Intégré             |
| IICA  | Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture |
| KOPAF | Koopérative des Peyisans de Furcy                       |
| UNIQ  | University of Quiskeya                                  |

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## Executive Summary

Poverty in Haiti is by far the deepest in the Western Hemisphere, and it has been steadily worsening over the last three decades. Particularly distressful is the situation of isolated rural households, the “en-dehors” people, who represent the vast majority of the poor. Given the unfavorable overall economic and political context that characterizes Haiti today, including the withdrawal of most official foreign aid, attempting to define a local-territorial approach to poverty reduction may provide an effective second-best strategy for poverty reduction. This is what is done in this preliminary report based on field work in three communities and on consultations with experts of rural development in Haiti.

Local development initiatives have been hampered by geographical isolation, strong individualism, lack of information sharing, weak local leadership, and a long spell of repressive and divisive practices used for political control that have undermined local trust and cooperation. Responding to the lack of global opportunities, extensive government failures in the provision of public goods, and high exposure to risk, rural households have engaged in individual and collective strategies to develop economic opportunities and reduce vulnerability. However, given the lack of resources and fragmentation of social relations, these strategies have been more effective for labor sharing and localized risk management than for income generation and community development. As a consequence, the “en-dehors” people may be rich in social capital for risk sharing and labor exchange, but they are poor in social capital for income generation and the delivery of public goods.

While lack of resources is a serious bottleneck to poverty reduction, the low level of efficiency in using available resources is also a major limiting factor. The recently regained social peace and individual freedoms open a window of opportunity to promote the development of organizations that could have a major impact on the effectiveness of projects, help attract additional resources, and open new local economic opportunities for rural populations. These organizations could help promote greater market integration, improve the delivery and sustainability of local public goods, and open new multi-sectoral investment and employment opportunities at the regional level.

We consequently suggest a three pronged strategy of institutional innovations, that capitalizes on some of the innovative institutional developments already emerging. This strategy consists in:

1. **The promotion of local economic organizations**, of the professional and cooperative type, that will provide access to markets and services to local entrepreneurs. Contrary to the current institutional fragmentation, these organizations must be of a sufficient scale to achieve market power and low-cost delivery of services to their members. They should focus on a middle class of entrepreneurs, and seek incorporation of the poor as additional members and through spillover effects principally via employment creation.
2. **The development of community-wide organizations for the provision, appropriation, and maintenance of public goods**, compensating for government failures and helping donor projects be more effective and sustainable. These community-wide, broadly representative, organizations would also serve to develop a logical framework of priorities

and a coordinating mechanism for the currently dispersed, short-lived, and insufficiently participatory projects brought to a locality by a multiplicity of donors.

3. **The development of territorial organizations** for the promotion of new economic activities in the region, the coordination of economic actors in the region, and the promotion of linkages between the region and the rest of the world.

Putting into place both the incentives and the means necessary to implement these institutional developments in support of a local-territorial approach to poverty reduction will require introducing special demand-driven programs. Based on international experiences with community driven approaches, a program would provide competitive resources to organized groups, communities, and regional entities to:

1. **Construct and consolidate the required organizations.**
2. **Fund programs that these organizations propose to undertake** as a learning-by-doing experience.

This broad brush definition of an local-territorial institutional strategy to make more effective the use of existing resources (and to attract new resources) in enhancing local incomes needs further definition and refinement before it is opened for discussion to a national forum of experts. As immediate follow-ups, we consequently recommend three undertakings:

1. **A systematic identification of successful initiatives** in institutional construction for local development in Haiti. This would be run as a national competition to report on successful experiences.
2. **In-depth institutional surveys of selected communities**, with questionnaires at the community, organizational, and household levels.
3. **A collection of expert statements**, providing informed visions of alternative strategies for local institutional development in support of reduction of poverty among the “en-dehors” population.

## **Introduction**

This report describes field work undertaken in Haiti between September 21<sup>st</sup> and October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The analysis focuses on three rural communities used as case studies:

- Adélaïde (Central Plateau).
- Furcy (Kenscoff).
- Ravine Sèche and Lully (Saint Marc).

The report intends to be a contribution to the discussion led by the Kellogg Foundation on how to develop a micro-driven development strategy in Haiti. It seeks to understand the potential role for local and regional organizations in such a strategy.

We are very grateful for the help received from the following organizations and their representatives who greatly facilitated the fieldwork logistics and provided helpful insights into Haitian rural communities:

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- Alfredo Mena and IICA (Institut Interaméricain de Coopération pour l'Agriculture).
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## **1. Description of the problem**

This section aims at providing a description of the international and local context for the study. The following paragraphs describe facts essential for understanding the case studies that comprise the main body of this report.

### **1.1. Macro-economic context**

Haiti is currently the poorest country in the Americas and one of the poorest in the developing world. Over at least the past twenty years, Haiti has been characterized by an overall decline in all the main economic and social indicators: in 1999/2000, per capita income was about \$250, unchanged from its 1995/1996 level and substantially below its level at the start of the decade.<sup>1</sup>

The high level of political instability evidenced by Haiti's progression through numerous governments and military dictatorships is part of explanations for this economic decline. Moreover, corruption and the misuse of public funds by the administration has done little for economic growth and given the country a dismal reputation on the international scene.

The Haitian poor suffer from limited government support as well as from an increasing dependence on the whims of foreign donors. This combination has resulted in a scarcity of resources directed towards health, education, and other important infrastructure and a low ability to use existing funds efficiently.

This context of economic stagnation and political instability raises the question of the potential for a "micro-driven" development approach. Put another way, is there scope for small local initiatives to be successful in reducing poverty in such an adverse economic and political context? Answering this question requires identification of the micro-dynamics of poverty and its main determinants. This information can then be used to design approaches that promote local initiatives.

We focus on the population in the "en-dehors" (a local expression for "out there", characterizing the population living dispersed in the countryside), since about 80% of the Haitian population lives in rural areas, where poverty is the most acute and programs to reduce it have been the least effective. Three case studies conducted in Haiti in September 2002 will serve as the basis for the analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, *Haiti the challenge of poverty reduction*, 1998.  
The Economist Intelligence Unit, *Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Puerto Rico country profile*, 2001.

## 1.2. Micro-economic context

As an urban bias is important in Haiti's public expenditures and government support, people from the "en-dehors" are forced to deal with poverty and vulnerability through sui-generis individual or collective strategies of mutual assistance and risk reduction. Nevertheless, formal collective action to enhance incomes and reduce risk is very limited.

### *Government failures*

Rural Haiti is largely neglected by the central government. Most communities are characterized by a severe lack of public services such as health, education, and infrastructure like roads, electricity, and potable water. The Cerca Carvajal<sup>2</sup> area exemplifies this absence of public services.

### *Risk exposure*

Another common feature of Haitian rural areas is the vulnerability of their inhabitants to risks. Rural communities are exposed to individual and collective shocks. For example:

- At the household level, inhabitants must deal with unpredictable large expenditures such as those associated with illness and burials.
- At the community level, rural households face political and macro-economic shocks as well as climatic shocks (drought, floods) which are exacerbated by extensive deforestation and soil degradation.

In response to this vulnerability, rural households have developed a variety of strategies which we divide into two groups :

1. **Collective strategies** to mitigate the consequences of idiosyncratic shocks through mutual aid networks based on kinship and neighborhoods.
2. **Individual revenue-diversification strategies** for covariate shocks (essentially climatic ones). In Adélaïde, for example, peasants cultivate simultaneously crops resistant to drought and crops resistant to flooding. In areas closer to markets, households devised income diversification strategies by engaging in multiple activities, combining agriculture, trade, handicrafts, and microenterprises.

### *Collective action*

Rural organizations have played an important role throughout Haiti's history. These organizations can be divided into four categories:

- Mutual aid organizations: Eskwads and school parents associations.
- Religious organizations: the churches.
- Traditional organizations: Socyétés.
- Community organizations: formal community development associations.

Locally-initiated development associations have historically been highly dependent on the political regime of the moment. The 1991-1994 coup era provides a striking example of repression, when formal rural organizations were either banned or controlled by government agents. With the return of President Aristide in 1995, these organizations were freed from military oppression. This era gave birth to numerous new local associations and saw the re-birth of former ones.

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<sup>2</sup> Case Study n°1, Adélaïde.

*Haiti's poor reputation on the international scene has led to a sharp decline in its main sources of official foreign aid. This raises the question of the potential for a micro-driven approach to development. Rural areas are characterized by numerous unsatisfied needs and a high degree of vulnerability. Facing a vacuum in government assistance, peasants have developed many strategies to cope with risk. However, few areas are endowed with organizations effective for community development and revenue generation. The recent liberalization of local associations offers a unique opportunity for new levels of institutional dynamism, facilitating micro-driven development.*

## **2. Positive Analysis**

The case studies show that isolation seems to be a major constraint to local development for the “en-dehors” population. This isolation has two dimensions: within the community itself and in its external relations.

### **2.1. Social isolation within the community**

Social isolation is the result of both spatial dispersion and lack of communication within the community.

#### *Households' isolation*

Rural Haitian households are organized in nuclear units, with an average of 5.8 members. In most cases, the house is located in the middle of the main plot, which results in geographical dispersion of the dwellings. However, as shown on the map of Adelaïde<sup>3</sup>, communities are typically composed of several small clusters of around 10 families. These clusters usually include no more than 3 or 4 extended families and can therefore be considered as the primary community unit. Thus, at the same time as the physical placement of houses results in individualism and geographic isolation, it also shows that households do exploit personal networks based on small cluster membership or strong friendships.

#### *Absence of community*

It is remarkable that none of the communities visited were organized around a focal point. Indeed, as shown on the map of Adélaïde, clusters are located along the road (path) that crosses the community. The absence of a meeting place results in poor diffusion of information between households. The road appears to be the main conduit for information, and distance from it seems to increase social isolation.

Lack of information sharing at the community level inhibits the construction of trust and social capital. This weak level of trust between inhabitants has been reinforced by government incentives to report on others, which were strongly exacerbated during the military era. The low level of trust is also reinforced by the lack of a clear authority system accepted by the whole community. In other words, there is a deficit of traditional leaders at the local level who could build trust and promote cooperation between households in the community.

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix 1: Case Study n°1, Adélaïde

***Rural communities in Haiti seem to be characterized by social isolation of the families inside the community itself. Lack of information sharing, absence of traditional leadership, and the long history of cross-reporting seem to work against building trust between households. This helps explain the low level of cooperation among community members, which is confined to mutual insurance in narrow circles of confidence and fails to address the search for income generation opportunities and the provision of public goods through collective action.***

## **2.2. Need for external links**

The case studies reveal the negative impact of geographical isolation on the communities' level of economic development. Given that market access and external partnerships are important conditions for local economic growth, this isolation is a serious hurdle in enabling households in these Haitian villages to move out of poverty.

### *Lack of market integration*

At the community level, weak access to markets is a symptom of isolation. As a consequence, households are often cut off from economic opportunities. Poor road and transportation infrastructure isolates the villages geographically and hence economically.

The two villages of Lully and Ravine Sèche<sup>4</sup> give good examples of the economic consequences of isolation. These communities are close to each other and share the same main activity (fishing). However, partly due to its better road infrastructure, Lully is well-integrated into the fish market when Ravine Sèche is not. The former has by far the more dynamic economy.

### *External links*

Another source of growth is found in the external links maintained by the members of a community. These include links with former residents, NGOs, regional and national organizations, and federations.

In Lully, external links have brought information, technology, and finances to the community, also contributing to its growth. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Ravine Sèche does not benefit from such external links and suffers from relative economic stagnation.

***As shown in the third case study, geographic isolation both in terms of market access and external links inhibits economic growth at the local level. It seems that development options are considerably more limited for an isolated community.***

## **2.3. Description of different types of collective solutions**

The case studies have shown the importance of two main requirements for successful micro-driven development:

- The need for funding, usually provided by external partners (especially NGOs and churches, given the current drying out of official foreign aid).
- The need for participatory "bottom-up development"<sup>5</sup> to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of initiatives of internal or external origin.

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix 3: Case Study n°3, Lully and Ravine Sèche

<sup>5</sup> Robert Maguire, *Bottom-up Development* (1981).

While it seems that these two conditions are rarely satisfied simultaneously, the case studies show two examples of efficient and sustainable organizations.

*Mutual assistance as a long term survival strategy*

As discussed earlier, there are numerous forms of local informal organizations aimed at mutual assistance. Because they are a response to the strong need for insurance or labor exchange, and because they are based on stable social networks, these kinds of organizations usually endure in the long term. They do, however, suffer from lack of capital that impedes them from offering other economic services to their members. As a case in point, most eskwads<sup>6</sup> that we met during the fieldwork complained of their insufficient capital resources to develop any other activities.

*NGOs intervention constraints*

One finds a variety of different NGOs working in rural Haiti. Most of them face two main constraints:

- The short term (typically 3-4 years) financial cycle of their projects: This is usually too short to develop projects that are sustainable after the NGO leaves. For example, the water pump in Ravine Sèche is out of order because the NGO that funded it was not able to ensure its sustained functioning by developing an organization to take responsibility for its maintenance.
- The need to show “quantitative impact” of their activities: It seems that most NGOs need to show results in terms of number of families helped in order to obtain new funding. As a consequence, NGO programs are mostly oriented at working with the whole community (rather than with smaller groups in more specialized activities) in order to maximize the number of people benefited.

To deal with these constraints, NGOs usually work through a local counterpart, most of the time a young and educated professional. Trained by the NGO, this intermediary is in charge of:

- Designing the bottom-up development activities of the project. However, as observed by Glenn Smucker, the counterpart has no incentive in sharing his responsibility with the local population and in helping this population effectively participate in the design of the project.
- Insuring sustainability of the program after the NGO leaves. However, given that the counterpart is paid by the NGO and finds social status in his function, he is not encouraged to help the community assume control over the project before the NGO leaves neither, of course, to “work for free” after the NGO has left.

As a result, there are numerous “professional counterparts” in Haitian rural areas. They are mostly driven by the need to find new external partners in order to secure their incomes and promote their social status.

It thus seems that many external interventions face problems of dispersion and lack of sustainability for their projects.

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<sup>6</sup> Small labor exchange organizations.

### *Two examples of sustainable development initiatives*

The field work conducted in the Furcy community has shown the presence of two types of organizations that seem able to achieve the coordination and sustainability of projects: the Comité d'Aide au Développement (CAD) and the Coopérative d'Obléon (KOPAF)<sup>7</sup>.

The CAD should be able, through elected representatives, to ensure coordination and sustainability of the social projects undertaken in the Furcy area. It is responsible for designing public development projects, which are then financed by external partners such as the UNIQ. It seems that this “committee”, because it gathers all the main authorities of the region (federations, public agencies, and notables), has more legitimate power than a single counterpart in coordinating external interventions and building local ownership of projects.

The intervention of SOCODEVI, through creation of a locally-initiated cooperative producers' organization (KOPAF), illustrates another way of guaranteeing sustainability of its actions in the zone. The cooperative can be seen as another form of local intermediary for external donors that can coordinate projects and promote ownership.

*The case studies have identified isolation as an important constraint to rural community development in Haiti. The absence of effective community level information-sharing mechanisms leads to a weak level of trust, and create disincentive for economic cooperation and the emergence of local leadership. Geographic isolation, characterized by the absence of external links, can itself lead to a lack of finances and economic opportunities. In the absence of a good interlocutor between donors and the community, many external attempts to reduce isolation have been confronted with serious problems of lack of coordination and lack of sustainability. The last two examples, however, offer hope for the potential effectiveness of micro-driven development initiatives based on local institutional innovations.*

## **3. Normative Analysis**

Achieving successful economic development and enhancing household welfare requires both private income generation and the availability of public goods. However, given the specificities of the Haitian context that were described in the previous section, communities' potential external partners must find an appropriate form of economic organization within the community, a point we address in section 3.1. In section 3.2, we show that the successful provision of public goods also requires a specific institutional infrastructure so as to ensure their sustainability. Finally, since private initiatives are more likely to emerge and succeed in places that are well-endowed in public goods, a territorial coordination of economic and social investments should favour entrepreneurship, as discussed in section 3.3.

### **3.1. Facilitating the emergence and effectiveness of economic cooperation**

We have seen that social fractionalisation and geographic remoteness are major obstacles to economic cooperation at the community level. These two constraints have to be considered when thinking about creating long-term economic growth through local organizations.

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix 2, Case study n°2, Furcy

### *Addressing the social remoteness constraint*

As seen above, the Haitian rural context is characterized by low levels of trust between people which limit economic cooperation. Indeed, as there is little circulation of information, free-rider problems are more likely to arise. That is to say, there is little incentive for people to risk part of their assets for a project whose benefits will likely be appropriated by others who contributed no time or money to its development.

Therefore, the development of organizations that can induce economic cooperation and protect members from free-riders is important for the Haitian context. Membership could be demand-driven, where members have access to technology, training, and inputs for a small price. Participants could then obtain direct benefit for their own activity without depending on the behavior of others.

### *Access to market power*

There are many opportunities for economies of scale in the provision of inputs and the sale of outputs. Larger organizations benefit from lower input prices and are able to contract at the local, national, and international levels for the commercialization of their products. Sufficient size of the organization allows for the consolidation of its external links through a hired contact, located in the market and thus strategically placed to gather the necessary information.

### *An example of sustainable economic organization*

KOPAF (Koopérative Agricole des Payisans de Furcy) was created in 1997 to address an increasing scarcity of fertilizers and inputs. In order to benefit from economies of scale, it has established formal relationships with three other local cooperatives. The four organizations share a manager (to maintain relationships with input companies and clients) and a warehouse in Port au Prince.

Today, KOPAF incorporates more members every year and offers a large variety of services. As analysed in the case study<sup>8</sup> in Obléon, most participants belong to the middle class in terms of revenue, land, and animals. This social class has more incentives to participate since it includes people who:

- Are already self-sufficient in terms of insurance and can afford to take business risks as opposed to the poor;
- Need gain access to new opportunities to increase their income, contrary to the rich.

This suggests that the sustainability and growth of KOPAF is largely based on the needs of its middle class members. Therefore, in such programs, targeting the middle class can increase the probability of success. In turn, the dynamics of such an organization can benefit the whole community through:

- Direct effects: encouraging the poor to enrol in the cooperative.
- Indirect effects: increasing the overall level of economic activity and wealth in the community, providing in particular employment opportunities for members and non-members.

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<sup>8</sup> Case study n°2: Furcy

*Opportunities for the development of successful income generation-oriented organizations exist. To be sustainable, these organizations need to develop market power through a larger size and stable contacts with the market, compared to existing organizations for mutual insurance and labor exchange that can be effective at a small scale and in isolation from the market. The likelihood of success of such income-oriented organizations can be enhanced by inclusion of the middle class as the primary target population. Benefits will be transmitted to the poor through subsequent inclusion, linkages, and redistribution effects.*

### **3.2. Coordinating public goods investment at the community level**

The numerous NGOs operating in rural Haiti face similar constraints in terms of project cycle and coordination. A local institution capable of managing the sustainability of projects and of defining a logical framework for the different interventions could thus be useful.

#### *Need for a community-wide organization*

As discussed before, Haitian rural areas are in most cases neglected by the central government. As a consequence, there is a real need for increased provision of basic public goods and services. For this reason, many NGO projects are public goods-oriented, attempting to make up for government failures.

Unfortunately, NGOs' short project cycles do not allow for appropriation of the projects by community members, when it would be necessary to secure sustainability. In other words, much infrastructure disappears after the NGO's departure, as there are no local organizations to take charge of the projects. Moreover, a typical scenario consists in a succession of different NGO projects, without a logical design to make them complementary.

#### *Characteristics of a community wide organization*

Thus, the need for coordination should be achieved through a community wide organization with the following responsibilities:

- Spearheading projects. The organization identifies the needs and potentials of the community. It creates external links with potential partners. It writes proposals for financing and technical assistance.
- Coordinating new and existing projects in the community. The organization is in charge of creating a logical framework between all providers of public goods and services.
- Designing specific mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of each public good or service. This requires securing the participation of inhabitants in the maintenance and upkeep of public goods.

#### *CAD as an example of a community wide organization*

CAD, because of its representative authority, has legitimacy in the region and is an important institution for the distribution of information. Indeed, since the Furcy area is composed of several distant clusters of houses with very few opportunities for inter-household communication, the CAD is a good structure for information exchange from bottom to top and top to bottom. It would

thus be an appropriate organizational design for managing a demand-driven development of the region.

As the main intermediary between the Furcy community and UNIQ, CAD is an essential partner in the definition of UNIQ's interventions. Moreover, it is likely that CAD will ensure the viability of UNIQ's projects after its departure.

***In order to increase the efficiency of external partners' programs in the area, a community wide organization provides a way of responding to the current government failures and to the absence of local governance. Such an organization can be in charge of the development of a logical framework representative of the perceived needs of the population, and of the mobilization of community members for maintenance of the public goods provided by projects.***

### **3.3. Territorial development institution**

Another complementary institution could be in charge of the coordination of public and private initiatives for the region, as well as of external linkages between the region and the rest of the world. As we have seen above, opportunities exist for the development of economic organizations (section 3.1) and for the coordination of public goods interventions (section 3.2). In addition, sustainable development of the region requires an organization capable of enhancing the area's economic dynamics.

#### *The intra-regional coordination role*

Certain types of public goods – such as irrigation canals, roads, and storage facilities – have an important influence on the level of regional economic activity. In some cases, no real economic development is possible without them. Here again, there are opportunities for coordination between public and private initiatives. Communication between local economic organizations is necessary, since it permits the exchange of experiences and potential benefits from scale economies through higher level associations.

#### *The external linkages role*

Enhancing the dynamics of the local economy also requires knowledge of national and international market outlets. A local institution capable of both identifying these outlets and disseminating the information to economic organizations in the region would greatly energize the local economy.

Another function of this institution is to develop a local image for the region, so as to identify the economic specificities of the region and help producers in the region gain better access to markets and to external partners. This marketing strategy could help stabilize relationships between the region and the market, and thus contribute to a more sustainable economic development.

***A territorial approach to poverty reduction is necessary to create economic opportunities at the level of localities within the region. Localities are generally too small to promote new economic activities on their own. However, regional employment and investment opportunities can be seized at the local level through the assistance of local organizations supporting private initiatives and community organizations for the provision and maintenance of public goods.***

*Regional organizations for a territorial approach to rural development are thus a necessary complement to community and local organizations.*

*Conclusion: The three levels of institutional development proposed above respond to the lack of communication, the lack of opportunities, and the lack of public support that characterizes rural “en-dehors” populations. They aim at promoting the availability of new economic opportunities, at helping the “en-dehors” participate to these opportunities, and at enhancing the sustainability of public goods programs. One important distinguishing feature of each of these organizations is their differential geographical scale of application. Since the scale covered is in each case determined by the mandate of the institution, be it local, communitarian, or regional, they need to be developed in a way that maximizes their complementarity.*

#### **4. Implementation: Programs in support of institutional development**

Implementation of this approach to poverty reduction for the “en-dehors” population based on institutional development at three different scales will require organizing special programs to create the necessary incentives for institutional change and to provide the resources needed to implement projects undertaken by these three institutional levels. These programs would provide resources on a demand-led basis to:

- (1) Construct and consolidate the required local, community, and regional organizations.
- (2) Fund programs that these organizations would propose to undertake as a learning-by-doing experience.

Piecemeal precedents with components of such a program exist in other parts of the world, but its assembly would be unique to Haiti and require further research and consultations. The unique features would be that:

- (1) Program resources can explicitly be used for institutional development.
- (2) Funding for specific projects defined by these organizations would be provided as a learning and consolidation device.

Experiences accumulated with community-driven development approaches in Haiti and in other parts of the world should be systematically collected in order to define best practice for the specific conditions of the target population in Haiti.

#### **5. Follow-up analysis**

The three community case studies have led to several preliminary conclusions. Before an open dialogue is initiated on the further definition of a local-territorial approach to poverty reduction for the “en-dehors” population, further information and research is necessary. In what follows, we thus suggest three complementary projects that could help enrich the further definition of this strategy.

### **5.1. Identification of successful institutional innovations and their beneficiaries**

The idea would be to design a national competition in which participants would be asked to relate a successful experience of local economic initiatives in rural Haiti based on institutional innovations. Winning initiatives should address the issues discussed in this report. Specifically, they should be:

- Oriented at income generation.
- Appropriated by rural households, most particularly in the “en-dehors” category.
- Sustainable in the long term.

Applicants would have to describe the area, the origin of the project, the institutional innovations that occurred, the activities undertaken, and the benefits derived from their successful initiative. The winner should be rewarded with sufficient publicity and a monetary remuneration.<sup>9</sup>

### **5.2. Systematic community-level census of organizations**

A systematic survey of local organizations would be done in ten communities selected for their contrasts. The questionnaires would be designed at three levels:

- The community level.
- The organization level.
- The household level.

This survey would shed light on the factors determining successful organizational initiatives in rural Haiti.<sup>10</sup>

### **5.3. Experts statements**

Several experts on Haitian rural development have contributed to this report through initial discussions with the authors, and many others could not be consulted. Asking these experts to formalize their visions would be a very useful contribution to a discussion on Haitian micro-development opportunities.

Two to three page statements could be requested from each of these experts on the following question: “What do you consider to be the best strategies of institutional development that could be pursued to help the “en-dehors” population generate sustainable income?”

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<sup>9</sup> RIMISP in Chile has developed a methodology to organize this type of competition.

<sup>10</sup> Similar community-level organizational censuses have been completed by the authors in Senegal

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Useful information was also found on the web-sites of the CIA, the UNPD and the FAO.

## CASE STUDY 1

### Adélaïde

#### 1. Overview

##### 1.1. Context

Cerca-Carvajal is located in the region named “Plateau Central”, about 180km away from Port-au-Prince. The lack of paved road makes this 180 km into a 6 hour drive in a four-wheel drive vehicle. The nearest town from Cerca-Carvajal is Hinche (30km), the department center. The low quality of the road makes Cerca-Carvajal one of the most remote areas of Haïti.

Cerca-Carvajal is a *Commune* divided in 7 *Zones*, each of which is composed of 4 *Localities*. There are about 50,000 inhabitants in the commune. Cerca-Carvajal is the administrative and economic center of these 28 localities. The services available in Cerca-Carvajal are :

- CASEC (Conseil d'Administration de la Section Communale)
- Justice of the peace
- Schools for students up to the age of 18
- Main market of the area (on Friday) where people come to sell their agricultural production and their animals and buy manufactured goods.

Cerca-Carvajal is surrounded by mountains that protect it from the hurricanes that periodically affect the rest of the country. The entire area is also characterized by massive deforestation due to the selling of the wood. Therefore the mountains are denuded, which exacerbates erosion problems.

Traditionally, the region was a catering zone. The 1963 Law forced people to keep their livelihoods attached. Consequently, peasants need to have private fields to breed their animals. As a result, animal production has subsequently fallen since 1963.

***What seems to characterize best Cerca-Carvajal is its remoteness. As Doctor Foblas puts it “Whatever happens in Port-au-Prince (political, economical, climatic ...events), it doesn't affect Cerca-Carvajal”.***

##### 1.2. Adélaïde

Adelaïde is one of Cerca-Cavajal's localities. It is a valley crossed by the Cerca-Cavajal – Hinche path. It is about 2 hours walking distance from Cerca-Cavajal (6km) and about 3 times farther from Hinche. The population is composed of roughly 250 houses, for an estimated 2000 inhabitants. There are 2 private schools in Adelaïde, for pupils until the age of 12. There are one Catholic and four Protestant churches. Four sources of potable water are located along the path.

Adelaïde is not connected to any source of electrical power. The Adelaïde market takes place every Tuesday and only attracts people from Adelaïde. There is one “chicken fight” arena on the main path. There is one irrigation canal, built in 2000, which brings water to 25 families.

*Adelaïde is a remote village in a remote zone and very poor in terms of economic and social infrastructure.*

## **2. Adelaïde’s community organization**

### **2.1. The main path as the communication center**

In Adelaïde, there is not one central place for people to meet. The main path serves as the conduit for all internal communication. As shown on the map, most infrastructure (water, schools, market place, chicken fight arena) is located along this path. The path can also be considered as the external communication axis: anybody who wants to reach Cerca-Carvajal needs to travel along it.

*Geographically, Adelaïde is not organized around a central point where community life could take place. There is no place for people to meet and discuss issues important to its inhabitants.*

### **2.2. Cluster organization of the houses**

Adelaïde’s inhabitants explain that the area is organized in *localités*. These clusters are composed of a limited number of houses, close to each other, and linked by very strong family or neighborhood ties. As can be seen on the map (red circles), these clusters vary in size and distance from the path.

It seems that the farther a cluster is away from the path (and closer to the mountains), the less its inhabitants are aware of the information that is diffused along the path.

*There is no real community-level organization in Adelaïde. Information does not diffuse very well and people do not interact with each other very often. Adelaïde looks like a gathering of small “cluster sized” communities where people actually know each other and exchange information. Each cluster seems to be self sufficient as there are few ties between the clusters (especially for those far from the path).*

## **3. Peasant strategies at the household level**

### **3.1. Household vulnerability**

In Adelaïde, each household is restricted to a small number of persons (nuclear family), all of whom work on the same fields. The average size of the cultivated land is between 2 and 3 *carreaux* (1.29 hectares), usually divided in 2 or 3 fields, in the valley and on the mountains.

In Haiti, non-irrigated agriculture runs from May until November (the rest of the year being the dry season). During that period, most crops can be cultivated twice. In Adelaïde however, yields are not sufficient and most families, for example, are not able to eat meat more than once a month.

In Adelaïde, sending children to school is considered very common even though it requires large expenditures. When asked, household heads explain this as a long term investment for a better living. Education is the primary family expenditure after food.

In this context, households have to face two major types of shocks:

- Community level shocks, which are mostly climatic ones. In fact, from one year to the other, there can be either too much rain or a drought. In both cases, the crops suffer from it. Deforestation tends to accentuate the impact of those climatic events.
- Individual level shocks, such as illness or death, which imply the spending of a relatively large amount of cash.

*Adelaïde's inhabitants live in extreme poverty and have to deal with potentially large expenditures implied by their exposure to various exogenous shocks. Such an environment makes people of this area very vulnerable.*

### **3.2. Households individual responses**

Households in Adelaïde are very homogenous in the way they deal with climatic shocks. One observes considerable crop diversification: all households simultaneously cultivate plants that are more resistant to droughts and plants that are more resistant to flood-like conditions.

This enables households to face most climatic shocks and assure them a minimum yield sufficient to survive.

Animals are also used to buffer sudden cash needs such as illness or burial expenditures and can be seen as precautionary saving devices.

*Although Adelaïde's households are poor and exposed to important external shocks, they have developed individual mechanisms through which they can handle at least some of the consequences.*

## **4. Institutional density in Adelaïde**

One observes numerous organizations in Adelaïde which vary both in size and activities. These organizations can be classified in two major categories by their purposes: mutual assistance and "development".

### **4.1. Mutual assistance organizations**

- Church-based organizations: led by the priest who collects money every Sunday during the ceremony (“everyone gives what is possible for him”). This fund can be used to assist a church member facing financial difficulties. However, in this organization, the main assistance device is to “pray for those who are ill”. There are 4 church-based organizations in Adelaïde, each of which has a different priest.
- The Socyétés are groups of people whose main purpose is common labor, music and food. The Socyété is a way to create community-like links and can thus be seen as a source of mutual assistance. However, in Adelaïde, the two Socyétés which were once important today seem marginalized.
- The Eskwads gather people with strong ties (either kinship or neighbours) and are thus mainly issued from the same cluster-community. The Eskwads are rotating labor groups, small in size (5 to 15 persons) and can also serve as a mutual assistance device. There are numerous Eskwads in Adelaïde, at least one per cluster.
- The school based associations are led by the school director and include most of the pupils’ parents (there are 300 members in the *école du bas* association. In these associations, all parents contribute (as much as they can) to a common fund designed to lend money to those who cannot pay school fees. There are 2 schools in Adelaïde, and thus 2 associations.

None of these groups is official in that none of them has a legal status.

#### 4.2. The “development” organizations

- The *groupeman* “*Mouveman Peyisan Papay*”

Created by Jean-Baptiste Chavanne, a national level peasant leader in 1973, the *groupeman* “*Mouveman Peyisan Papay*” is composed of 3 sub-groups (young men, men, women), in conformity with the national organization rules. They cultivate a common field (owned by JB Chavanne), work on soil conservation, stock agricultural goods and raise money for mutual assistance.

To be part of the group, one must contribute to the common fund (as much as he can) and swear to God that he won’t participate to any *Famille Lavallas* (President Aristide’s party) activities. They are quite political and have a member designated to run at each election.

All the members live in the same cluster.

- The *groupeman* “*Tet Ansemble pour un Mouveman Peyisan*”

Created 3 months ago by an external foundation, they are still waiting for the funds to work on soil conservation, forestry, animal production and credit. The 8 sub-groups of 10 persons are mostly based on former Eskwads.

- The *groupeman* *Bon Samaritain*

These groups have their origin in Doctor Foblas’ NGO activities in the entire zone.

- The *Club des mères*

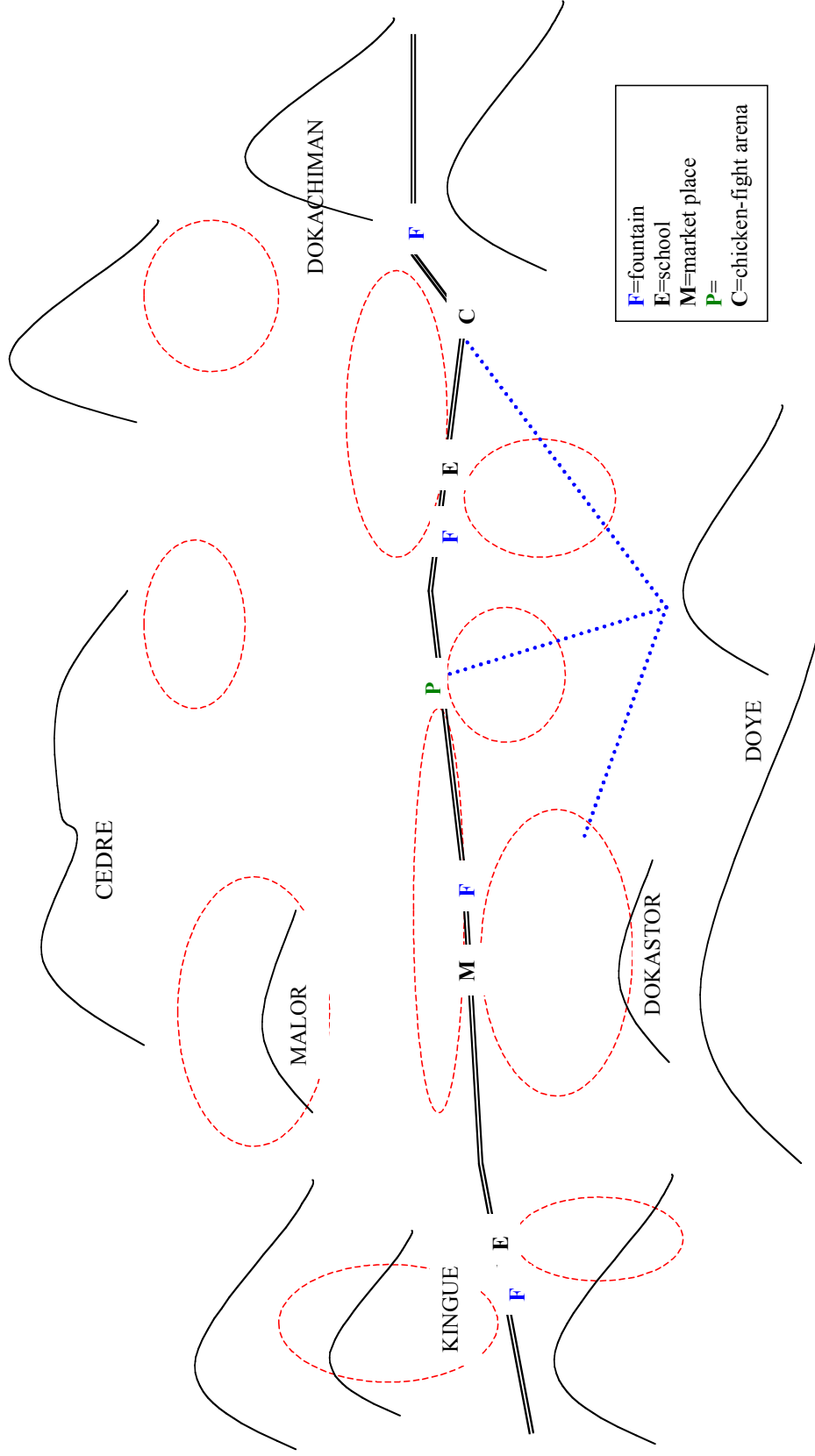
The “mother’s club” is not yet active in Adélaïde since the local counterparts are presently being trained. The objective is to give mothers courses in nutrition, soap and medical cream making. When asked, the counterpart admitted that she hoped to be able to make money out of it in the long term.

- The *Club légumes*

Created in January 2000 to cultivate vegetables during the dry season, the NGO has built irrigation ditches from which 25 families benefit. The 25 members are also trained in vegetable growing techniques and given plants. A committee is in charge of selling of part of the individuals’ production for which it gets 10% commission. This operation requires a truck which is lent by the NGO free of charge.

There also is a common fund to which everybody contributes (as much as he can) designated for mutual assistance and the perpetuation of the activities in case the NGO should run out of money.

# A representation of Adelaide



## **CASE STUDY N° 2**

### **Furcy and Obleon**

#### **1. Objectives and Methodology**

Furcy is one of the Kellogg project's zones, in which we have chosen to focus on two main features:

- The government-like institution of CAD (Comité d'aide au Développement), which serves as an interface between Furcy's external partners and local organizations.
- The agricultural Cooperative of Obléon (KOPAF), one of Furcy's small communities. We have here oriented the field work in order to better understand who participates in which kind of institution.

#### **2. The Furcy area**

##### **2.1. Description of Furcy**

Located in the communal section of Sourçailles, which belongs to the municipality of Kenscoff, nearby Port au Prince, Furcy is a mountainous area composed of 40 small communities quite far from each other (from 30 minutes to 3 hours walking distance).

There are about 800 families living in Furcy, dedicated to different activities:

- Agriculture: Most of Furcy's inhabitants are integrated into Port au Prince's market, cultivating vegetables or flowers for cash purposes. Most peasants also plant small plots designated to family consumption.  
There are no valleys in Furcy; all the plots are located on mountain-side slopes which in most cases are greater than 40 degrees in slope.
- Commerce: Since Furcy is only one hour by public transportation away from Port au Prince, commercial activities constitute an important occupation. The exchange goes both ways, i.e., Furcy residents sell local products in Port au Prince and also open small boutiques in Furcy selling manufactured goods from the capital.
- Services: The « swiss alpes climate » of Furcy makes it an attractive place for the Port au Prince bourgeois. Therefore, several domestic employment opportunities are available to Furcy's inhabitants.

Furcy's infrastructure is relatively well developed, thanks to the Kellogg project run by the Quisqueya University. In addition to church-based charity programs in Furcy, the UNIQ has managed to develop a great education program which involves both local peasants and young educated migrants from Furcy.

Most of Furcy's small communities have created at least one peasant association. 32 of these belong to the CAD through 3 local federations:

- CUJEF (“Comité de la jeunesse de Furcy”): is the most recent and aims at gathering the young peasants groups of the zone;
- OPF (“Organisation des paysans de Furcy): seems to be politically involved with the present governing party (famille Lavallas);
- COODES: seems to gather former Duvallier’s party members.

There are two distinct dynamics in Furcy’s small associations; some were created by the local federations, others already existed and chose to join or not one of the federations. All three local federations sit in the CAD where they are supposed to represent the small groups’ interests.

## **2.2. A focus on the CAD (Comité d’Aide au Développement).**

Created in 1996 at the beginning of Kellogg’s presence in Furcy, the CAD intends to be the interface between the UNIQ and the population. Therefore, any UNIQ initiative is discussed in the CAD so as to allow the affected groups to participate in the definition and implementation of the project.

In order to be representative of the populations’ interests, the CAD is composed of 7 members elected for a 2 year term:

- A CASEC representative;
- A Communal representative ;
- 2 Notables (a woman and a man);
- One delegate from each of the 3 federations.

Therefore, the CAD is composed of members from the administration, the traditional community and local development organizations. It can thus be considered as a kind of local parliament.

A main feature of the CAD is that its members are relatively well educated persons, able to write projects for donors and to organize the diffusion of information from bottom to top and top to bottom.

Even though not all of Furcy’s local organizations are represented in the CAD (like Obléon’s cooperative), its objective is to become a valid intermediary for all of Furcy’s external partners in the future.

## **3. Institutional participation of the Community of Obléon**

### **3.1. Description of Obléon**

Obléon is located on the road from Port au Prince to Furcy, a few kilometres up from Kenskoff. It is composed of 4 groups of houses (see the map). There are 2 schools, 2 Protestant churches, a non-functioning well and a relatively large number of boutiques (8) on the road, one of which also serves as a restaurant.

The institutional landscape of Obléon includes:

- 4 Eskwads (rotating labor groups);
- 1 sol (rotating credit group);
- 1 peasant group: Tet anseble d’Obléon, which is a member of the CUJEF.

- 4 church chorals;
- 1 cooperative organization (the KOPAF) which is based in Obléon but also covers other Furcy communities for a total of 200 members.

The KOPAF (Kooperative agricole des paysans de Furcy) was created in 1997 with help of the Methodist Church of Haiti (EMH) to address fertilizer scarcity. The EMH has contributed to the development of the organization through the gift of a house, a salary for the manager and inputs. It has also contacted SOCODEVI which has provided loans and trainings. SOCODEVI has helped in establishing contracts with Port au Prince input companies.

In order to benefit from scale economies and facilitate its exit, SOCODEVI has promoted formal relationships between 4 local cooperatives such as the KOPAF. Today, the 4 organizations share a manager (for relationships with input companies and clients) and a storage facility in Port au Prince.

### **3.2. Main features of the households participation in Obléon's institutions**

Since Obléon is a small community, we chose to proceed with an exhaustive survey of all households of the community. Two of Obléon's inhabitants were asked to draw a map of the area and answer a few questions on each household. The questions were designed to better understand the heterogeneity of the population (mostly in terms of activity and wealth). Even though the survey was not big enough to draw robust conclusions, the information collected, combined with the map and the data on the institutional landscape, did give a sense of:

- the social structure of Obléon;
- the participation in traditional organizations (here the Eskwads and the sols);
- the participation in the local agricultural cooperative.

*Obléon Social Structure:* The data seem to indicate that the population can be classified in terms of risk exposure. Those considered "richer" are those who benefit from several risk protection devices, such as:

- Possession of large animals (essentially cows), which is a form of saving for insurance purposes;
- Sources of revenue diversification: rich people are usually involved in several activities: agriculture, trade, house-construction, bourgeois' employees etc...

On the opposite end, the "poorer" are less endowed in animals, usually depend on a single activity (mostly agriculture) and are thus much more vulnerable. The data show that a majority of Obléon's inhabitants belong to a large "middle class".

*Participation in traditional forms of organization:* We here tried to understand participation in rotating labor groups (Eskwads) and rotating credit groups (sols), which are both small size traditional organizations. These groups are built on reciprocal confidence. Indeed, in these groups one's revenue depends on the other members' behavior. Therefore, one must carefully choose his partners so as to minimize the risk of default.

As expected, the data show that the groups are based upon neighbourhood relationships. In the two Eskwads and the sol, people mainly come from the same area of the community. For the Eskwads, the data also show that the participants are mid-ranged in terms of the surface cultivated. This can be interpreted as follow:

- the small cultivators do not need extra labor;

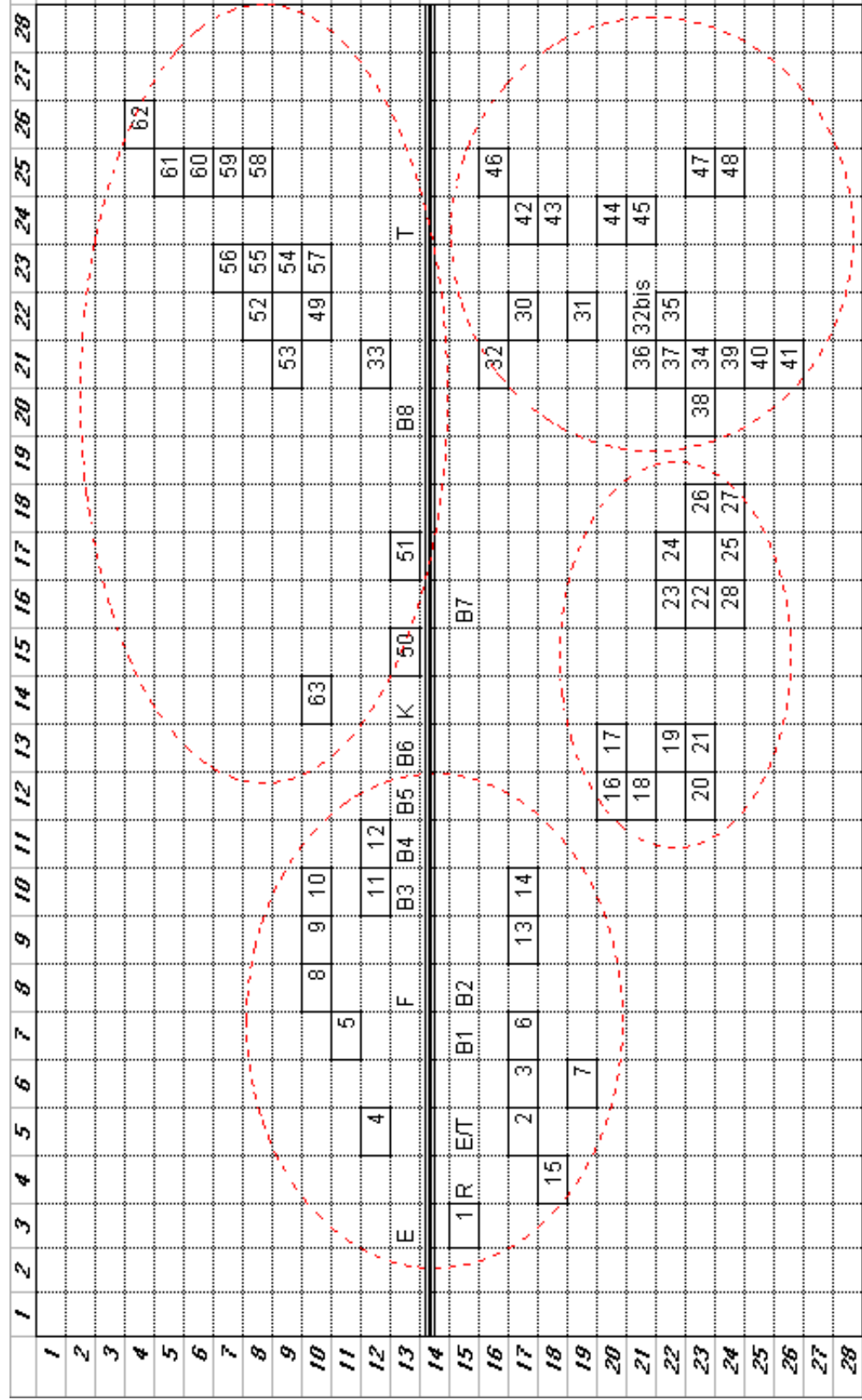
- An Eskwad (5 to 10 persons) is not sufficient for the large cultivators. Moreover, there are opportunities for temporary hiring of labor (such as the Kombit) in the area, which is less constraining.

*Participation in the agricultural cooperative:* Only 15 (out of 62) Obléon families are permanent members of the cooperative. However, non-members can purchase the inputs sold by the organization at a slightly higher price than the members. This could be part of the explanation for the low membership rate in Obléon. The participation decision must be explained through motivations other than access to lower input prices.

The data show that membership in the cooperative, just as in the Eswads, is mostly middle class in terms of both wealth and land cultivated. However, none of the family members in the cooperative (except for one) is also member of an Eskwads. This suggests a kind of substitutability between the 2 organizations.

Given that one doesn't need to belong to the cooperative to benefit from its services, one possible explanation for cooperative membership is that being a member of the cooperative also gives access to an insurance fund. Since those belonging to the Eskwads already benefit from such a fund, they only use the cooperative for input purposes.

# A Representation of Obléon



## **CASE STUDY N° 3**

### **Comparison of Two Fisherman Communities**

#### **Lully and Ravine Sèche**

### **1. Objectives and Methodology**

We have chosen here to focus on a specific activity, fishing, which usually offers great gains from cooperation. There are two possible types of gains:

- Access to production means: boats and nets are quite expensive and can thus justify either a common property or a credit system at a community level;
- Commercialisation: in Haiti, the main fish market is located in Port au Prince where the main consumers (restaurants and wealthy people) and export companies are located. This implies transportation and contact making costs. Therefore, there are opportunities for scale economies for fishermen outside of Port au Prince.

The area around the town of Saint Marc is known for its fishery. We have been able to locate two villages in this zone relatively close to each other, one of them “rich” and the other relatively “poor” in terms of institutional density. The comparison of these two areas has given us the opportunity to better understand what can lead to greater institutional density in economic activities.

### **2. The Ravine Sèche area**

#### **2.1. Description of Ravine Sèche**

Ravine Sèche is a small community (62 households), located 4 kilometres from the second main road of the country and 15 kilometres away from Saint Marc, the main economic and administrative town of the region.

The activities in Ravine Sèche can be classified as follow, starting from the most important:

- Fishing: there are about 10 small boats (3 of which are engine-driven), but most people fish from the shore, using hooks, traps or small nets.
- Agriculture: most of Ravine Sèche inhabitants cultivate small plots for food purposes.
- 12 families in Ravine Sèche also benefit from the presence of “bourgeois” beach-houses where they are employed.

There are no irrigation mechanisms in the village and for the last few years, “the rain has stopped at the road”. As a consequence, all villagers have recently turned to fishing for cash purposes.

This shift in activities, combined with a lack of boats, has led to a sharp decline in the fish population near the coast.

The village is also relatively poor in infrastructure, as it has only 2 small schools both are funded by the Protestant churches. A small community house is located on the main path. Until now, no external organization has undertaken a project in the village. A potable water source is located on the top of a hill, but is out of water most of the time.

## **2.2. Institutional landscape**

Although there are a few very dynamic people in Ravine Sèche, there is no truly effective organization in the village.

- The community council was created in 1981 for the purpose of building a road to the village and the reforesting hills surrounding the community. They also built the community house, a project in which everybody participated in land, monetarily and with labor. Today, the community council survives through a single activity: a small saving and credit fund.

- The « Association des Pêcheurs » was created in 1988, on the advice of an area-wide fishermen's federation. Its central objective was to raise external funds in order to bring electricity in the village so as to be able to store fish and other marine products. The association has written several letters to donors, and after 7 negative responses, it has been discouraged and turned to the creation of a solidarity fund dedicated to small trade and support for the schools.

*Today, the “Association des pêcheurs” and the community council are not functioning organizations; both await external assistance.*

## **3. The Lully Area**

### **3.1. Description of Lully**

Located 20 kilometres away from Ravine Sèche on the road toward Port au Prince, Lully is quite a large community (about 800 households). It is divided into two main sections “Lully bas” and “Lully haut”, the former being better off than the latter in terms of infrastructure. With paved roads, 1 kindergarten, 3 schools, 1 Catholic and 3 Protestant churches, 2 fountains (periodically out of water), 1 private ice factory and one permanent fish market, Lully can be considered a well-off village. Lully is also well off in terms of external links, such as the several projects run by NGOs (directly in the village and also through local organizations) and its numerous and helpful diaspora in the United States.

Lully's inhabitants are involved in the same activities as those living in Ravine Sèche. Again, fishing is the main occupation but the techniques differ: here more people own or have access to boats so that fishermen can go farther away from the coast where fish are less scarce. This makes Lully well-known for fishing and has created many commercial activities. Most women are involved in small fish selling, while a dozen private merchants buy fish for the Port au Prince market.

### 3.2. Institutional landscape

There are plentiful of formal and informal organizations in Lully including:

- APEL : Association des Pêcheurs de Lully
- COPELU : Coopérative des Pêcheurs de Lully
- MFL : Mouvement Féminin de Lully
- CBL : Comité de Beauté de Lully
- OPL : Organisation progressiste des jeunes de Lully
- COPAGEL : Coopérative d'Agriculture et d'Elevage de Lully
- PHARE : Paroles Honnêtes d'Ayitiens pour des Réponses Eclairées.

...

We have here chosen to focus on the organizations most involved in fishing, APEL and COPELU.

- The Association des Pêcheurs de Lully. The APEL was created in 1992 by 3 people who realized how low the local fish price was relative to that paid in Port au Prince. They created the APEL in order to offer the fishermen a better price by reducing the margin. The APEL has thus benefited all the fishermen selling their fish in Lully by pushing up the prices through the introduction of competition into the oligopolistic merchants' market.

Today, the APEL buys fish from any fisherman, with the exception of small fish which they refuse to buy in hopes of preserving the fish population. APEL members are required to sell at least half of their catch to the association.

The money generated by commercialisation is re-invested into several community services:

- i. A rescuing system with motors boats and communication devices with other villages on the coast designed to help people in distress.
- ii. A school for children and training for adults offered in order to develop fishing techniques.

Some services are only accessible for members, including credit for boats and nets purchasing.

Most of the APEL activities are designed for the whole community of Lully and nearby villages. There seems to be a political motivation for one to become a member of the association (The APEL has only 77 members, which is very few in comparison to the large number of fishermen selling their sea-products in the association).

- The Coopérative des Pêcheurs de Lully. As explained by its president, the evolution of the COPELU has depended heavily on the national political context. COPELU was created in 1977 in order to furnish fishing materials (boats, nets) to its members. It also developed product conservation opportunities through 2 freezers. The cooperative only buys fish from its members who have the obligation to sell all their catch to COPELU. In this way, COPELU is more exclusive than APEL.

In 1986, when Duvalier left Haiti's presidency, the COPELU decided to stop all their activities due to the political conflicts in the village, as "the COPELU was not aimed at becoming a political organization". In 2002, the former president decided to re-

start COPELU's activities, since "people are discouraged, they do not want to get involved in politics anymore". Today, COPELU plans to re-start its former activities and participate in the village development through a potable water committee and other community infrastructure projects.