

VIII. Constraints & Challenges

In addition to the challenge of coordinating myriad players discussed above, the difficulty in reaching remote areas on nearly impassable roads sometimes presented a constraint to implementing the program. For example, travel to sites in the far southeast was often accomplished only by traveling through the Dominican Republic. To address this constraint, with USAID approval, PADF established a satellite office in one particularly difficult area that had several ongoing activities. A project coordinator and administrator remained in the area and worked closely with the CBOs there.

Throughout the life of the program, civil unrest and insecurity due to high crime hindered implementation of certain activities, especially those that relied on technical assistance from foreign experts. During most of the period of November 2000 to March 2001, travel to Haiti was restricted for security reasons related to political violence and unrest. In fact, there was a voluntary evacuation for USG dependents during this period. Though political tensions eased in mid-2001, crime has been a more pervasive problem. Car jackings, robberies and more recently kidnappings occurred almost daily. Security of USAID staff and partners could not be taken lightly and required a high level of management. In spite of these concerns, the HGRP met its targets.

Another challenge for the HGRP was to ensure sustainability of such a short-term program. Maintenance training and hands-on training of CBO staff in management and accountability was implemented with this objective in mind. The community funds generated under the 3-2-1 formula for the IR3 and IR 4 activities have ensured some means of continuing activities of priority to the CBOs.

Some aspects of the HGRP are being replicated and/or continued. USAID/Haiti has funded a follow-on program to further the strides made under the HGRP with local and municipal level committees. The Hillside Agriculture Program is continuing to support research in seed production. The PL 480 Title III will soon begin an extension of the Cap Rouge Road rehabilitation. The USDA has awarded a Food for Progress grant to PADF to implement a program very similar to the HGRP in the north and south of the country.

IX. Lessons Learned & Recommendations

The SECID final evaluation, partners reports, retreats and meetings among partners and SpO team members have generated several lessons learned.

- The umbrella grant mechanism was probably the best implementation mechanism, considering the short timeframe and the myriad small activities to be implemented in over 20 locations. Having one main grantee with several subs created a ready network that eased communications and established a “chain of command” that facilitated progress reporting and accountability. Most activities were implemented by CBOs, supervised by U. S. NGOs that were in turn supervised by PADF. Though this required tight coordination, the HGRP was able to benefit from the expertise at each

level without becoming bogged down by the weight of the structure. By relying on this network of organizations, USAID was able to benefit from a broad range of experience while having to deal with only one main grantee.

- Working with strong, experienced CBOs was crucial for this reconstruction program. Again, the short time frame of the HGRP did not allow for the time to create new organizations.
- NGOs and contractors already in country were able to design activities and begin implementation sooner than an organization that had not worked in Haiti before. Nevertheless, another lesson learned was that even these organizations needed a month or more to be fully mobilize after an agreement was signed.
- Close coordination among partners enhanced communications. Progress towards meeting targets was freely shared and a joint sense of involvement and investment in the program was developed.
- Taking the time to form a strong SpO team that clearly understood the roles and responsibilities of each member helped to facilitate the technical and financial oversight needed with such a visible, highly scrutinized program. Every team member worked hard to facilitate approvals and provide support to field staff implementing the activities.
- The generation of community funds using the 3-2-1 formula was an innovative means of ensuring ownership of the activities by the communities and a resource for community based organizations. Annex three discusses the community funds and the 3-2-1 formula, which was implemented under the HGRP.
- USAID and its partners learned that a concerted effort was needed to increase the interest in and usage of commercial seeds. Even though the commercial quality seeds were sold at grain prices, the demand in the first year was lower than expected. In the second year of the program, an active campaign was implemented to increase awareness of and demand for the seeds in the project-assisted areas, which helped to increase use from 4% to 19% in one year.
- Success in managing the other USG agencies whose agreements originated from Washington was good but could have been better. Though these agencies brought unique and valuable expertise to the program and made every effort to collaborate closely with the USAID Mission and complement USAID/Haiti's program, the fact that program managers were based in Washington made coordination more difficult. These agencies never became full partners in the program as the other USAID partners did. Having a full time representative in country would have been helpful. The question of to whom they were responsible and how their programs would be monitored was not clear. A more direct relationship such as a PASA with the USAID Mission with clear lines of authority is recommended for another reconstruction program.