

## 16 A Haitian Peasant Tree Chronicle: Adaptive Evolution and Institutional Intrusion

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**D**uring ten years of operation, between 1981 and 1991, the Agroforestry Outreach Project (AOP) made it possible for some 200,000 peasant households throughout the ecologically and politically ravaged country of Haiti to plant over sixty million fast-growing wood tree seedlings on their land. The unexpected participation of as much as 20 percent of the entire rural population in this tree-planting effort vastly exceeded what anyone had anticipated. Several articles and reports (for example, Conway 1986; Murray 1984, 1987; Lowenthal 1989) have discussed the project's conceptual and methodological underpinnings; how it used anthropological theory and ethnographic methods to reformulate the relationship between trees and people in a manner acceptable to Haitian villagers, and how it employed nongovernmental channels to implement the project, bypassing Duvalierist ministries to assure that donor funds would reach intended beneficiaries in the form of income-generating seedlings.

After ten years of effective operation, the project was renewed for yet another five years. But it was brought to a sudden halt by bureaucratic interventions in 1991. Even though it was partially resurrected in early 1995, it is important to examine the vulnerability of such an undertaking to institutional oscillations. Although tens of thousands of rural households benefited from the AOP's provision of trees, this case shows that even well-functioning projects can be damaged by institutional meddling.

### BACKGROUND

Three basic assumptions underlay AOP design: (a) that the rural small-holding population was the sector most likely to spearhead tree planting in Haiti; (b) that this effort had to build on microeconomic considerations, specifically on peasants' need for income, rather than on the macroecological concerns that shape the thinking of most development agencies and environmentalists; and (c) that externally funded projects

can facilitate substantial behavioral change, if designed on the basis of ethnographic insights into smallholder socioeconomic conditions.

The initial project document (Murray 1979) identified institutional factors—project design and implementation—rather than village-level barriers as the source of previous failures. Given appropriate incentives and opportunities, it was argued, Haitian villagers would plant trees in great numbers. Having contributed preliminary studies and helped design the project, I was invited by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to launch and direct it for the first two years. The project's rapid output argued for the correctness of its core hypotheses. However, even a well-functioning project that meshes with local cultural subsystems, is ahead of schedule in producing targeted outputs, and evolves still more effective procedures over time can be sabotaged.

In Haiti the usual whipping boy for such an institutional critique is its government. In this case, such lashes would be off target. The AOP was designed to be insulated both from the institutionalized predation of Duvalierist ministries and the institutional chaos of the post-Duvalier years. The intruding institution was, paradoxically, the provider of generous support over the previous decade, USAID.

Although some unfortunate behaviors on the part of individual USAID officials are chronicled here, the agency's overall track record in Haiti was generally far better than that of most other bilateral or multilateral agencies of equivalent size. During the years of disorder and public sector paralysis that followed Duvalier's ouster in 1986, most large donor agencies, led by their mandates and/or their philosophies to channel their funds through the government of Haiti, reacted to the political chaos by sitting on their hands, shaking their heads, sharpening their pencils, doing studies, or closing their offices and evacuating their expatriate personnel. USAID, in contrast, was one of the few donors in Haiti that continued, despite political chaos, to fund ground-level activities in health, nutrition, tree planting and job creation. A simplistic USAID-bashing critique would therefore be unwarranted. This account identifies the extraneous management factors that can cause an institution's program decisions to oscillate between inspired deftness and ill-informed bludgeoning. The oscillations continue, as the agency now appears to be moving back to a more supportive role.<sup>1</sup>

AOP did not regreen the entire Haitian landscape, a goal that might require either centuries of time or preternatural interventions far beyond the capacity of a development project, but it did induce two hundred thousand households throughout rural Haiti to incorporate serious tree planting (several hundred trees per household) into their economic survival strategies. Although the hefty funding required to resurrect the project has

yet to materialize, two of the thirty-five nurseries are back in operation, generating a trickle of trees that will hopefully swell again to the volume of the 1980s. Even though this present trend is promising, the structural vulnerability of efforts such as AOP to institutional swings, by a donor or a sponsoring government, is in itself a major problem that warrant systematic analysis.

### UNDERLYING PROJECT THEORY

During the nineteenth century, the interest of foreigners in the trees of Haiti was exclusively extractive. Haitian regimes allied themselves with foreign companies to remove much of the precious hardwood from Haiti's forests. In the twentieth century this orientation was reversed. Starting in the late 1940s, foreign agencies began financing reforestation projects among Haitian peasants. Generally, these projects were inspired by ideologies of statism, environmentalism and protectionism. The Haitian state was to promote and own the trees planted; the trees would be planted principally to restore and protect the environment, and, once planted, the trees themselves would have to be protected from peasant woodcutters and charcoal makers.

Villagers identified the Creole term *rebwazman* (reforestation) with coercive interventions by the Haitian state—supported by foreign money—to force them to cover part of their land with unwanted trees, whose subsequent removal could result in penalties. Rumors spread throughout villages that the state or the foreign project would subsequently expropriate the land once the trees were mature. Given these factors, it should be no surprise that tree-planting projects in Haiti had little success.

Based on anthropological reconstructions of cultural evolutionary processes and on my own ethnographic research on Haitian peasant communities, I proposed that USAID try to reverse all three of these principles. First, state control of wood would be replaced by peasant ownership and usufruct rights; second, the macroecological needs of the environment would be served not directly but instead indirectly, by meeting the microeconomic needs of smallholding cultivators; and third, fast-growing wood trees would be planted, not for protection's sake, but explicitly for harvesting and selling wood, thereby encouraging widespread planting. Together these ideas led to a major paradigmatic and programmatic shift in USAID's strategy for Haiti.

The evolutionary theory underlying the project strategy was based on an analogy between the current wood crisis and the much earlier food crisis of our mesolithic ancestors that led to the ancient neolithic transition

from foraging to a domesticated mode of food production. Our hunter-gatherer predecessors did not solve the increasing scarcities of wild meat and vegetation through protectionist or conservationist tactics. Rather, they responded by shifting gradually into a domesticated mode of food procurement (Murray 1987). The contemporary tree dilemma, both globally and in Haiti, viewed within the same theoretical framework, proposes a transition from an extractive mode of procurement to a domesticated mode of production. Designing tree-planting projects that regard wood as a renewable crop to be harvested and used would better suit the orientation of the Haitian peasants, among whom I had worked, and also correspond to the prehistoric strategy adopted by our neolithic ancestors to deal with the decline of natural sources of vegetation.

This was the historical rationale for the proposed tree-planting strategy. But projects have to function in the existential present. The major contemporary assumption was that present Haitian farmers, operating in the ethnographic here-and-now, are energetic and economically rational decisionmakers oriented principally toward the market in their land use decisions. They previously rejected tree projects, it was hypothesized, because projects failed to link tree promotion to local market opportunities, toward which the economic energies of Haitian peasants have been so heavily oriented for the past two centuries.

Since Haitian households had only smallholdings to cultivate, wood trees would have to be incorporated into existing farming systems that were already under stress. Peasants would not plant forests, but only woodlots or tree stands. Thus, the idea of *agroforestry*—the combination of food crops and trees on the same plot, or at least on the same holding—replaced that of *reforestation* as the guiding concept of the project. Second, in view of the involvement of Haitian peasants in local markets, the planting of trees was explicitly and publicly promoted as an *income-generating* rather than as an ecological or subsistence strategy. Project messages thus promoted, rather than castigated, the cutting and selling of wood.

The project was planned with three core components, each of which had to be carefully programmed and thought out: a *technical* strategy that would produce trees, a *benefit-flow* strategy ensuring that the economic sources from tree planting would go to the farmers and not to some other social group, and an *institutional delivery* strategy to guarantee that donor funds would not get siphoned off by other actors with their own personal or institutional agendas.

Previous projects had focused largely on the technical dimension and mostly ignored local benefits. Ownership of the trees planted had been assigned, in some projects, to a vague village entity or to the state itself,

while in other projects it was left undefined. Either way, farmers were not sure that they were really the owners of the trees, and many were apprehensive about eventual expropriation of their land once it was planted with alien trees. Being told that trees should be protected, not cut, further raised apprehensions. Ownership ambiguity, ecological sermonizing and hidden threats dampened potential farmer interest in planting trees.

To counteract this, AOP explicitly and publicly assured full ownership of the trees to the individual farmers planting them. Indeed, the project took the locally unprecedented step of encouraging farmers to cut their trees, without asking project permission first, to harvest the wood and sell it as lumber or charcoal whenever the trees were mature and the trees' owner needed cash. Presenting fast-growing wood as a privately owned, harvestable crop was a new message to most of these farmers.

Equally critical to ensuring benefit flows was the institutional delivery strategy. Despite the predatory attitude of the Duvalier regime toward development funds, USAID and other agencies routinely channeled the bulk of their grants and loans through one or another government ministry. As a result, tree-planting funds routed through the ministry of agriculture produced very few trees. This institutional route was tactfully but purposefully circumvented in the project design.

An alternative delivery structure based exclusively on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) was adopted, despite protest from Duvalierist officials and from several highly placed USAID officials in Haiti who saw their task, abstractly, as that of "building institutions." Stripped of its sloganeering veneer, this approach often amounted to dutifully pumping new infusions of U.S. money into predatory Haitian state bureaucracies. After some bloody in-house battles within USAID and some courageous backroom maneuvering by some junior USAID officials, an innovative project was approved in which not one nickel would go to Duvalierist bureaucracies. The part of the program that I initially managed was a grant of \$4 million, made to a U.S.-based NGO which undertook to enter into agreements with local NGOs all over Haiti. These organizations actually organized the outplanting and follow-up on the trees.

The operational foundation of the project was the Haitian peasant household that agreed to plant several hundred fast-growing trees on its own land. AOP entered into an arrangement with villagers, an informal contract, by which households would supply two of the factors of production, and AOP would supply the third. Farmers who wished to participate would have to make some of their own land available for the trees and would have to supply all the labor. The project would provide the capital in the form of free seedlings. The project would also provide technical assistance, suggesting different ways to incorporate trees into

existing farms—distinct woodlots, border plantings on cropped fields, rows of trees within fields, full intercropping with other crops. These were simple recommendations. Decisions about how they would plant their trees on their own land were left to farmers.

The early results of the project have been described in numerous publications and reports generated by the project itself.<sup>2</sup> These reports document that farmer response to this new option far exceeded even the most optimistic project projections. Many, perhaps most, government projects have time delays and cost overruns. This project faced the opposite dilemma: once Haitian peasants were convinced that the trees would be theirs—and not the state's or the project's—and that they could harvest the wood when and as they needed it, villagers requested and planted four to five times more trees than the original estimates. Also, the project found ways of supplying the seedlings for much less than the original estimated cost, which enabled it to increase its output as demand expanded.

As a result, the four-year goal of getting four million trees planted had already been reached by the end of year two; by the end of year four, some twenty million tree seedlings had been distributed, rather than the four million originally envisioned over five years. Survival rates, at first low, particularly in the drier areas, soon rose to technically acceptable levels—in the 60 percent range after twelve months. As news of the project spread, peasant demand for the seedlings kept increasing.

## PROJECT EVOLUTION

Because it surpassed early goals, the project was renewed and extended for a decade. When my contract terminated toward the end of year two, another anthropologist assumed project directorship. During its ten-year life, the project experienced two types of pressure for change: positive internal ones that nudged it onto more adaptive pathways, and destructive ones stemming from intruding external forces. Both kinds of pressures occurred from the beginning.

### Adaptive Internal Evolution

Throughout its life, the project adhered to its original principles of private tree ownership and of peasant rights to harvest the wood for income-generating purposes. But other aspects of AOP shifted and evolved. A major shift was the eventual decentralization of seedling production. Seedlings were originally supplied by a large nursery near Port-au-Prince and shipped by truck to communities in distant parts of the island. This

initial dependence on one central nursery had been reluctantly adopted as a temporary means to launch the project rapidly. Within a few years, happily, seedling production became decentralized and regionalized, as a network of over thirty well-run nurseries was established all over Haiti, managed by many of the same Haitian NGOs that were organizing the outplanting of the trees. Large numbers of farmer-run backyard nurseries were also started to supplement the NGO nurseries.

Second, an increase in the variety of trees made available to farmers, including locally known species, moved them away from reliance on a few exotic species. Third, although for logistical reasons the project had to supply standard packages of seedlings to farmers, the mixes of trees supplied to individual farmers became more tailored to local demand, and a few nurseries actually began taking orders from individual farmers for specific numbers of seedlings of selected species.

Fourth, the number of seedlings delivered to individuals was reduced from 500 to 250 or less. This was done partly to permit the project to reach more farmers, since the demand for seedlings had outstripped the project's capacity to produce them. But many farmers were not able to plant 500 seedlings at once. On the basis of our conversations with farmers during project design, we had calculated that even small farmers would have access to enough space on their holdings for this number. If planted in a two-meter by two-meter grid, 500 seedlings would require only one-fifth of a hectare. But we had not factored in competing demands on farmers' labor.

At nurseries, seedlings could easily be removed from their containers (special root trainers that produced easily transportable microseedlings) and shipped to a region within a few days of the onset of the annual rains. But to prevent spoilage, they had to be planted within a few days by the farmers who received them. Farmers were also planting their other crops at precisely this time, and many farmers were leaving some of their 500 seedlings unplanted. Providing smaller numbers of trees at one time permitted AOP to reach more farmers, and it meant that more care was given to the seedlings themselves.

A fifth shift was the emergence of alley-cropping and hedgerows as a major project activity. Initially, AOP focused on wood trees as a future harvestable wood crop, placing little emphasis on soil conservation. Once hedgerows and alley-cropping began to be introduced, using *leucaena* and other appropriate species, which trapped soil that would otherwise wash downhill and which increased crop production near the hedgerows through nitrogen fixation, both soil conservation and increased agricultural production emerged as important project contributions. AOP thus evolved from being a promoter of wood trees to being a genuine agroforestry project.

Other positive shifts were administrative. In its first years, the project covered four regions; this number was increased to five. Initially, regional directors were all expatriates. Even though all expatriate staff were required to become fluent in Creole, English continued to be the language of in-house project meetings and project documents. Within a few years, however, Haitians worked themselves up into positions of increasing responsibility, and Creole became the language of meetings and of project documents. While this shift to Creole as the project language did not increase the flow of trees, it was symbolically important for the Haitianization of the project.

### Negative External Pressures

Adverse influences were also encountered, although, at least in the beginning, they were resisted. A dynamic staff person backstopping AOP in the Washington home office of the implementing NGO provided important support to the field operations, and fortunately, she stayed with the project for ten years. Perhaps by virtue of his own institutional responsibilities, however, the NGO's executive officer when the project commenced, a former USAID mission director, gave the impression of being less concerned with what the NGO could do for the project than vice versa. There were pressures to acquiesce in questionable but technically legal (and perhaps quite common) courtesies to friends and colleagues of the CEO. Fortunately, the importuning was withdrawn when the field office resisted.<sup>3</sup>

USAID/Haiti itself began shackling the project with cost-inflating accretions of marginal value to the central goal of the project. A separate multimillion dollar research project, whose major beneficiaries were, in my opinion, U.S. professors, contractors and graduate students, was foisted on AOP, although many interesting studies of high quality came out of this (for example, Balzano 1986, 1989; Ashley 1986; Grosenick 1986). Fortunately, the funds for this research were not extracted from AOP's operational budget but were added on by USAID; thus, the research did not reduce or impede the flow of trees. But it did absorb funds that might have been better used for direct project outputs, and it added an aura of bureaucratic, business-as-usual opportunism to a project whose managers had, up to that time, been proud of cutting costs and beating deadlines.

Despite these external pressures, for ten years the project functioned well. Appreciating this, the USAID mission in Haiti extended AOP for a year beyond its original termination date, and then extended it for another five years, through 1991. During the turbulent years following Duvalier's removal in 1986, when political chaos brought most government programs to a halt, AOP continued largely unaffected, because of its nongovernmental

implementation and because of the increasing demand by Haitian peasants for what the project offered. After a highly positive end-of-project evaluation in 1991, AOP was renewed again for another five-year period under a new name. Shortly thereafter, disaster struck.

This occurred with the arrival of a new USAID mission director who began dismantling what his predecessors had supported successfully. Even though a cooperative agreement had been signed between USAID and the participating NGOs to continue the project for another five years, the new director simply revoked the agreement and forbade the grantees to distribute any more free seedlings. Peasants, he said, were no longer to be spoiled with subsidies; they should pay full market costs for any seedlings which they received from any USAID project. However, this opposition to subsidies was apparently limited to Haitian farmers because it did not apply to the government officials and foreign contractors whose salaries and air-conditioned vehicles are routinely subsidized by the agency.

This arbitrary change in policy undermined the foundations of the project as it was then operating—essentially a voluntary exchange with farmers who, if they supplied land and labor, were provided several hundred seedlings free of charge. This arrangement was identical in many ways with that prevailing in the United States. When working with much more prosperous farmers in its own country, the American government already knew that it would have to underwrite most or all of the cost of seedlings if it wanted to get wood trees planted on private farms. Project implementers knew that suddenly requiring Haitian peasants to pay cash for seedlings would bring the project to a halt.

The participating NGOs protested and argued against this policy change. The project had received outstanding outside evaluations; it had been the jewel in the mission's portfolio during the 1980s and had achieved growing international attention as a showcase project. Haitian farmers were certainly less able than American farmers to pay for tree seedlings, particularly given their economic distress following years of international embargo against Haiti after the ouster of Duvalier. The mission director, however, ignored every evaluation, every message, every plea—and imposed his new policy. The result was the shutdown of thirty-five nurseries around Haiti, which were putting out nearly eight million forest trees per year onto degraded Haitian peasant land, at a time when efforts should have been accelerated to restore Haiti's devastated environment. Ironically, this USAID decision was taken at a time when the U.S.-imposed embargo was forcing Haitians to accelerate their charcoal production in rural areas.

The project itself was not officially terminated. Rather it was converted into a more conventional hillside farming project which emphasized alley-cropping, backyard tree nurseries, and other improved land use behaviors,

most of which AOP had already introduced as supplements to tree planting. These activities now became the main focus, as tree planting was relegated to the margins, and the unique system of agroforestry extension developed in the 1980s was abandoned. The number of trees planted per year plummeted from eight million to several hundred thousand. The survival monitoring, a central part of AOP, was dropped. The number of farmers reached by the project per year declined from tens of thousands to a fraction of that number. What did not decrease, of course, was the cost of the project. Under AOP we were spending about \$70 per rural participant. The cost in the new project is closer to \$750 per participant, but only a fraction of this reached villagers in terms of any palpable material benefits.

The return of Aristide in late 1994, plus the widely unlamented departure of that mission director from Haiti, opened the door to reexamining USAID's environmental projects. High-level authorities in USAID/Washington, apparently acting in response to a nudge from the White House, put together a special environmental task force for Haiti in November 1994. I was invited to join the task force as an outside member and was given a green light to assist in putting together proposals for the resurrection of AOP. The anticipated resumption of significant development assistance to Haiti has not materialized, so most of the activities that the task force proposed remain on paper. But one small activity has been reestablished, the reopening of several root-trainer nurseries. Tree dissemination is receiving less than a million dollars, not the twelve million dollars that was requested and justified. But the system is slowly being primed again, and reactivation of the tree flow is feasible.

### LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

The willingness of Haitian villagers to plant trees, and the ability of donor and implementing institutions to launch and support this process, clearly constitutes a major reason for hope. This chronicle should end, however, with neither promotional hype nor with lamentations about evil bureaucrats, but rather with some causal analysis. The flow of trees onto Haitian farms during the 1980s was engendered by a cluster of three causal factors that may never again fully coalesce: a mass of energetic and economically rational peasants, oriented toward local markets, willing to experiment with new land use practices that would strengthen their position in those markets; a network of operational NGOs capable of linking these peasants to external sources of funding and new technologies; and a funding agency (in this case, USAID) willing, at least for a decade, to experiment with new modes of implementation.

Whereas it took three clusters of actors to make the project work, it required only one causal agent to dismantle it. The crisis that suspended the program was attributable neither to the peasants nor to participating NGOs. Their opinions, preferences and capabilities were ignored. And although recent USAID reports diplomatically allude to Haiti's political crisis as responsible in some way for the now-lamented termination of AOP (it is considered poor taste to criticize former mission directors openly), in fact the demise of AOP was produced by factors internal to USAID.

Will the project reassert itself? The prognosis is modest. The first two causal factors—rational, energetic farmers and competent NGOs—are still alive and well in Haiti. Hundreds of thousands of Haitian farmers have now shifted into the production, rather than simple extraction, of wood. My advocacy of the NGO route to reach these farmers implies no naive view of the inherent goodness of NGOs. The extractive opportunism of many new NGOs, and their inclusion under the same generic NGO label as older and more serious institutions, casts a pall over the entire NGO strategy now favored by many donors.<sup>4</sup> But in the short-term perspective of contemporary Haiti and the long-term perspective of development in general, NGO behavior has been less detrimental than that of governmental institutions, either donor bureaucracies or recipient bureaucracies.<sup>5</sup>

The Achilles heel in the AOP approach is to be found in the third causal factor, reliance on unpredictable external donors. Here prospects look bleak. Despite the reopening of two AOP nurseries with USAID funding, current USAID Haiti mission discourse at the time of my most recent visit (January 1996) is once again to reroute funding of all agrarian activities through their "proper" home, that is, the ministry of agriculture. The NGOs, without whom USAID could have done nothing during the Duvalier and post-Duvalier years, are being sidelined as unsustainable fly-by-night amateurs undertaking activities better managed by the presumed-to-be-more-sustainable government of Haiti.<sup>6</sup>

Given the erratic behavior of external donors, is there any way of breaking dependence on external funds? Why not encourage farmers to produce their own seedlings? This is a philosophically attractive option. Unfortunately, the peasant backyard nurseries that have moved in this direction have achieved only limited output. Experience in many countries indicates that wood trees will be planted in substantial numbers only through the delivery of free, or at least highly subsidized seedlings. In Haiti, farmers will often pay for fruit or coffee seedlings, but they will rarely, if ever, pay for wood-tree seedlings. Nor will they produce them in the quantities required to have a significant local ecological or economic impact. They will, however, plant and care for tens of millions of seedlings if they are provided in some way similar to that of AOP.

Continuing dependence on external funders and seedling producers will make many observers uneasy. There is a widespread sense in the development community that a good project is one that will continue without any outside support after a specified period of assistance, and, to achieve this, subsidies must be kept to a minimum during the life of the project. To accommodate this sentiment, a compromise proposal is often heard: Stop total subsidization of seedlings. Have farmers pay a small, symbolic amount for the seedlings. "That way they'll appreciate the seedlings more and take better care of them."

Not only is there no evidence to support this assertion, but attempts to serve two masters simultaneously are likely to end up serving neither. A project run this way would not be sustainable because it would not generate enough funds to be fully self-financing, and neither would it produce enough volume to make a substantial environmental impact. A project that recovers only a fraction of its seedling production costs through small payments is no more "sustainable" than one giving the seedlings away. And when confronted with short-term and long-term investment options, most cash-needy Haitian farmers will not spend anything on wood-tree seedlings. The main achievement of any compromise measure would be to reduce the seedling flow to a fraction of what it could be if planners would simply define wood-tree seedlings as a justifiable project contribution to a larger societal good, that is, the reforestation of denuded hills and valleys.

The millennia of extractive wood mining that have gone on around the planet, and the centuries of that behavior in Haiti itself, have created an orientation to the wood tree that will not change overnight. As a result of AOP, tens of thousands of farmers now view the wood tree as a welcome income-generating crop, rather than as a gift of nature to be quickly cut before someone else does. Trees are not yet culturally construed in the same category as traditional crops. Because of the length of time that wood trees take to produce a harvest, the ambiguities concerning financial yields per hectare, and a number of other factors, trees are not yet treated by Haitian farmers as an ordinary crop in which they are willing to invest capital. They will allocate land and labor to this new crop, but not cash. And my field visits to tree-planting projects in Central and South America and West and East Africa lead me to suspect that this reluctance to invest capital may affect wood tree projects elsewhere as well. In retrospect, AOP's strategy of meeting rural people halfway on this issue was fully on target.

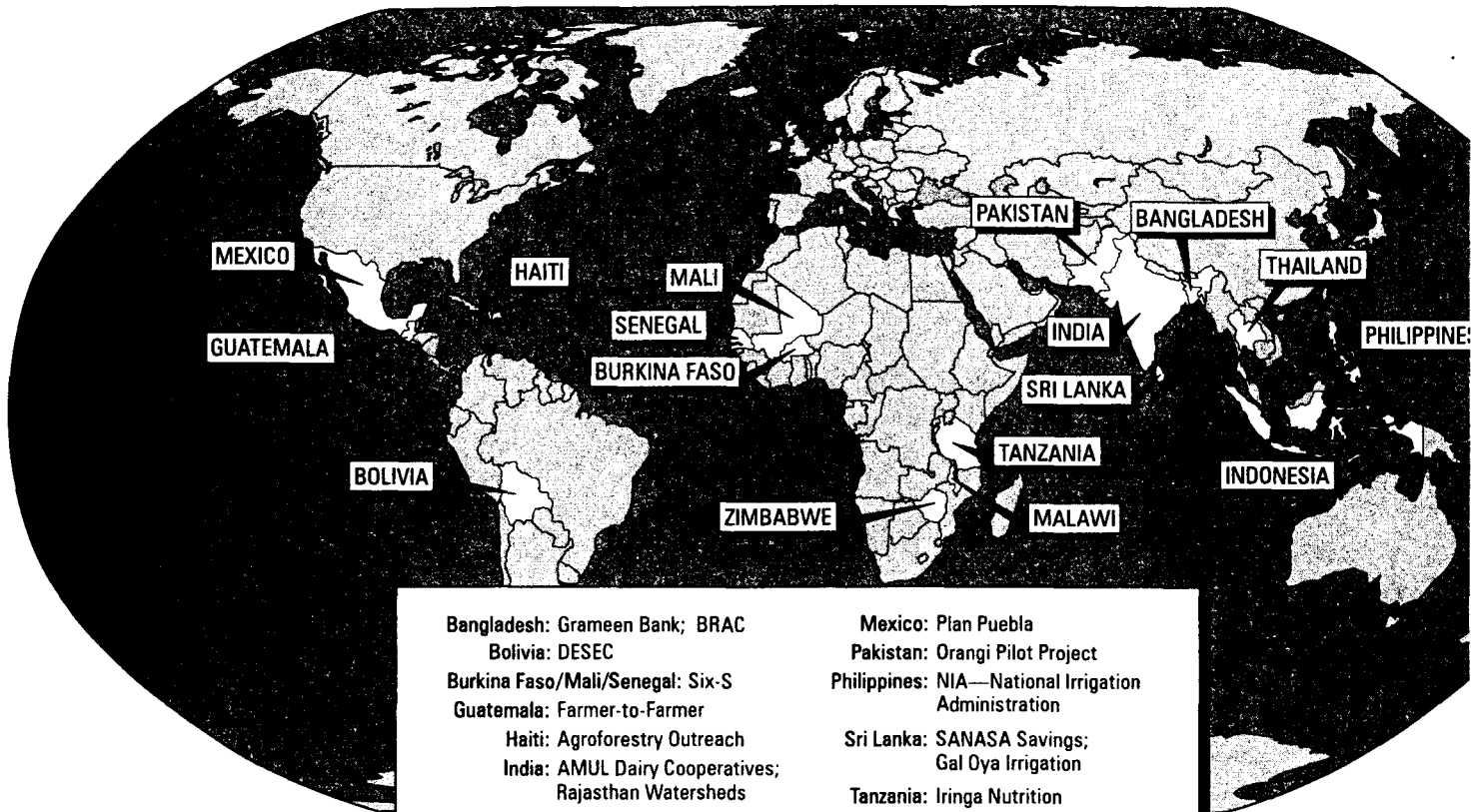
Other objections may be that the approach is not sustainable, or that farmers stop planting trees as soon as project funding stops. Research has shown that, in fact, project participants do find ways to produce more trees—protecting and managing regrowth, transplanting pioneer seedlings—even after the project leaves a community. But the objection is true in

that the volume of planting achieved under AOP is certainly *not* achievable without continued donor support. For how long? Probably until such time as the volume of arboreal biomass outplanted in Haiti (or any country) has reached a stage where farmers can, without jeopardizing their traditional agrarian activities, harvest and manage their own domestically controlled and marketable spontaneous regrowth on a sustained yield basis, without any further dependence on project nurseries. This will take a long time.

Although Haiti's macroproblems give reason for pessimism, the experience reported here justifies optimism for the specific domain of tree planting. The key is a negotiated compromise between the macroecological concerns of foreign donors, environmentalists and government planners, on one hand, and the microeconomic needs of poor Haitian smallholders, on the other. AOP arranged such a coincidence of interests. Despite recent setbacks, it appears worthwhile to seek the resources to begin again in Haiti and, making culture-specific adjustments as appropriate, to attempt extrapolation elsewhere.

## NOTES

1. In late 1994, after the return of Aristide, I was invited back to Haiti twice by USAID/Washington as a member of a special Environmental Task Force. One of its major objectives was to reinstate the previous flow to the countryside of peasant-planted and peasant-owned trees. The current mission management in Haiti commissioned a retrospective evaluation of AOP. The verdict was quite positive (Smucker and Timyan 1995).
2. Over three dozen references that deal exclusively with AOP are available, and numerous others allude to AOP. In addition to ones cited earlier are: Ashley (1986); Balzano (1986, 1989); Bannister and Josiah (1993); Buffum (1986); Buffum and King (1985); Conway (1986); Grosenick (1986); Jickling and White (1992); Lauwerysen (1985); Lowenthal (1989); Smucker (1982); Smucker and Timyan (1995); White and Jickling (1993).
3. On one occasion while I was visiting Washington, the executive introduced me to a gentleman with a "strong background in information-gathering" whom he thought we should bring down to Haiti as a consultant, on project funds, to write up public relations blurbs about our project for other potential donors. I was later told (but could not, of course, verify) that the gentleman in question was a former CIA employee interested in consultancies. I thanked both the executive and his friend for their concern and assured them that we already had the required in-house writing skills in Haiti to promote the project. The executive was not pleased with my inflexibility and lack of imagination but dropped the matter.
4. In a report which I did previously for USAID in El Salvador, I proposed a distinction between ONGOs and FONGOs: ONGOs are Operational NGOs



Bangladesh: Grameen Bank; BRAC	Mexico: Plan Puebla
Bolivia: DESEC	Pakistan: Orangi Pilot Project
Burkina Faso/Mali/Senegal: Six-S	Philippines: NIA—National Irrigation Administration
Guatemala: Farmer-to-Farmer	Sri Lanka: SANASA Savings; Gal Oya Irrigation
Haiti: Agroforestry Outreach	Tanzania: Iringa Nutrition
India: AMUL Dairy Cooperatives; Rajasthan Watersheds	Thailand: PDA—Population and Development Association
Indonesia: IPM—Integrated Pest Management Program	Zimbabwe: CAMPFIRE Association
Malawi: Self-Help Rural Water	

# REASONS FOR HOPE

## INSTRUCTIVE EXPERIENCES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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