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More information on the Our Border program can be found at the program website: [www.OurBorder.org](http://www.OurBorder.org)

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Note: The points of view expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Multilateral Investment Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States, or the United States Agency for International Development.
When we began working in the borderlands at the beginning of 2004, the Dominican Republic was gripped by the fear that the collapse of the Aristide government in Haiti would bring a flood of refugees across the border. I attended workshops in which the international community, Dominican government, and local civil society debated how best to handle this flood, a flood that never happened. Six years later, when Port-au-Prince was destroyed by a terrible earthquake, the Dominican Republic opened its arms to injured and destitute Haitians and their families and sent an unprecedented assistance to its neighbor. A great number of different factors have contributed to this change, most notably the strong relationship between Presidents Rene Preval and Leonel Fernandez, however, we are proud to have played a role in bringing about this transformation.

In 2003, when we began selling the idea that the borderlands were a land of opportunities, no one was interested. Today, both governments have a renewed focus on their borderlands and are investing in improving them. Six years ago, cross-border commerce was generally ignored by the governments as insignificant. Today, both governments have invested in strengthening their controls over the border and improving the flow of commerce.

We have been very fortunate with respect to the support we received from our donors—first, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and later, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Through the support of these donors, we were able to focus on the problems afflicting the Haitian-Dominican borderlands for nearly seven years—enough time to gain a deep understanding of the conditions along the border and be a part of the longer term solutions that were required.

We were also very fortunate to be able to work with a great number of strong partners, both in the borderlands and in both national capitals. But the true heroes of this success are the men and women who lead the local organizations of the borderlands and have been working for years to improve local conditions and reach out to their cross-border neighbors.

As we prepared to wrap up this phase of our work, we made a commitment to sharing the information and lessons we have learned as broadly as possible. We developed this report with that goal in mind. I hope that you are intrigued enough by the possibilities and promise of the borderlands that you seek out additional information, visit the borderlands, or perhaps join with our partners to improve conditions in this challenging region. We believe that the Haitian-Dominican borderlands hold the key to unlocking Haiti’s development and breaking the Dominican Republic’s stubborn rural poverty.

Thank you,

Daniel J. O’Neil
Dominican Republic Director
Pan American Development Foundation
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The Caribbean island of Hispaniola (or Quisqueya, as the Haitians prefer to call it) is divided into two very different worlds. The eastern two-thirds is the Dominican Republic. Although poor by Western standards, it has a robust economy based on exports, services, and tourism. It has a stable democracy and receives a significant amount of foreign investment. The western third is Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas. Most Haitians are subsistence farmers afflicted by grinding poverty. Even before the terrible earthquake of January 2010, less than a quarter of the population lived outside of poverty. These two different worlds meet at the Haitian-Dominican border.

Each country has traditionally viewed its borderlands differently and each side has its own set of opportunities and challenges. The Dominicans have tended to view the border as a permeable barrier through which Haitian workers flow into their country. The concept of developing the borderlands as a bulwark against Haitian influence has been explicitly incorporated into every Dominican constitution for the last fifty years. Despite this nominal importance, the Dominican borderlands are poor and isolated as compared to the rest of the Dominican Republic. By contrast, Haitians view their borderlands as a land of opportunity. Haitian border towns have increased their population over the last ten years, and local populations have a higher average income than most other parts of rural Haiti.

Equally, production in the borderlands faces similar challenges, but very different opportunities on either side of the border.

Production in the Dominican borderlands is difficult. Roads leading into the region are in poor condition, and farm-to-market roads tend to be dirt roads that can be impassable after heavy rains. There is limited irrigation, little credit, and few sources of agricultural inputs or support. However, Dominicans have not failed to recognize the region’s strategic importance, implementing a number of measures to encourage Dominicans to invest in the borderlands or to move there. These included establishing colonies, such as Mencias in Pedernales, and paying a bonus to government workers assigned to the borderlands. Currently, the main measures are a law allowing tax advantages for factories in the borderlands and direct support to border communities through a poorly funded government agency, the General Directorate for Border Development (DGDF).

However, the borderlands hold some very profitable niche industries. Six years ago, the honey producers of the northwestern borderlands were a fragmented group. Today, they have come together to form a strong, cohesive cooperative with a modern honey processing factory and have signed their first export contracts. The coffee growers of Pedernales have evolved from selling their coffee at below market rates to having their own brand that sells at a premium. Many other producer groups are developing new products and setting their sights on new markets.

PADF helped its partners achieve these successes by providing targeted technical assistance, helping the local groups to access grant funds, and linking them with national and international organizations and buyers.

The Haitian borderlands have the same problems as the Dominican borderlands, but far worse. Although the main arteries into the borderlands have been dramatically improved (with the exception of the roads leading into Anse à Pitre), the farm-to-market roads are in very bad condition and there is little agricultural credit or inputs.

Executive Summary

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However, in comparison to the rest of rural Haiti, the borderlands are somewhat prosperous. Residents of the border have access to economic possibilities that are unique to the borderlands, including paid day labor in the Dominican borderlands, work in Dominican factories and the CODEVI Free Trade Zone in Ouanaminthe, and selling products at the border markets. For these reasons, Haiti’s border towns have grown tremendously over the last 20 years, with this population growth spilling over into the Dominican Republic.

Because of these advantages, it is easier to implement economic development in the Haitian borderlands than elsewhere in Haiti. Through this program, PADF studied 150 different potential income-generating activities in the borderlands and identified no less than 14 concrete investment projects that would provide significant returns, ranging from ice production in Anse à Pitre to yams in Belladère and organic banana production in Ouanaminthe. Initial investment ranged from a few thousand to a million dollars and would provide positive returns within three years.

Although the borderlands have been long neglected by both countries, they have begun to receive significant attention on both sides of the border. Formal and informal trade between the two countries has dramatically increased over the last five years. The twice-weekly border markets have become the backbone of border town economies on both sides of the border. Increasingly, producers are working together to improve their production and reduce cross-border conflicts.

Work in the border region is hampered by stereotypes, misconceptions and the language barrier. However, as PADF has shown through its numerous successes, preconceived notions can be overcome with well-designed cross-border outreach programs, and these cross-border successes often have a dramatically greater impact than individual successes on either side of the border. Dominican beekeepers, ranchers, fishermen, and farmers are now working with their Haitian counterparts to improve production in Haiti. Haitians are gaining the technical experience they need, while Dominicans are successfully preventing the diseases and pests that threaten their production.

Dominicans and Haitians trading at the Dajabon market.
The challenges of the complex bi-national relationship are less intractable than it may appear. Cross-border collaboration has proven to be plausible and sustainable, but only after years of building trust and capacities and working with a wide range of actors—not in the short term under an imposed agenda.

Currently, the main sources of conflict in the borderlands are the Dominican management of the border markets and cross-border theft. The main border markets are Dominican-controlled markets to which Haitians are granted access. Haitians are frequently required to pay arbitrarily established vendor’s fees which can be ten times that paid by Dominicans. Additionally, there is no clear standard for payment of customs or migration fees. The inconsistency of the fees causes resentment among Haitian vendors. Cross-border theft is quite common and includes everything from petty theft of agricultural produce by Haitian day laborers to cattle rustling by both Dominicans and Haitians working together to smuggle animals across the border in both directions.

This access to border markets is one of the key paths to improving Haitian-Dominican relationships based on collaboration rather than conflict. The current absence of a clear set of rules for cross-border trade may be causing serious damage to binational relations.

The January 12, 2010 earthquake dramatically changed the situation of the entire island, with many implications for the borderlands. First and foremost, it made Haiti dramatically poorer. In addition to the horrendous death toll, the earthquake destroyed over a billion dollars of Haitian infrastructure and eliminated hundreds of thousands of Haitian jobs. Conversely, the earthquake improved cross-border relations. The immediate response of the Dominican government, private sector, and civil society was a dramatic gesture of solidarity that was very much appreciated by the Haitian population. This sudden change of context has created a completely new paradigm, where both sides have expressed a renewed willingness to collaborate and a strong commitment to build a new future.

Both countries have also begun to realize that the Haitian-Dominican borderlands are a unique region with the potential to serve as an important catalyst in rebuilding Haiti and reducing extreme poverty on both sides of the island. Haiti’s clear and urgent need for reconstruction, combined with the goodwill being demonstrated by both countries and the strong economic potential of the borderlands, have created an ideal opportunity to harness their potential and develop Haiti from the border outwards. The international community also has a unique opportunity to adjust its interventions to the reality of the new situation. This will require a change in how specific projects and initiatives are developed for Haiti or the Dominican Republic. There is also a growing need to change the current pattern of investment for allocating resources (human and financial) and prioritizing cross-border programs and initiatives.

In 2005, in partnership with the DGDF, the Nuestra Frontera program rehabilitated 23km of local roads and opened another 8 new ones in Pedernales. Actions like this are required throughout the border region to allow for access to markets.
As Haiti struggles to escape from the terrible devastation caused by the January 2010 earthquake, the poverty of Haiti and the relative prosperity of its neighbor, the Dominican Republic, stand in stark contrast to one another. Why are these two countries so different? Does their shared geography provide a path to Haiti’s development? We believe that understanding the differences is vital for understanding the situation in Haiti. Furthermore, our experience in the borderlands has convinced us that the borderlands provide fertile ground for planting the seeds of Haiti’s future, and that they hold the key to ending the Dominican Republic’s stubborn poverty.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic are very different countries. They naturally have very different views of the border and development in the borderlands. Solutions that work on one side of the border may not necessarily work on the other side.

As Haiti has emerged from 20 years of political instability and economic deterioration, its government has prioritized the development of the country’s borderlands and improving border management as one of the keys to its economic progress. Haiti’s newfound political stability and economic progress have created a window of opportunity for the Dominican Republic to work with it to improve cross-border relations and strengthen economic ties.

On the Dominican side, the borderlands are an area of stubborn poverty. Since the area has relatively few economic opportunities, the local population has been steadily declining. The government presence and control over the long land border is limited. However, the opportunities that exist on the Dominican side are still better and more numerous than those available on the Haitian side. Therefore, Haitians continue to move into the Dominican borderlands in increasingly greater numbers, creating a perceived threat to Dominican national sovereignty. On the Haitian side, the border holds significant economic and developmental opportunities. Although the border region has been historically ignored, nowadays the Haitian government sees this area as a top priority for development and is working to provide more infrastructure to allow local populations to take advantage of these opportunities.

The development of the Dominican borderlands is the key to freeing this area from the cycle of poverty.

Lessons Learned

We have learned four general lessons through implementing our program:

1. Mutual mistrust, misunderstandings, and the language barrier have caused both countries to ignore cross-border opportunities and treat their border region as if it were the end of the world rather than an important commercial crossroads, which has in turn hampered development in the borderlands.

2. The lack of clearly defined rules of interaction and effective mechanisms for resolving cross-border problems are the greatest sources of conflict in the borderlands. Fees for crossing the border, customs, and market space rentals are not posted, encouraging arbitrary application. Because the enforcement of these fees is so inconsistent and because of the innate mistrust between the two sides, the person paying the fees assumes the worst of the person collecting the fees. The arbitrary enforcement of visa requirements and random roundups of undocumented workers are other significant sources of conflict.

3. Poor physical and legal infrastructures are the greatest hurdles to increasing cross-border trade and production in the borderlands. Although Haiti and the Dominican Republic are one another’s second largest market for agricultural and nationally manufactured goods, access roads to the border are in bad condition, both countries’ customs and inspection facilities are terribly outdated, and neither country has laws that facilitate imports across the border.

4. Poverty and the consumption of natural resources are underlying sources of conflict between the two countries in general. Dominicans are out-migrating from the borderlands due to the lack of economic opportunities, while Haitians are moving from other areas of Haiti to the border region and migrating across the border.

In light of these lessons learned, we make the following recommendations for organizations looking to work in the borderlands:

- Cross-border projects must have equal staffing from both countries and additional staffing from other countries. It is critical that projects model the cross-border collaboration they are trying to promote.
Not only does this provide a good example for the project’s beneficiaries, but it also allows the implementers of the program to learn how to work through the same issues faced by the beneficiaries. The presence of people from other countries can provide a balanced perspective to the views of the Haitian and Dominican program staff.

- Since Haiti and the Dominican Republic have strikingly different needs, specific program activities in each country will differ. The program needs to ensure that opportunities for cross-border collaboration and meetings will be provided alongside the more country-specific activities.

- The windows of opportunity for cross-border collaboration open and shut based on larger national events—changes in government, negative coverage in the media, high-level binational visits, etc. Program implementation therefore needs to be nimble enough to take advantage of opportunities as they appear.

- Work in any border region is very politically sensitive. It is therefore very important for implementers to build a broad coalition not just locally in the border region but also nationally to support the work. Border interventions that do not involve cross-border communities can actually aggravate differences and increase tensions.

In agricultural production and cross-border trade, here are the most significant challenges and possibilities:

- Haitian agriculture is extremely rudimentary, under-capitalized, and focused on small agricultural plots. The needs of Haitian farmers are enormous. The most practical projects involve financing small-scale agricultural infrastructure (market access roads, irrigation pumps and canals, rice and cassava mills, and storage silos) and providing microcredits to farmers and merchants. On a secondary level, Haitian farmers need assistance in moving beyond traditional agriculture and introducing the use of fertilizer, pesticides, vaccines, and improved seed varieties and livestock.

- Dominican agriculture is much more developed than on the Haitian side, but still somewhat rudimentary. The main needs of Dominican farmers are better access to credit and markets, improved feeder roads, and technical assistance. Since the Dominican borderlands have less rainfall and are further away from major processing areas than most of the rest of the country, it is especially important for the region to have good access to agricultural inputs and infrastructure, which will allow it to remain competitive for agricultural production and attractive to young farmers.

Cross-border trade has flourished over the last 15 years as both Haitians and Dominicans have taken advantage of laissez-faire policies towards cross-border trade. However, as both governments are tightening their border controls and Haiti has begun to adopt trade policies similar to those of the Dominican government in discouraging imports and promoting national production, cross-border trade may decline. The challenge is, therefore, to help both countries develop more open and clearly defined trade policies and guide their neighbors to a better understanding of these changes. Secondly, the two countries need to be able to share more information in order to reduce the illegal trafficking of goods, drugs, and weapons.

Another challenge lies in the fact that the Dominican Republic will not treat Haiti as an equal partner until Haiti escapes from its economic and political crisis. We believe that the borderlands hold the key to this process. Residents of Haitian border communities have seen the progress made by their neighbors on the Dominican side and are ready to learn from it. They have access to jobs and markets that do not exist elsewhere. Likewise, the poverty afflicting Dominican border communities could be dramatically reduced with minimal investments. The development of the Dominican borderlands is the key to freeing this area from the cycle of poverty. We believe that developing the entire island can most effectively be done from the border outwards.
The island of Hispaniola (or Quisqueya, as the Haitians prefer to call it) is unique in that it is the only island in the world that is shared by two independent nation-states. However, these two countries could not be more different. Haiti is very African in its culture, and Haitians speak French and Creole. The Dominican Republic is very Latin American in its culture, and Dominicans speak Spanish. The two countries do not even share the same national sports—Haitians are soccer fans, while Dominicans are crazy for baseball. How did this small island end up so deeply divided? Four key events shaped this division.

Spain’s cession of the western side of the island

When Christopher Columbus claimed Hispaniola for the Spanish crown, it was to have been Spain’s capital in the New World. But since very little gold was discovered, so Spain’s interest turned to its newer, richer colonies in Central and South America. However, Spain continued to maintain a tight control over Hispaniola. In 1605, to maintain control over the island’s small population and prevent them from trading with passing ships, Spanish authorities ordered all of the colonists to resettle to the areas surrounding Santiago and Santo Domingo. This enabled other countries, especially France, to gradually establish a foothold in the abandoned lands to the west. Spain ultimately ceded the western side of the island to France in the Treaty of Ryswick (1697). The border was formalized in the Treaty of Aranjuez (1777).

Haiti’s occupation of the entire island

Haiti won its independence from France in 1804 after a brutal revolutionary war. In 1821, the Dominican Republic simply declared its independence from Spain, and no one objected. Within a year, on the pretext of an invitation from the governor of Santiago, Haitian troops were sent to occupy the former Spanish colony. Haitian domination of the island lasted for 22 years. The Haitian government closed Dominican universities, conscripted Dominican youth into its army, and used this army to control the country. Slavery was abolished, state and church lands were redistributed, and Haitians were encouraged to colonize land in the former Dominican Republic. President Boyer also negotiated the recognition of Haiti’s independence by France in exchange for a substantial payment that was not fully paid off until 1947. To begin payment of the debt, Boyer encouraged heavy logging in the forests and imposed stiff taxes on the entire island. In the 1830s, Juan Pablo Duarte began organizing a clandestine opposition to the Haitian presence that ultimately resulted in the independence of the Dominican Republic on February 27, 1844 (February 27 is celebrated as Dominican Independence Day).

Redivision of Hispaniola without a clearly defined border

The Haitian army invaded the Dominican Republic several times between 1844 and 1861. Finally in 1861, Dominican president Pedro Santana negotiated the Dominican Republic’s reversion to its status as a Spanish colony—the only time in modern history that a free country has voluntarily given up its freedom. Shortly after losing their independence, the Dominicans began pushing to restore it. Ironically, with help from the Haitian government, the independence of the Dominican Republic was restored on August 16, 1865 (August 16 is celebrated as Dominican Restoration Day).
In 1874, 30 years after the Dominican Republic won its independence from Haiti, the two countries finally signed and ratified a formal peace treaty, but did not define the border. Although the northern and southern portions of the border were defined by rivers, there was no clear geographic division for the central portion. That line was not drawn until the United States occupied both countries. The 1929 treaty and the clarifications of the 1936 revision were based partially on the idea that the county whose citizens constituted the majority in an area should be given jurisdiction over that area. The end result was that the Dominican government gave up a significant amount of territory.

Following the signing of the 1936 border treaty, Dominican president Rafael Trujillo began tightening restrictions on Haitians living in the Dominican Republic and stepped up deportations in an effort to reduce the number of Haitians in the Dominican Republic. He visited the border region in August and September 1937 and concluded that his policy was not working. On October 2, 1937, he gave the order that resulted in the infamous Parsley Massacre, where tens of thousands of Haitians and Dominicans who were mistaken for Haitians were slaughtered in the borderlands.

Reopening of the border

From 1937 until 1987, the border remained largely closed and only limited, very informal exchanges occurred, with the exception of a binational agreement allowing the Haitian government to provide workers for Dominican cane fields.

On March 13, 1987, the foreign ministers of the Haitian and Dominican governments signed an agreement to reopen the Haitian-Dominican border. However, for the next 20 years, the Haitian government would struggle with crisis after crisis and neither country would focus on developing clear rules and procedures for the border region. Paradoxically, it was during one of Haiti’s greatest crises, the period following the 1991 coup against President Aristide, that cross-border trade began to grow. After the OAS had imposed its embargo against Haiti in 1991, the Dominican government openly allowed goods to be sold across the border under the excuse that it prevented Haitians from setting up refugee camps on the Dominican side of the border. When the embargo was lifted in 1994, the Dominican government allowed trade to continue, and neither country developed any new policies or regulations to control the flow across the border.

Geography and Corridors

Although we tend to speak of the borderlands as one monolithic region, it is a patchwork of lands united only by an artificial line. Travel along the border is almost impossible due to the three mountain ranges that divide the island into east and west and the borderlands into four cross-border corridors, each with a unique geography, ecology, and economy.
THE NORTHERN CORRIDOR (Dajabón-Ouanaminthe)

The Northern Corridor contains the twin border towns of Dajabón (Dominican Republic) and Ouanaminthe (Haiti). These are the largest border towns in either country. Naturally, their border markets are also the largest on the border. This corridor also links the largest secondary cities of both countries (Santiago and Cape Haitian). Although more commercial goods flow through the Lakes Corridor of Jimaní-Malpasse, a good volume of trade comes through Dajabón and Ouanaminthe as well. Goods are trucked to Dajabón or Ouanaminthe, stored in warehouses, and loaded onto Haitian trucks for transport to Cape Haitian. The European Union financed the construction of a modern highway from Dajabón to Cap Haitien, reducing the commute time from three hours to only one hour.

THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR (Elías Piña-Belladère)

The Central Corridor has the highest incidence of poverty out of all the major regions of the border. It has less flat land than the other regions, and hardly any irrigation. Also, the border towns of Elías Piña and Belladère are several kilometers from the actual border. As a result, although their biweekly border markets are quite active, there is less personal interchange at this corridor than in the other three. Interestingly, the highway in this corridor has become a popular alternate route between Port-au-Prince and Santo Domingo for transporting commercial goods due to the flooding in Malpasse and the congestion at the Jimaní border.

THE LAKES CORRIDOR (Jimani-Malpasse)

The main route connecting Port-au-Prince and Santo Domingo passes through this corridor. In contrast to the other corridors, the border towns are small and far less important than the traffic that passes through them. There is little agricultural production around the town of Jimani, and Malpasse is merely a border post with no town infrastructure. This corridor’s most distinctive feature is its string of inland saltwater lakes, with Étang Saumâtre (also known as Lake Azuei) being the largest on the Haitian side and Lake Enriquillo being the largest on the Dominican side. All are at or below sea level, with Lake Enriquillo being the lowest point in the Caribbean (39 meters below sea level). These lakes have been steadily rising for several years, flooding out the old Dominican Customs building in Jimani. Both governments have had to raise the road by well over a meter as they struggle to keep it open to traffic.

THE SOUTHERN CORRIDOR (Pedernales-Anse à Pitre)

The Southern Corridor is the most isolated of the four. It is a five-hour drive from Santo Domingo to the town of Pedernales, including several hours on mountain roads. On the Haitian side, it is almost impossible to get from Anse à Pitre to Port-au-Prince in anything but a sturdy 4x4 vehicle. Due to this isolation, Pedernales and Anse à Pitre are tied more closely together than any other border towns. When flooding in 2004 made it impossible to cross the Anse à Pitre/Pedernales River for several days, this caused extreme hardship in Anse à Pitre. As twin fishing communities, Pedernales and Anse à Pitre have been embroiled in a fishing rights dispute that is described further on in this report. These two towns are also the most tourist-friendly of all the border towns. Pedernales is surrounded by the Jaragua and Sierra de Bahoruco National Parks and contains one of the last undeveloped beaches in the Dominican Republic, the Bahía de las Águilas (“Eagles Bay”).
The reality of the Dominican borderlands: between challenges and opportunities

Without a doubt, the Dominican borderlands have gone through a wide range of transformations, due both to local and national changes, since the island was first divided between the French and Spanish. However, one fact has not changed: the area’s economy is still largely based on agricultural production. This is true for all seven of the provinces that make up the border region: Montecristi, Dajabón, Elias Piña, Independencia, Pedernales, Santiago Rodríguez and Bahoruco. Whereas in the past, this might have provided a sufficient living, that is no longer the case.

Even though every Dominican Constitution since 1931 has stated that the Dominican borderlands are a priority area for development, the real focus of public policy has been on national security and the preservation of traditional Dominican cultural identity. In general, these policies have amounted to a general desire to support the Dominican presence in the borderlands rather than any actual efforts to stimulate productivity. The most infamous example of this was the massacre of Haitians living in the borderlands followed by the creation of new communities such as Mencia in Pedernales and Río Limpio in Elias Piña. These communities in particular retain a strong sense of militarization that dates back to their creation.

It is no coincidence that the Dominican border provinces are among the country’s poorest, with catastrophic social indicators. Data obtained by the 2007 Demographic and Health Survey (ENDESA) show that while the country has an average of 10% of children under the age of five with chronic malnutrition, the border provinces are among those with the highest prevalence of this condition: Elias Piña, with 23%; Bahoruco, with 18%; Pedernales, with 17%; and Dajabón, with 16%, in contrast to Santo Domingo with only 7%. The borderlands have the nation’s highest illiteracy rates. Whereas the national average is 11%, Elias Piña is at 30% (the highest in the country), Bahoruco, at 24%, Pedernales, is at 20%, and Dajabón is at 16%.

Since there are few job opportunities, not only technical personnel but also young people are immigrating away from the borderlands to the bigger towns and cities.

The Dominican part of the border contains a few agroindustries, but they employ only around 5% of the region’s total work force. In the vast majority of cases, what should be “agroindustries” have devolved to little more than subsistence farming activities on soil that is losing more and more of its productive capacity each day, suffering from inadequate irrigation and bad agricultural practices.

Although there are a wide range of factors that contribute to the downward spiral in agricultural productivity and the increase in poverty, the following are the most important:

- **Lack of understanding of the markets:** Currently, producers in the borderlands do not select their crops based on market demand nor do they offer competitive differentiation. The vast majority of these producers do not plan their farming activities nor do they develop effective commercialization strategies. Instead, they let themselves be led by what is currently popular. As a result, many of them produce the same thing at the same time and thereby glut the market and reduce prices and earning for all.

- **Poor productive infrastructure:** Most local roads and paths are in bad condition, hindering and increasing the cost of transportation of goods from farms to processing centers and finally to their markets. There is little irrigation in the borderlands. The province of Dajabón has the highest percentage of irrigated land, but it is still only 55% of its cultivated land (36% of its arable land). The poorest province, Elias Piña, has less than 10% of its arable land under irrigation. To make it even worse, few of these canals have any kind of lining. The earthen canals lose a significant amount of water to seepage and are hard to maintain.
- **Low education levels**: Most borderland producers have limited formal education and there are few technical schools. The Escuela Vocacional de las Fuerzas Armadas (Vocational School of the Armed Forces), established in Las Matas de Farfán thanks to a donation from Fundación Castillo (FUCAS) and the Escuela Agronómica San Ignacio de Loyola (St. Ignatius of Loyola Agricultural School) in Dajabón are the most popular. In nearly all cases, students throughout the borderlands must transfer to equivalent centers located in Barahona, Bani, San Juan and Santiago de los Caballeros.

- **Weak cooperatives**: Since the producers don’t have collection centers or joint strategies for commercializing their products, they are forced to work through intermediaries who can take advantage of the producers’ weak position to keep farmgate prices low.

- **The aging of local producers**: The Dominican border zone has been the subject of depopulation, especially of the youth who do not wish to follow in their parents’ footsteps and therefore emigrate from the area in search of new opportunities. According to a study conducted by CEFINOSA, the average age of beekeepers in the northwest is 54.2 years. This raises serious concerns with regard to the sustainability of activities in the borderlands.

- **Uncertain land tenure**: Three out of every five farmers do not have clear title to all the land that they farm. The prevalence of the minifundio (a plot of land too small to provide economic benefits on its own) is highly visible throughout the borderlands. A few people control the largest and best plots of land. The small farmers cannot obtain the greater benefits enjoyed by the different association schemes holding sway in the region due to their own financial weaknesses and lack of technical ability.

- **Low level of technical assistance**: Local government extension offices, while willing to help, can do little due to a lack of resources and equipment. The interventions that are offered tend to be short-term and therefore do not create the changes in the culture that are needed to help the small producers to orient themselves toward market demands and strengthen their cooperatives.

- **Lack of access to credit**: Even in the most commercial of the border provinces, Dajabón, financing from Banco Agrícola for the agricultural subsector reached a scanty 2.07% of the national total in 2007. In an extremely poor province like Elias Piña, where agricultural production is a key to development, they received only 1.17% of national total disbursed by the bank. Meanwhile, the local fishing industry in Pedernales received only 3.71 million pesos out of the overall total set aside for national fishing.

- **Strong dependence fossil fuels and chemical fertilizers**: To increase the short-term production of their land, producers in the borderlands rely heavily on chemical fertilizers and tractors for plowing. These techniques cause a loss of organic matter which hastens the soil erosion and reduces the development and diversity of micro-organism colonies in the soil. As a result, there are increased problems with insects, diseases, and declining soil fertility.

As if all of this was not enough, deforestation has steadily increased throughout the borderlands, resulting in greater soil erosion, reduced infiltration of water, and less regular rain patterns.

In general, most borderland producers do not follow best practices for sustainable agriculture nor do they use systems of recording the sources of their production which would permit the traceability of production—a key requirement for exports. The most notable exceptions are some of the coffee and honey producers who have steadily improved their systems.
An Area of Opportunities

Despite these problems, we have found that the borderlands also have unique opportunities. Most of its provinces enjoy climatic and edaphological conditions that are suited to the development of agriculture and the raising and ranching of cattle, sheep and goats. The vegetation, rainfall amounts and distribution, and mild temperatures of the mid- and high-elevation areas of these provinces favor the planting of tree crops like coffee, fruit, and wood.

The borderlands can also produce vegetables and other staples of basic consumption on a small scale, like beans, squash, yucca and maize. Also, with the cultivation of pastureland and plants for foraging, the region could expand bovine ranching in the lowlands and the raising of goats in the highlands. Agroforestry and the planting of timber trees are viable options as well.

In the lower part of the provinces of Pedernales, Elías Piña, and Dajabón, local soil and climate conditions favor the planting of mango trees. The Madame Frances variety grows well in Pedernales and Dajabón and the lower part of Elías Piña, specifically along the banks of the Macasías River. Production could be increased in collaboration with Haitian producers who have more experience in mango production.

The area of Neyba, in Bahoruco, has excellent conditions for growing and processing wine grapes, while fishing can be developed at the level of local lakes, with profitable options for sea fishing in Montecristi and Pedernales.

Vegetables can also be adapted to a model of organic production. The entire San Juan Valley offers conditions that would allow sufficient production for exportation purposes. The crops currently grown there have encountered growing demand and would be highly profitable.

The use of greenhouses could guarantee expansion throughout the area. Aromatic herbs and/or Asian vegetables, like basil, red chili peppers (aji caribe), green beans, and Chinese bitter melon, which already enjoy very solid export markets on the international level, could be developed throughout the lower part of the borderlands with some irrigation: El Llano, Potroso, Macasías (Las Dos Bocas), and some of the riverbanks along the Artibonito River.

The supply of seedlings for various fruit crops should not be a limiting factor as long as the area’s one germplasm bank, managed by the Lancelot Project in Las Matas de Farfán, is strengthened; its services could be extended to most of the producer organizations in the area and could even include seminars. The Lancelot Project has experimented successfully with date palms, the cultivation of which could be developed even in arid regions like Sabana Mula as long as these regions are supplied with enough water.

Another opportunity lies in organic macadamia nuts, due to conditions that favor the planting of macadamias in regions like Juan Santiago in Elías Piña.
There are sources of raw material throughout the entire area that are sufficient for producing organic compost and guaranteeing the fertilization of the proposed crops. This could be done through producer organizations partnering with their municipal governments to produce organic compost based on solid waste. The producers would win and the locals would win as well. This would allow us to reverse the accelerating processes of soil degradation and loss, recovering soil and allowing it to be more productive.

The results of a study done by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) with the Ministry of Agriculture to analyze the production chains of ten producer groups in the borderlands show that there is potential for the growth of agribusinesses of various types all along the border. It is critical that these agribusinesses be formed with a focus on food safety and agricultural competitiveness. They need to be aimed at specific markets, not only on the local level and in Haiti, but on the regional and international levels as well. Given the border’s notorious porosity, it is critical that the businesses maintain strong sanitary management to overcome a bias against the area. When it comes to exportable products, it is worth noting the case of organic bananas.

According to data from the SEA, the Northwest region is the Dominican Republic’s top banana-producing region.

To help border producers to orient their production toward specific markets, PADF hired the firm Consultores Económicos, Financieros y Organizacionales S.A. (CEFINOSA) to study the potential of a series of products being launched in the area. They identified five products whose production could be expanded and gave specific recommendations as to how the production could be increased and made more profitable. The products are the following:

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   1. **Organic bananas**

In confirming this cooperative’s production capacity and post-harvest management of specialty coffees (organic and fair trade coffees), the study concludes that there is potential for the diversification Las Trés Hermanas is implementing, and affirms the need to develop certain processes, including improvement on the level of the plantations and working capital.

Because nearly 96% of the domestic market is under monopolistic control, their strategy focuses on diversification and access to regional and international markets. For a cooperative with a production capacity of about 15,000 quintales of coffee per year (qp/yr), CEFINOSA notes: “With the conditions under which conventional coffee is grown... the opportunities for trade in this type of product are not promising for the short and middle term... Fortunately, on the international level, opportunities are opening up for niche markets through specialty coffees: organic coffee, gourmet coffee, coffee with appellations of origin, etc.”

In this case, the close proximity of Haiti ensures available manpower for growing and production, albeit to the disadvantage of Dominican manpower, but it also requires implementation of a series of quality controls to limit the influx of lower quality Haitian coffee being confused with the higher quality local production.
SEA FISHING the Case of the Agustín Muñoz Fishing Association of Pedernales

This association is struggling to move from traditional, artisanal fishing to a hybrid of artisanal fishing and semi-industrialization. Its evolution is hampered since fewer than one percent of its members have their own equipment and there is a strong influence from intermediaries and fishery owners who participate in the association’s decision-making process. The potential for developing the fishing industry definitely exists. Although the coastal waters are largely depleted, there are still ample stocks of deep water fish. The fishermen are very knowledgeable and have formed an effective network, despite living in a very isolated province and the seasonal nature of their catches. According to CEFINOSA: “The opportunities for the fishing sector of Pedernales are related to improving the indicators of competitiveness, especially those focused on productivity and the group’s ability to directly access the market, replacing intermediary distributors, and thus obtaining for themselves the benefits implicit within this type of strategy.”

Currently, the group is defining an array of short-term, mid-term and long-term strategies, many of them aimed at promoting cohesion in a traditionally individualist sector, and are on the road to becoming a cooperative. They recently signed cooperation agreements with the Marche region of Italy and ProIndustria for the potential semi-industrialization of the local fishing industry to supply lobsters and pelagic species like tuna, marlin and mahi-mahi to specific markets.

HONEY and the Salvador Ferrer Beekeepers Cooperative in the Northwestern Borderlands (Dajabón, Montecristi and Santiago Rodríguez)

CEFINOSA states: “The borderlands have excellent conditions for beekeeping, due to their great wealth of plants usable by bees and their climatic conditions, in addition to having beekeeping associations that have been established for over 30 years. However, these conditions have not been properly taken advantage of, due to the predominance of producers affected by limited access to technology, low profitability, improper methods of production, dispersion and institutional weaknesses among existing beekeeping organizations.”

Although droughts and deforestation are identified as factors limiting greater production volumes, honey has some interesting market opportunities. For honey to be profitable, it must meet certain requirements, including health-related requirements. An interesting case is represented by what is now the Salvador Ferrer Beekeepers Cooperative, one of the four organizations newly created under the Fwontyè Nou – Nuestra Frontera program on the Dominican side of the border and whose producers account for close to 40% of Dominican honey production. While they have a challenging road ahead of them in terms of working out their organizational development, they have signed their first business contract with an American company under the DR-CAFTA framework and are preparing their first shipment of honey to Miami. Honey producers have high hopes for development of trade with this port city due to its proximity to the northern portion of the Haitian-Dominican border.
CEFINOSA states: “The avocado ... is one of the ten products with the greatest potential in the New York market, mainly due to the great influence of the Latino population on demand.”

Elías Piña, the poorest border province in relative terms, happens to be the country’s top avocado producer, and this province, along with Dajabón, Montecristi and Duvergé, are among the 14 provinces of greatest production. On the national level, Dominicans are heavy consumers of avocado, with high volumes of exportation and even higher volumes of importation. However, the study concludes that while production is profitable for large scale producers already established in the area, small producers like the members of FUCAS are beset with management problems, a lack of adequate equipment, low access to technology, landholding issues, the proliferation of minifundios and the paternalist approach prevalent throughout the area, which promotes an economy of subsistence over an economy that is oriented toward business. All of these things represent great barriers to the cultivation of the avocado by more traditional, impoverished producers. On top of all this, the avocado growing association of the central portion of the borderlands is Haitian; 85% of the population lives in a state of poverty and occupies communal lands; 90% of the adult population does not know how to read and write; and services such as health care, transportation, telecommunications, drinking water, etc. are absent. This scenario is but one of many where highly marketable products only end up benefiting more advantaged groups.

CEFINOSA concludes: “For outside assistance to be successful, there must be an expressed commitment on the part of groups of interest, and a supportive response [sustained over a period of time] from support organizations.”

The study indicates that the production of Sanin Yogurt could be quite profitable, especially in such an environment of uncertainty as the one characterizing free markets in relation to traditional products like milk and cheeses. While the ranching federation, which includes ranchers from four provinces, three of which are border provinces (Dajabón, Montecristi and Santiago Rodríguez), needs to increase its working capital, separate certain administrative functions, improve the refrigeration chain and implement a suitable marketing plan, it could take advantage of this opportunity for productive diversification and add value to its milk production.

While these market studies serve to confirm the market potential of the products discussed, they also highlight the pressing need of border groups to increase their working capital and strengthen their internal processes and structures even more, based on solid business strategies. This confirms one of the barriers identified at the beginning of this article, which has to do with funding, something that, due to the elevated risk of agricultural activities in the Dominican Republic, should be part of relevant public policy. There are also as many positive aspects (cheap labor, access to new markets, etc.) as there are negative aspects (impact of poor quality products, traceability issues, etc.) in the situation that these border groups share, in their close proximity to Haiti.

While some of these organizations can certainly succeed as long as the opportunities and challenges they face are under their control, it is necessary to remember that many others, like the Elías Piña avocado growers that FUCAS is trying to support, will require more solid support, whether for improving their levels of productivity and competitiveness or for redirecting themselves into less vulnerable subsectors. This is a clear indicator of how structural as well as nonstructural barriers can have such a strong impact on the development processes of the area.
The productive potential of the borderlands is not centered exclusively on agricultural activities. One of our studies, conducted by Yacine Khelladi, documents the tourism potential of one of the country’s most isolated provinces, Pedernales, which is characterized by a constant electric dynamism and has a wealth of attractive tourist resources that is unmatched throughout the Enriquillo region, with at least 18 sites of ecological importance, ranging from national parks to lakes, valleys and beaches and a rich biodiversity with endemic species of flora and fauna. However, issues with landholding, isolation, low supplies of drinking water and a shaky legal framework have hampered the creation of a greater number of investment initiatives, despite the fact that Pedernales can benefit from legislation related to the promotion of tourist hubs.

But since the sale of traditional tourist packages should not be the be-all, end-all of the local economy, the study also explores a viable alternative: agro-ecotourism. One of the main organizations involved in the project, AGUINAPE, is the only one of its kind to train young tour guides, who have timidly begun exploring this area. It is a given that the judicious development of areas such as the banks of the El Mulito River could turn them into recreational areas par excellence – with camping and picnic areas, forests, routes for aquatic activities and mountain biking, and birdwatching – but above all, with access to a very dissimilar (but interesting) culture just kilometers away, they could be a model of sustainable tourism.

We have identified two new tourist routes, with their respective attractions, that include stops at diverse production centers like coffee plantations, recreational areas, fortifications, beaches and even communities on the Haitian side, going up to Nan Banan. With a well-conceived development strategy based on the diversification of combined tourist attractions through complete packages, AGUINAPE, which employs young people with an average age of 29, giving them official permits issued by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, has been supported by us in very diverse ways, ranging from technical assistance and training to the establishment of operating infrastructures. This has energized economic activity and encouraged a culture of cross-border cooperation – with the positive effects of this being seen in the mitigation of conflict. Having more initiatives like this could help solve one of the great problems afflicting the borderlands at this time: the emigration of men and women in search of better opportunities for their lives.

Agro-ecotourism could be implemented throughout the entire border region, with routes that incorporate the participation of production groups, attractions and communities on both sides of the border, with mutual enjoyment of the benefits, whether the tourists come from the Dominican Republic or from Haiti. All this potential can only be fulfilled through the active cooperation of border communities and their leaders. To gain a better understanding of these communities and the dynamics that influence them, it is necessary to explore some of the components of the border’s social fabric.

TWO SUCCESS STORIES

As CEFINOSA aptly stated in one of its market studies: “Directly supporting producers, with products that have the potential to make incursions into emerging markets and that can compete in the global economy, constitutes a strategy that has positive effects in the short and middle term. Breaking with lethargy and blazing a trail toward individual and collective progress represents a huge challenge for the area’s producers, who are at the lowest level of development relative to the rest of the country. Contributing to the creation of a culture of success in a region where so many experiences of failure have occurred could be the greatest contribution to an area like the border.”

From the far south, the aroma of coffee grown by the Las Tres Hermanas Coffee Growers Cooperative wafts north

In 2003, Las Tres Hermanas Coffee Growers Cooperative was a loose association that sold a low quality coffee. They lacked a clear vision of what they wanted to accomplish and did not have a strategy of how they wanted to grow.

As PADF began working with them to identify their strengths and weaknesses, the group began to coalesce together. They identified as one of their main problems their lack of ability to offer services to their members, including their low capacity for storing and drying the coffee beans from members. Through its USAID funding, PADF gave them a grant to allow them to construct a 1,500m² drying pad. Previously, members dried their beans on the road. This resulted in significant loss from vehicles driving over it, but also in damage to the beans and inconsistent drying. The new pad allowed for the beans to dry faster and in a more controlled environment. It also allowed them to more directly control the quality of their members’ beans and gave the Cooperative a stronger role in the community.

PADF, the Peace Corps, and others continued to work with the coffee growers to help them improve their administration and to offer technical assistance to their farmers. By 2007, they had improved their operations to the point where they won third place in overall quality in a national level competition sponsored by the National Coffee Council (CODOCAFÉ).

This achievement further motivated the association’s members and gave them national recognition. Other organizations offered to help including IICA, IDECOOP, FEDECARES and IDEAC. The association began the process of transforming itself into what is now the Las Tres Hermanas Coffee Growers Cooperative of Pedernales. It now has a clear vision of how it is channeling technical, economic and financial assistance to all its members in order to derive, through joint actions, the maximum benefit from all coffee that is produced, processed and commercialized.
According to Ariel Moreta, the cooperative’s general manager: “In addition to the drying infrastructure, PADF has also supported us in numerous training initiatives. They helped us understand the power of having clear objectives in mind such as the goal of converting from an association to a cooperative. Through our cooperative’s members, we’ve been able to organize a solid financial accounting system and this has helped market our products on the national and international levels. We are now ready to roll out our own brand. Our membership has increased. Our sales have grown. PADF has also helped us diversify our production, supporting the construction of composting centers so that we are now producing organic compost, solid as well as liquid, and our annual production of 8,000 quintales of compost is pre-sold for the next two years.”

Their achievements are so well known, that the cooperative is now exporting under associative agreements with third parties to the United States, Holland, France, Sweden and Australia, and they are now developing their capacities for direct exportation, setting their sights on accessing such faraway markets as Japan.

The cooperative’s main challenge is to grow the cooperative while preserving the high quality of the coffee. They need to obtain more capital to increase their production capability and to expand the technical assistance that they provide to their members—quite a far cry from the situation that they faced in 2003. Their success shows a combination of direct grants and technical assistance can have a dramatic impact when given to a dynamic organization with a commercially viable product.
The united northwest: the Salvador Ferrer Beekeepers Cooperative of the northwestern borderlands

On our arrival in Dajabón in 2004, we found the Asociación de Apicultores La Fronteriza (Borderland Beekeepers Association) meeting in a hut loaned to them by a local church. Next to their borrowed hut was the foundation of their dream: a small building that they could call their own. Although the Association was over 30 years old few people in Dajabón even knew that it existed.

As PADF began providing them with training and technical assistance, it became clear that they needed a storefront to sell their honey and to establish their brand. Through its USAID funding, PADF gave them a grant to complete their planned building, but as a store rather than a meeting hall. The store opened at the end of 2004 and became a focal point both for the sale of honey to the community and the sale of bee products to their members.

As the Dajabon beekeepers’ association grew, it attracted the attention of similar beekeepers’ associations throughout the northwest region. PADF began meeting with other organizations that were interested in promoting apiculture both for its environmental and its economic potential. Seven of these organizations joined with PADF in forming a support group for beekeeping in the northwest:

- the Dominican Republic’s General Directorate of Border Development (DGDF)
- the National Botanical Gardens,
- the Center for Agricultural and Forest Development (CEDAF),
- the Dominican Institute for Agricultural and Forest Research (IDIAF),
- the Directorate of Ranching (DIGEGA),
- the Institute for Cooperative Development and Credit (IDECOOP), and
- the National Beekeeping Network (REDAPI).

After a series of arduous work and planning sessions held throughout the Northwest region, we brought together 98 producers from four different beekeeping associations in the provinces of Dajabón, Santiago Rodríguez and Montecristi to form the Dominican Republic’s first beekeeping cooperative, the Salvador Ferrer Beekeepers Cooperative.
The next challenge was to get funding to develop the infrastructure that the cooperative needed. The European Union had a small projects fund, but its focus was on community development. PADF and the support group successfully lobbied the European Union’s program management team to allow the beekeepers to become eligible and helped the beekeepers to develop their proposal. They were awarded a grant for EUR200,000 complimented by an additional EUR100,000 in complimentary funding from the support group and the community itself to build a honey processing center.

From 2006 through 2007, the support group helped the cooperative to build the honey processing center and to provide the training that the members required to increase their production. The cooperative developed new techniques for constructing hives and began building the capacity to produce queen bees. The members learned to manage the cooperative as a business and to look beyond the subsistence agriculture that they had practiced. By 2010, they had developed the capacity to produce 44,000 gallons of honey per year and were on track to increase this to 66,000 gallons.

They gained national attention when they were invited to make a presentation of the success at the regional United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Conference that was held in Santo Domingo in 2006.

The UN considered them to be a success story for how to generating revenue for producers who live in areas prone to desertification and droughts, and were especially impressed because of the beekeepers’ commitment to taking care of forests to ensure proper floral pollination.

Additionally, the beekeepers participated in the IICA’s agricultural exports training program both in 2008 and in 2010. As part of this training, they went to New York and Miami to meet with potential buyers. In 2010, they signed their first export agreement with Natural Bee Honey for their entire 2010 production.

The Dominican beekeepers have begun to actively reach out to their Haitian counterparts. Since the bees do not recognize the land border, the beekeepers know that it is important that they cooperate with their neighbors to promote beekeeping and control diseases. Unfortunately, current Dominican laws prohibit the importation of honey from Haiti, but perhaps in the future it will be possible to have a binational cooperative.

As with the coffee growers, the beekeepers biggest challenge is managing their growth. They need more capital to expand their factory and need to be able to convince more beekeepers to sell their honey through the Cooperative. As with the coffee growers, this is an enormous change from where they were back in 2004 when they dreamed of having their own building.

AN INFLECTION POINT

These days there is a greater interest in the Dominican borderlands and in improving cross-border relations with Haiti. Both as a result of the increased cross-border trade and the increased cross-border solidarity that came as a result of the earthquake. The Dominican government, private sector, and civil society are far more aware of the importance of the borderlands and its potential than ever before.

But most importantly, the local residents have become empowered and are proudly reaffirming their status as “border people” part of an area where, in their words, “our homeland begins rather than ends.”

The Director of Cauca, Joseph de la Rosa, outlines the development priorities for the border region to the Dominican President, Leonel Fernandez, in a workshop in 2005. These were the result of a series of workshops held by PADF and DGDF throughout the border region that year.
Historically, the Dominicans, not the Haitians, controlled the border. Following the formalization of the border and the massacre of thousands of Haitians living in the Dominican borderlands in the 1930’s, Dominican President Rafael Trujillo began strengthening the Dominican presence in the borderlands. He reorganized the border provinces so that the border towns became the regional capitals. This led to quite unnatural situations such as the creation of the city of Jimani and the naming it as the provincial capital even though it was in the middle of a dry, hostile area that lent itself in no way to economic development. However, Trujillo’s objective was to control the border.

By contrast, the Haitian government did little to reorganize based on the new reality of the border. None of the Haitian border towns are departmental capitals. Even the commercially important town of Ouanaminthe is not a departmental capital. The far southern town of Anse à Pitre is so isolated from its departmental capital that it is extremely difficult to reach it by road. The “Department of the West” was named with a vision of the island being one country. However, it abuts Haiti’s eastern boundary, not its western one. While the capitals of the Dominican provinces are all located along the border and equipped with the specially trained military resources, their counterparts on the Haitian side have only an occasional police station here and there, manned by agents of the Haitian national police.

Additionally, the Haitian government provides few services to its population. The only government offices that are present in all the more important Haitian towns are tax offices. Apart from some rare exceptions, the few agencies of the Haitian government that have established themselves in the border region operate out of private homes rented out for public service. Until December 2009, there was no migration control at the Belladère border crossing, even though it was the third most important border point. Travelers would receive only a Dominican stamp in their passports.

With respect to other government functions, basic services are nearly nonexistent. There are only two hospitals in the Haitian borderlands, one in Belladère and the other in Ouanaminthe. The health clinics of other border communities like Anse à Pitre, Thiote, Fonds Verrettes, Mont-Organisé and Cerca La Source are in dire need of human resources and materials. These structures are so impoverished that Haitian patients are forced to go to Dominican facilities to receive certain types of emergency and critical care.

On top of this, many Haitian youths living in the border towns cross the border daily to attend Dominican schools. This practice is prevalent even on the level of the primary schools, because there are few Haitian schools and those that exist are weak. Technical assistance for agriculture, despite the wealth of possibilities on the Haitian side, is almost nonexistent. Irrigation infrastructure, agricultural management support, training in production methods, and the availability of good equipment are all limited. As a result, many Haitians find it more advantageous to work as day laborers in the Dominican Republic than to farm their own fields at home.

With respect to roads, the only paved roads leading to the border are those of Malpasse, and the one that joins Ouanaminthe to Cape Haitian. Travelling between the border towns and the capital is a hard ordeal for anyone without a four wheel drive vehicle, even in the dry season. It can take over eight hours to travel the 100 kilometers from Fonds Parisien to Anse à Pitre.
Community-based organizations have begun working together to lobby their local and national government to provide more services. Rather than receiving government subsidies, as do their Dominican counterparts, Haitian organizations have traditionally been ignored and left out important decision making processes.

Over the last few years, the Haitian government has taken an increased interest in the Haitian borderlands. A significant first step was taken through the binational summit of border organizations held in Santo Domingo in June 2005 with the Dominican president and the OAS. In October of that same year, another similar summit was held with Haitian authorities.

In 2006, the Haitian Parliament launched its Border Commission and conducted various visits to the border cities to find out about their problems and had the pertinent ministries discuss possible solutions to the difficulties encountered.

Various meetings were organized between the Parliamentary Border Commission and its Dominican counterpart.

The media coverage received from different parts of the island led authorities in both governments to examine border issues more closely. International organizations also joined the group after observing the interest that was being raised in these problems which for so long had appeared to be a real apple of discord between the two countries.

The Haitian government, particularly through the Presidential Commission for the Development of the Borderlands, began playing an active role in promoting border development and improving management of the borderlands. In an historic move, the reforms began in Malpasse, where the government replaced all of...
the personnel of the customs office. The new team began a stricter enforcement of customs and doubled customs revenues in the first month alone.

As customs revenues continued increasing in Malpasse, the government then instituted the same changes in Ouanaminthe and Belladère. This series of initiatives was also followed by the construction of new customs and immigration infrastructure, in Malpasse, Belladère, and Ouanaminthe.

The construction of the route between Ouanaminthe and Cape Haitian in 2006 greatly impacted the northern borderlands. Whereas it used to take three hours of hard travel, it is now an easy hour drive.

At the same time, on the way to Belladère, the stretch of highway that joins Port-au-Prince and Mirebalais is now finished and the stretch between Lascahobas and Belladère is being worked on. There is even talk of building a highway to connect Anse à Pitre with Port-au-Prince.

One of the most dramatic changes was in the town of Belladère. In the 2005 national conference on the borderlands, the representatives from Belladère said, “All that we want in Belladère is to turn the calendar back 50 years. Back then we had paved streets, running water, electricity, and well maintained public buildings. Back then, Belladère was belle”. The Haitian government made Belladère a priority, invested heavily in its roads, electricity, and buildings. Three years later, the title of the Belladère presentation was The Renaissance of Belladère.

This past year, Haitian authorities turned their attention to Anse à Pitre. They rebuilt the town streets, starting with the main road leading to the border and created city parks. As the government has invested in the border, so has the private sector. Five years ago, there were few telephone lines in the border and the only cell phones that worked were Dominican ones.

Now, two different companies offer both cell phone and mobile data service in all four border towns. The Dominican company, Grupo M, operates a textile factory in the free trade zone on the Ouanaminthe border, employing 2,000 people in the fabrication of Levis jeans and Sara Lee t-shirts. As the public infrastructure was improved in Anse à Pitre, the first two modern hotels to ever exist were built and the local fishing associations are preparing to take visitors on tours along the coast.
As part of the OAS-MIF funded phase of the Fwontyè Nou—Nuestra Frontera project, PADF commissioned a detailed study of the potential investments in the main towns along the border: Ouanaminthe, Belladère and Anse à Pitre. The study was conducted by Paul Duret in 2009. His geospatial study covered the 735 km² these municipalities occupy. He reviewed the available documentation and visited each area several times. He studied the prices and fluctuations of the market and interviewed around 150 border residents.

Taking into consideration the main features of the three areas, the main problems encountered, and the numerous opportunities identified by the persons who were interviewed, he identified 74 potential investments. He then prioritized the investments based on the following criteria:

A total of 74 production activities have been defined by around 150 interviewed persons with the help of a set of well-defined criteria. The main criteria utilized are, in this order, essentially:

1/. Information on the markets described here takes into account current unmet demand, experienced particularly by investors and producers who expressed the possibility of a collapse.

Consequently, through research, the pertinent channels of commercialization were tested out.

2/. The technology for identified products was already perfected to the extent possible by local structures of production and no supplementary training was necessary.

3/. Cultural practices and the handling of products are compatible with sustainable development.

4/. The local organizations who are involved are open to the entrepreneurial spirit and to all options aimed at final refinement of the products.

Mr. Duret also proposed that any donor interventions focus on helping specific sectors rather than providing broad training or funding small projects or only infrastructure. He felt that the local producers need a complete package of assistance—from technical assistance to credit to assistance in marketing. Without this deep level of involvement in a specific sector, the local producers could not overcome the many obstacles that they face.

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(3) The complete report in French along with an English translation of the Executive Summary are available at www.nuestrafrontera.org.
THE MOST PROMISING OF THE 74 INVESTMENTS ARE DETAILED IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS.

IN OUANAMINTHE

Production and exportation of Cavendish ORGANIC BANANAS in Maribaroux

The Dominican Republic is the largest exporter of organic bananas and most of these come from the Dominican border town of Mao. This production could be easily expanded into Haiti. There are 100 hectares (250 acres) on the plains surrounding the lagoons of Maribaroux that would be ideal for producing organic bananas. The land could be irrigated with artesian wells and a modern microaspiration irrigation system.

The initial investment to bring the land into production would be USD1,045,000. Gross annual income is expected to reach USD1,325,000 and will begin to be generated in the tenth month of operation with net profits of 25%. The project would initially employ 50 local workers. As more workers are trained and the systems developed, this could be extended to the upper Maribaroux area to include an additional 600 hectares (1,500 acres) in three years.

Production and processing of RICE for the local market in Maribaroux

Haitians consume 428,000 metric tons (MT) of white rice per year and only produce 90,000 MT. The balance is imported. The price of imported rice doubled in 2008 and caused widespread protests worldwide. However, it also made Haitian rice production more competitive. Currently only around 9,000 MT of rice are produced in the Maribaroux Plain. This could be dramatically expanded if the producers were provided with the technical training and credit that they require.

Production and exportation of ORGANIC PINEAPPLE for the American and European markets in Gens de Nantes

The high price (over USD 0.50 per unit) of pineapple in the local market, the Dominican market and the organic products market in Europe and the United States has encouraged the reactivation of organic pineapple production in Gens de Nantes.

This municipality has the ecological conditions (soil, temperature, rainfall, possibility of irrigation) that favor this type of crop. The group that is spearheading this project is an organization of women from Gens de Nantes that has transformed itself into a company and wants to convert five hectares (12 acres) into a model plantation. The plantation will be built based on an elevated density per hectare of close to 68,000 pineapple plants. The group expects to export 50,000 units per hectare. The rest will be sold on the local market. Production will be organic and respects all the monitoring and certification standards set by the organic market.

They could sign export contracts with either SAVIDSA or Plantaciones del Norte, Dominican companies based near the border with refrigerated export facilities in the Manzanillo port. They will need an initial investment of USD 60,000. The cost of production is estimated at USD 64,100 with profits of USD 60,000 and an earnings index of 48.7%.

IN BELLADÈRE

Production and processing of CLERÈN LIQUOR for the local market

Haitian farmers produce a basic version of rum known locally as clerén. The national clerén market is valued at USD 75 million per year, representing a volume of 15 million gallons of clerén or a per capita consumption of USD7.5 or 1.5 gallons per year. Based on this average, the border residents consume 125,000 gallons of clerén sold each year for a total of USD625,000.

Additionally 1.3 million gallons are exported to the Dominican Republic for USD 8 million. The market is a stable one, and prices are constantly increasing. From
2005 to 2009, the price per gallon (in October, less demand and limited supply) went from 150 to 250 gourdes (HTG), representing a 60% increase in 4 years. The price of clérén is now HTG250 in Belladère and 300 pesos (DOP) or HTG342.85 in Elías Piña (October 2009).

A private group wishes to take advantage of these opportunities, investing USD321,000 in a distillery to transform 3,000 MT of sugarcane (produced on 100 ha. of land) into 45,000 gallons of clérén for the local market primarily. Financial projections show that this is a profitable company worthy of investment, with an earnings index of 33.5%.

Production and distribution of vibrated CONCRETE BLOCKS for the local market

Belladère is a municipality of over 80,000 inhabitants joining the districts of Baptiste and Croix Fer. Central Belladère now has 16,467 inhabitants. The population is growing at a rate of 11% per year, and has a growing need for housing. At its current pace of growth, in 2020 Belladère will have 60,000 inhabitants. However, there is only one business that makes vibrated concrete blocks and they cannot meet the local demand. As a result, blocks are transported from Port-au-Prince or Lascahobas or across the border in Comendador.

It would cost approximately USD31,000 to establish a small factory to produce these blocks locally. Each factory could generate earnings of USD27,000 per year, with an earnings index of 24.5%.

Production of YAMS for Puerto Rico

Among the products found in the different agricultural areas, yams are the agricultural product with the highest added value per unit of cultivated land, in addition to the largest net profits. Several varieties are grown; the best sellers are the Guinea yam and yellow yam. The variety grown in Haiti at the highest price is the Martinique yam. This variety enjoys significant demand in Puerto Rico where the retail price is USD4.40 per kg.

Domestically consumed and sold yam production is at 197,000 MT, representing the production of small growers on 10,000 hectares. The quantity consumed by producer families is 60%. The variety most frequently consumed by these families is the “Real” or “Kareal” variety of water yam. The local yam market includes three varieties that are sold the most frequently: the Guinea yam (or white Guinea yam), the yellow yam (or Toutan) and the Martinique yam (or cush-cush yam). Prices for the two most prevalent yam varieties, the Guinea yam and yellow yam, are relatively stable – around USD0.50 per pound, all year round, at the large
central market of Croix des Bouquets in Port-au-Prince, a market that reflects price trends on the national level (source: HAP survey, 2003).

Whatever the varieties and their respective advantages in terms of quality or price, the cultivation of any one of the most frequently sold varieties (Guinea yam, yellow yam, Martinique or cush-cush yam) can allow local families to earn at least USD5,000 per hectare.

**Production of CHAYOTES for the local market**

Chayote, also known as mirliton, is a green fruit similar to a pear. According to data gathered for the metropolitan Port-au-Prince area alone, the market for chayotes represents USD13 million for 18,400 MT. To satisfy this demand, approximately two million dollars' worth of chayotes are imported from the Dominican Republic every year.

The promoter of this project is a cooperative based in Roche Plate. Their strategy aims at replacing a portion of the chayotes imported from the Dominican Republic (at least 50%), offering the product in Port-au-Prince at a better price than that of the imported product.

In Baptiste there are 6 varieties of chayotes: green chayotes, green prickly chayotes (pikans), white, black (or blue), sale trou, and ti prosper (very dry). Commercialization of the chayotes is carried out through the cooperative thanks to the use of three trucks that make the Baptiste – Port-au-Prince run regularly.

**Production of OCEAN-CAUGHT FISH AND TILAPIA for the local market, Croix des Bouquets and Puerto Rico (Belladère and Anse à Pitre)**

Here, the concept of the “local” market refers to the entire country. In fact, there is a great demand for fish in all the departments of southeastern Haiti from Cotes de Fer to Anse à Pitre, in the Department of the West including Croix des Bouquets, and throughout the entire metropolitan area. Fishing represents a major activity of the coastal populations of the southeast. In the municipality of Anse à Pitre it is noted that around 400 families practice or live off of fishing. Fishermen live in settlements according to the possibilities of the location.

Demand is very strong and fish farming represents a very attractive activity, especially on the Plain of Cul de Sac in the area between Ganthier and Croix des Bouquets. With respect to sea fishing, one must consider devices for the concentration of fish and assemble a team to go out on the open sea.
Haitian fishermen generally limit themselves to the waters closest to the shore due to a lack of equipment, unlike their counterparts in Pedernales to the southeast who are equipped to go out to deeper waters. Also, this project represents better possibilities for conservation and the transport of fresh fish.

For Anse à Pitre, the subject of this study, the needs of around 100 fishing boats for 400 fishermen (in teams of 4) were evaluated to be at USD1,055,000. One must also provide for the education of fishermen. Total desired investment for the project would be USD1,500,000, if we add the purchase of a large boat to facilitate open sea fishing and the transportation of the products (USD250,000) and an investment of around USD195,000 for education and the general management of the project.

**IN ANSE À PITRE**

**Production of ICE for the local market of Anse à Pitre**

This project consists of building an ice factory in Anse à Pitre with a production capacity of 125 blocks or 400 pounds per day. Currently, the municipality of Anse à Pitre depends on the city of Pedernales to obtain ice. Currently the demand for ice includes the individual consumer, the refrigeration of beverages, the conservation of seafood and consumption by fishermen who live in fishing settlements.

The research, which was very in-depth, established profitability for the ice company that would increase if it supplied the entire eastern and southeastern regions. The market depends on the quality of the product, the price, and distribution strategies, because ice begins to melt at the moment it leaves its medium.

The details for this project are available in the document created by the consultant. The needed investment is USD700,000, of which USD400,000 should be disbursed during the first six (6) months.

**Production of washed PREMIUM COFFEE for the Japanese market**

The production of washed coffee will be supported by the Bellanse Coffee Growers Cooperative (COOPCAB), the largest Haitian exporters of gourmet coffee from southeastern Haiti. The cooperative’s Mare Blanche coffee has been very much in demand, particularly among Japanese companies, but COOPCAB has not yet figured out how to meet the demand. The amount produced is significant for the area, and a large amount of the coffee is purchased by Dominican brokers to be sent to Europe as Dominican coffee.

With an investment of USD765,725, the project aims to process 200,000 beans per year, or 250,000 pounds of coffee, which would generate average earnings of USD183,000. An estimated 500 families would benefit from the product, in addition to the coffee suppliers. The amount of coffee growing land available for the area in question in Belladère is estimated to be around 1,169 hectares, rounded down to 1000 hectares. Launching this project requires the implementation of a rotating fund of around USD400,000, of which USD200,000 will be used for funding maintenance and the purchase of products used in farming for around 500 farmers in Mare Blanche, and the remaining USD200,000 will be used to directly pay the factories of the farmers who offer their products. Also, in order to facilitate the development of these activities, assistance measures would need to be considered.

**Production of PIGEON PEAS for the Dominican market**

Pigeon peas have the advantage of being not as demanding in agricultural-technical terms as other products are. They adapt well to mountainside agriculture and are found in all production areas of low and middle altitude.

Neither the Dominican Republic nor other countries (Trinidad) have been able to increase the production of this high-demand product. Per-hectare yields are low. The current production system in Haiti, which associates the pigeon pea with beans/maize/sorghum, to which all the costs of production are attributed, seems to be the path to follow. But in this case, it is nearly impossible to expect an increased supply from extensive association systems.
Institutional strengthening and subsidies to local organizations for revenue-generating activities

The funding of specific small projects identified by grassroots organizations has posed a real challenge in recent years. Donors are reluctant to fund local organizations that have not already developed a strong track record in managing projects. Additionally, few donors have made the long trek to visit the border region. This is further complicated by the poor local infrastructure that makes communication difficult.

In the current framework of the Fwontyè Nou–Nuestra Frontera project, we have noted a clear weakness in grassroots organizations with respect to their legalization, their functioning, and their acceptance by local authorities and other national development structures. These local organizations are generally very willing to support development initiatives, but the municipal governments and the Consejos de Administración de la Sección Municipal (Municipal Section Management Councils) (CASECs) often come in conflict with local leaders, who suspect these organizations want to replace them.

It is important for the government to encourage the participation and integration of local structures within development activities in general.

Also, we recommend educational sessions and allowing the groups to plan for the continuous renewal of their personnel. This is a part of the good management we all hope for. Institutional strengthening involves ongoing training sessions with the groups to help them adopt methods of strategic planning to avoid waste tied to internal weaknesses.

Equity for the political structures across the border

The Dominican border cities are the capitals of the provinces to which they belong. There is a big difference between these cities and Anse à Pitre, for example, which is a third-class municipality next to Pedernales, and there is a big difference between Ganthier and Jimani. One of the disadvantages that the Our Border project has faced in its efforts to establish a dialogue among border leaders has been precisely this imbalance in the representation of the authorities. This caused the only comfortable level of negotiation to be informal with respect to certain problems, regardless of which organizations of civil society were involved.
Creation of consular offices along the border

For the resolution of urgent immigration problems and the assistance of people in difficulty, it is necessary to create Haitian consulates, especially in Dajabón, Comendador, Jimani and Pedernales. From time to time, problems do arise between Haitians and Dominicans on the other side of the border. But there are no competent authorities to address these cases, which are generally associated with illegal immigration, the theft of products or animals, or crimes committed by criminal networks. Also, in diplomacy there is the obligation to create equivalency, which prescribes the appointment of interlocutors by the authorities of both countries with the same power to facilitate discussions.

Creation of an Office of Border Development

Whereas the Dominican Republic has a well-equipped agency focused on developing their border region, there is no corresponding agency in the Haitian government. The Director of the Border Development Fund is very effective at creating interest in the borderlands, but he has few resources. Because of the long neglect of this region and its great development potential, a special governmental agency should be created and equipped to oversee the development of this region.

Creation of a Border Patrol

The border area is a unique area with unique policing needs. Haiti needs a special police force to meet this challenge. They need to be trained in the laws concerning the border and specialize in dealing with child trafficking, drug smuggling, and cross-border theft. They should be well trained and fluent in Spanish. Currently the MINUSTAH fills this role.

Construction of Haitian Border Markets

Currently nearly all of the border markets are on the Dominican side of the border and are completely controlled by the Dominican authorities. Building corresponding markets on the Haitian side of the border will allow Haitian and Dominican vendors the option of buying and selling on their own side of the border. This will give the Haitians stronger leverage in confronting the abuses that happen when they travel to the Dominican border markets. These markets will also provide an important source of revenue for the mayors. Of all the changes proposed for the border, this was by far the most popular among the Haitian border residents.

Increased interaction between border organizations and authorities

Until recently, formal encounters among border organizations have been led by government authorities. Still, these encounters have effectively contributed to the smoothing of relations among similar groups who would otherwise tend to consider one another only as competitors, not collaborators. These encounters organized within a formal framework had a very positive impact that defied the expectations of the most renowned experts.

It is important to create a systematic plan of encounters to implement moving forward. The main limitation will always be the working language. Dominicans generally know neither Creole nor French, and the Haitians who know a little bit of Spanish do not use it frequently enough to be able to follow the training courses.
Through our seven years of work along the border, we have found that relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic are characterized more by interactions based on seeking out mutual benefit than by hostile interactions as they are generally portrayed in the media, human rights reports and academic research. In the dominant narrative, tensions between Haitians and Dominicans are derived from racial factors – specifically, that Haitians are mostly black, and Dominicans, who are mostly brown-skinned, reject black people and consequently, reject Haitians. This simple storyline is used by most media—both international and local media—to explain the cross-border dynamics. It is also used by human rights activists to provide a simple explanation to the situation of Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic.

To better understand cross-border perceptions and the sources of cross-border conflict, the Our Border program hired the anthropologist, Dr. Gerald Murray, to study and document cross-border relations, brought in Yadira Soto, an expert from the Organization of American States on conflict resolution, and expanded our work to focus more directly on conflict resolution.

Dr. Murray found that although conflicts exist in both countries’ borderlands, they are more often between members of the same community or between the local communities and their national authorities than between two cross-border communities. The situations that do generate cross-border conflict arise from a wide range of perceptions, sentiments, anxieties, and economic and linguistic differences that stem from the shared histories of the two peoples. To call the conflicts “racial conflicts” is to put an incorrect emphasis on skin color over the other more important roots. The negative perceptions and behavioral tensions that do exist are ethnic and national, not racial.

The tensions between Dominicans and Haitians that were documented through the research were generated by economic, ethnic, demographic, political or other behavioral variables, not by racial perceptions, racial differences or racial prejudices, as they are traditionally defined.

The accurate identification of the sources of conflict allows one to understand the binational relations and avoid the misconception that Haitian-Dominican relations are mainly conflictive. Despite the undeniable existence of prejudices, stereotypes and differing world views, cross-border cooperation and solidarity resulting from economic interdependence and interpersonal relationships are the rule and not the exception. The numerous successes enjoyed by the Our Border program and the other organizations working in the borderlands demonstrate that cross-border cooperation can be promoted by well-designed and well-executed programs.

Dominicans and Haitians cooperate not only to solve common problems, but to create cross-border conflicts. Nationals of the two countries have established effective networks to harvest trees on the Dominican side of the border to smuggle into Haiti as charcoal. They have formed binational networks to identify and steal prime cattle from either side of the border and to smuggle them across the border to resell. Other binational networks exist to smuggle vehicles across the border and to help Haitians sneak into the Dominican Republic. Unfortunately, these binational criminal networks are more effective than the binational cooperation for law enforcement, making them very difficult to stop.

The main barriers to increasing cross-border cooperation are linguistic and cultural. Few Dominicans in the borderlands speak French or Creole. Although there are many Haitians that speak Spanish, the local officials rarely do. As a result, cross-border meetings nearly always require translation.

(4) Dr. Murray produced two reports, “Dominican-Haitian Racial and Ethnic Perceptions and Sentiments” and “Sources of Conflict along and across the Haitian-Dominican border”. Both are available at the program website: www.OurBorder.org.

(5) Yadira Soto’s report on her site visit is available on the program website: www.OurBorder.org.
Organizations such as the United Nations or the Organization of American States regularly hold forums in multiple languages thanks to a smooth system of simultaneous translation. The cost of this is prohibitive for most local cross-border meetings. Instead, they rely on the tedious system of having the speaker pause after each couple of sentences for a local translator to attempt to convey the speaker’s meaning in the other language. This form of translation makes for long, slow, formal meetings.

The cultural barrier is mainly a fear of the unknown. Although there are frequent cross-border exchanges, few Dominicans have spent much time in Haiti and few of the Haitian officials have spent much time in the Dominican Republic. Both Haitians and Dominicans hear horror stories in their local press of problems on the other side of the border and grow up with local legends of abuses.

In the following sections we will point out the main sources of conflict that exist between Dominicans and Haitians so as to identify their causes and subsequently propose concrete strategies to address them.

The great opportunity for cross-border cooperation: trade

The Dominican Republic and Haiti are each other’s second largest trading partner for their national (as opposed to free trade zone) production. The flow of merchandise in both directions is critical for both countries’ economies. Although Dominican exports to Haiti are frequently portrayed as a sort of humanitarian assistance, commercial exchange in 2009 topped USD700 million. The main exports from the Dominican Republic are cement, construction steel, and flour. There are no reliable data on Haiti’s exports to the Dominican Republic. Most of the goods that are sold by Haitians are either items that they are reexporting (used clothing, imported rice, perfumes, and liquors) or unprocessed agricultural produce including mangos, coffee, and avocados.

Despite the importance of this trade, neither country has adequate border facilities to manage the flow nor clear rules governing the payment of tariffs. Exporters complain that each time that they export, they pay different fees. Scores of trucks are queued at the main border crossing while their drivers can spend days negotiating their passage.

Transporting goods across the Dominican-Haitian border is a mess. Large trucks are queued from the border far down the road into the Dominican Republic. There is no clear process to the inspections. Haitian market women stream through the border with goods on their heads. Little documentation is provided to anyone.

Whereas Dominican airports quickly and efficiently process large numbers of people, the border is chaotic.

This chaos and confusion are also a significant source of conflicts. Both Haitian and Dominican exporters complain of arbitrary fees, excessive delays, and expropriation of merchandise. Haitian market women complain of their treatment by Dominican authorities and Dominican exporters complain of their treatment by Haitian ones.

Although in theory, phytosanitary inspections are required for all animals and plants brought into either country, there are no laboratories in either country’s borderlands that could issue these certificates nor any facilities at any of the border points to perform independent verification. At best, there are a couple of agents of the Ministry of Agriculture that watch the flow of animals and produce.

The customs system does not appear to operate based on established rules, but instead on criteria that are applied subjectively and randomly. The fees that are levied seem to vary from one day to the next.

This lack of clear control significantly affects the ability of the governments to exercise mechanisms for safeguarding national interests. The apparently arbitrary collection of fees reinforces negative stereotypes on both sides of the border.

Although both countries have clear rules for imports, these rules were written for the ports in the main cities and require inspections and approvals that are not available on the border. After the cross-border markets were opened in the early 1990’s and cross-border trade began to increase, the import rules were not updated to reflect the changed reality. Without clear policy guidance and in violation of the existing laws, both countries developed procedures to allow for goods to flow through the border. These procedures are neither documented nor fixed. This lack of transparency and consistency creates confusion for importers and makes it easy for officials to solicit bribes.

Based on statistics from the Dominican Republic Export and Investment Center (CEI-RD).
On the Dominican side, most of the goods that Haitians are importing are prohibited by different rules:

- **ANIMALS**: Can only be imported through the airport and seaport in Santo Domingo as per law 43-55.
- **FRUITS**: Can only be imported through either Santo Domingo or Puerto Plata as per resolution 84-96 from the Secretary of State for Agriculture (SEA).
- **VEGETABLES**: Prohibited except with specific authorization from the SEA which is not available on the border.
- **BEANS AND CHICKPEAS**: Prohibited except with specific authorization from the SEA which is not available on the border.
- **USED TEXTILES** (re-exported from the United States): Prohibited as per law 458-73.
- **RICE** (re-exported from the United States and elsewhere): Prohibited except with specific authorization from the SEA, which is not available in the border.

The Dominican government also prohibits the re-exportation of fuel.

The Haitian government does not have specific laws that ban certain products. Instead, the process for clearing customs is very complicated and requires many approvals that are not available on the border. They also require that payment be made only at the Banque de la République d’Haïti which does not have any offices in the borderlands.

These issues have serious repercussions in the formulation of public policies based on unreliable information, the deterioration of food safety in both countries and the imposition of control measures aimed at protecting national production. However, what is most problematic is that border communities appear to blatantly ignore the prevailing reality; in other words, the laws that should regulate and delimit trade do not apply.

Cross-border trade is the most dynamic force in the binational relationship. Its operation outside the law shows that social realities greatly affect the deepening of interchange. The manner in which cross-border trade currently operates is creating conditions that are reinforcing conflicting scenarios for cooperating partners. This can be clearly seen in the daily interchange taking place in the “binational” markets where the absence of clear and transparent rules is seriously eroding Haitian-Dominican relations.

Improving management of commerce is a win-win situation for both countries. The governments should be able to recover more customs duties from a larger flow of legitimate goods. Exporters should be able to export more efficiently. Consumers in both countries would be better protected by better phytosanitary controls. Finally, by reducing the amount of legitimate goods that are smuggled across the border, the officials in both countries will be better able to focus on the smuggling that threatens national security—that of drugs and weapons.
A special subset of the cross-border trade is the informal exchanges that occur at the border markets. These open air markets occur twice a week at twelve different points along the border. Although they are sometimes referred to as binational markets, 11 of the 12 occur on Dominican soil and are managed by Dominican authorities. These markets lack a special regulatory framework, generating an environment of inequality and vulnerability for economic agents and creating relationships of asymmetrical power. Economic activities are carried out without a clear organization aimed at reinforcing them.

Trade takes place mainly on the Dominican side of the border, where Haitians and Dominicans go to buy and sell various products. The greatest movement of individuals takes place from Haiti to the border communities on the Dominican side. Due to this mobilization, the mechanisms that operate outside of the law materialize through the systems for collecting fees (used by agents of the Dominican government) and paying for merchandise, which have no clear legal framework. In this equation, those who are hurt the worst are the Haitian vendors.

Despite this, these “binational” border markets represent a much richer world of opportunities for Haitian border towns due to their regular occurrence twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays all along the border, except in Malpasse, where they take place on Mondays and Thursdays. In general, this weekly event brings together populations from different parts of the territory: vendors from Grand’Anse travel to Belladère and vendors in Ouanaminthe talk about their clients in Santiago. The areas of influence of the border markets extend to the capitals of the Haitian departments, including Jacmel, Port-au Prince, Hinche, Gonaives and Cap Haitien. Twice a week, tens of millions of gourdes (Haitian currency) change hands in the main border communities.

During market days in Mapou or at the level of the so-called “pine forest platform,” we noticed a high number of Dominicans coming to buy vegetables and various other food products to resell them in Barahona or Santo Domingo. The situation was the same as we headed toward the central plateau and the rice growing areas of Artibonito and the coffee, maize and pigeon pea growing areas of Savanette, Belladère, Croix Fer and Baptiste, in Mirebalais, Thomonde and Thomassique. All the products are purchased by Dominicans and sold as “organic products,” especially coffee, because a large number of Haitian producers do not use chemical fertilizers.

A concrete example of the potential of trade has been the transformation of Ouanaminthe. Without any direct economic infrastructure such as telecommunications, electricity, or transportation systems, it already had five banks and three savings and loan cooperatives ranking among the country’s most important savings and loan institutions by 2006.

(7) According to information from the CEI-RD, of the 1,008 “binational” markets being held at 12 points along the border, only two (Los Cacaos and Tiriall) took place on the Haitian side.
These institutions were already functioning with their own resources for Internet access, electrical power, etc. On the morning of every market day, the cities fill with trucks arriving to sell or buy agricultural and other products.

As a result of the benefits that trade brings to individuals on the Haitian side, the populations of the border communities of Anse à Pitre and Ouanaminthe have more than doubled.

Dozens of motorcycles, trucks, overloaded mules and donkeys, men pulling handcarts and women with huge baskets on their heads form a clamorous, enthusiastic, active and aggressive crowd. Products that are most greatly needed circulate in both directions. Banks are filled with deposits and earnings.

The border markets are not simple events put on by the local population, but are true centers of commercial interchange for all levels of the middle class and the urban and rural masses involved in commercial activities. It is obvious that there is life on the border thanks to this trade. However, it is necessary for financial resources and irrigation systems to be available for the impact to be generalized and not be felt by only a few.

Most of the agricultural products that are sold come from other parts of the country, from places as distant as La Romana. Haitians generally offer secondhand products or finished goods, which generate profits for them through sales. Efforts must be directed toward strengthening systems of agricultural production, increasing the number of middle term funding sources, creating more collective irrigation systems and generating resources through forestry and agroforestry projects. Without adequate oversight and technical assistance, the challenges of the past could become the errors of the future.

These situations are familiar to people living on the border and have been identified as the biggest challenges in the cross-border relationship. For purposes of illustration, it is necessary to make special mention of a source of conflict between Dominicans and Haitians related to the management of the market in Elías Piña.

**The market of Elías Piña**

In the Dominican Republic, the municipalities are in charge of managing local markets, from which they collect payments from vendors for the use of the space. In theory, the funds help maintain the place where trade is taking place and provide the municipality with enough money to improve local infrastructure. However, in the municipality of Elías Piña, management of the market is auctioned off every six months to private businesses who pay a fixed amount for the right to manage the space. This situation has allowed the market to privatize itself, even though it is an eminently public asset.

The problem lies in how the system of payment for use of space in Dominican communities is managed. Each market uses a different system. In Pedernales, a vendor (whether he is Haitian or Dominican) must pay DOP10 per day for the use of a space; in Dajabón, due to the stronger commercial dynamic, vendors pay DOP20 per square meter, regardless of the type of merchandise being sold. In the case of Elías Piña, differentiated payments have been established for the use of spaces. The price of a spot in the market for a Haitian vendor can be as much as DOP500 per day, on average while Dominicans pay DOP50. Private fee collectors act in a threatening, intimidating manner toward vendors when they refuse to pay the charges imposed. Different payments are requested from different Haitian vendors for the use of the same space, especially women vendors.
When the vendor is someone the collector knows, there is a high possibility that he will be charged a lower fee. If the payment is not made, part of the merchandise that the vendor is offering is confiscated, in an arbitrary manner.

Due to the situation of the privatization of the Elias Piña market, the relationship between Dominicans and Haitians is strongly influenced by the specific actions taken against Haitian vendors in a commercial space in the Dominican Republic. The apathy of municipal authorities in this injurious situation creates an environment that is extremely conducive to the reinforcement of stereotypes of abuse and discrimination. Haitians fervently believe that the presence of a true system of binational markets, where each border town has its own market, will reduce the economic losses that Haitians are currently suffering under the predatory practices to which they are being subjected and will reduce the level of abuse taking place. If Dominicans had to go into Haitian territory every week to purchase goods, Dominican authorities would be reluctant to continue with abusive practices that could cause a backlash against Dominicans who cross the border to Haitian markets.

The equality built into binational market infrastructures could reshape the asymmetrical structures that place Haitians in radical subordination to Dominican authorities and, as in the case of the Elias Piña market, create a hostile environment that reinforces negative perceptions. The existing imbalance promotes asymmetry in the cross-border equation. For these reasons, spaces should be created where true binational markets exist. To level the playing field, markets that currently operate outside of the law should transform themselves into assets of the formal economy. To achieve this it is necessary to formulate a framework of special regulations, in accordance with reality, to prevent the proliferation of actions such as those occurring in the Elias Piña market.

Although the most serious problems are currently appearing in Elias Piña, situations of this nature are being replicated all along the border, in each one of the markets. This indicates the fragility of the interchange under the current conditions and the high potential for frictions from the constant increase in trade to become a continual source of conflict, hampering the ability of the commercial relationship to increase the mechanisms of cooperation and working together. Despite the existence of some very important challenges in the binational relationship, thanks to hard, continual work with the leaders of each community, it has been possible to achieve substantial, deep changes in how Dominicans and Haitians approach their common problems. Next, we present two specific examples of how cross-border conflicts can be successfully resolved, based on shared commercial activities: ranching and fishing on the border.

Interchange and training as mechanisms for combating cross-border livestock theft

The northern part of the border is the most dynamic area for cross-border exchanges. The cooperation between citizens from both countries is impressive, and trade relations are carried out as a normal matter of course. The high degree of interaction is such that thieves on both side of the border have also intensified their joint activity. It is common to hear of cases where Dominicans and Haitians work together to smuggle animals across the porous border zone, with the complaisance of the authorities of both governments, whether through their absence or their active collusion.

Initially, the Ranchers Association of Dajabón believed that livestock theft was being carried out exclusively by Haitian citizens. Meanwhile, the ranching groups of Ouanaminthe and Ferier thought that the few animals they had were being stolen by Dominican smugglers. After the project held meetings with groups on both sides of the border, it was determined that binational networks were involved. Therefore, it was necessary to implement two-way communication to expand the mechanisms of information, build trust, create professional and personal ties, recognize and appoint a valid interlocutor on each side of the border, and consolidate instruments of cross-border cooperation. Thanks to this, relations have progressed to the point where livestock stolen on both sides has been returned.
Livestock theft occurs under a range of different mechanisms, but in most cases it is carried out through verbal agreements between Dominicans and Haitians. The Dominicans identify the animals and take them to the border, where the Haitians wait to receive the requested animals. The animals are then taken to their new “owners.” Also, animals are stolen in the Dominican Republic, then killed and transported in parts for sale beyond the border.

When Dominican ranchers are able to identify their animals with the help of Haitian workers, Haitian authorities require payment of a “recovery fee” that occasionally exceeds the cost of purchasing a new animal.

In the context of these strengthened relations, the Dajabón ranching association has begun providing technical assistance to ranchers on the Haitian side. Currently, ranching activities on the Haitian side are still incipient and lack institutionalization and structure. Because of this, with an eye toward deepening cross-border relations, it is necessary to begin a process of strengthening the organizational structures that represent different productive sectors on the Haitian side and strengthen their technical capacities in ranching.

Three binational meetings have been held between the members of the Ranchers Association of Dajabón and the Federation of Producers of Northeastern Haiti with the goal of increasing cross-border cooperation to fight the scourge of theft, reach out to one another to renew the activities of interaction and exchange, and define a program of specific training sessions for Haitian ranchers by the Dominican General Directorate of Ranching.

Thanks to these activities, the flow of information between ranchers on both sides of the border has been reactivated and specific Dominican technical assistance activities have been defined to improve the quality of Haitian ranching and the ability of ranchers to work to increase their own capacities. Also, the idea of forming ranching committees on both sides of the border has taken hold in the form of different initiatives, exchanging seals, resolving potential conflict and strengthening the work of cooperation.

**The fishermen of Pedernales and Anse à Pitre: from confrontation to training**

Pedernales and Anse à Pitre are the only twinned coastal border towns on the Haitian-Dominican border. Whereas the border is clearly identifiable on land, it is but a vague concept at sea. Dominican and Haitian fishermen have always navigated through the waters and caught fish in each other’s territory without paying very much attention to the maritime delimitation established for each country. This has allowed each side to take advantage of the other side’s resources, bringing about a series of consequences that has greatly affected fishermen in their use of the sea’s riches.

Fishermen operating in the southern part of the Haitian-Dominican border have traditionally had a difficult relationship. Dominican fishermen have complained that Haitian fishing methods were drastically affecting the marine ecosystem. The nets they use (trawling nets) capture small species of fish, forcing fishermen to go further out to sea when the high cost of fuel and the lack of owned equipment has caused fishing to be less and less profitable for Dominican fishermen. Haitian fishermen, in turn, have complained about the theft of catches. On various occasions they were attacked on the open sea, at a convenient distance from their docks, by Dominicans who took their catches away, disappearing quickly over the horizon in launch boats with no identifying markings.
These types of situations created an environment of mistrust among fishermen, and accusations from each side were constant. Various cooperation agencies attempted to mediate this situation without success. PADF began its work in 2004 with groups from both sides to help them to establish mechanisms for exchanging information and identifying problems. After several years, this work bore fruit in a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2007 by the Agustín Muñoz Fishing Association of Pedernales and the Asosyason Peche Pou Anviwoman (APPA) of Anse à Pitre in the presence of the provincial government of Pedernales. This agreement established clear and specific responsibilities for each side in mitigating actions that tended to intensify situations of conflict.

The agreement also marked the start of a new phase in relations between the two groups and, in general, between fishermen of both sides: a phase of cooperation. Thanks to the interchange that had taken place prior to the signing of the agreement, bonds of trust and awareness were formed among fishermen on both sides of the border. This led to the appointment of liaisons in each group that people can turn to when needed, not just whenever a conflict erupts but also whenever any situation arises that requires joint action: disaster response, boat rescue operations and other rescue operations. Also, it became increasingly common for fishermen in each country to befriend fishermen in the other country.

In this context, and at the request of the fishing organizations of Pedernales and Anse-à-Pitre, three meetings were held to explore possible mechanisms of joint cooperation. The main motivation for integration was the need of Haitian fishermen to increase their technical capacities through learning float fishing, a method that has been in use for a few years among the fishermen of the Agustín Muñoz Association.

Over the next few months, the Pedernales fishermen trained the members of APPA and APDA on land and on the open sea, teaching workshops on how to construct floats on the Haitian coast and deposit them on the open sea; the use of heavy cord; and the use of global positioning systems (GPS) to locate the floats. CODOPESCA participated in the training sessions as well. These activities helped strengthen the mechanisms of cross-border cooperation and allowed the capacities of Haitian fishermen to be increased, creating new possibilities for improving their quality of life.
As a result of the exchanges, the mechanisms for reciprocal cooperation between the organizations of both sides were strengthened, new technical methods were taught to Haitian fishermen, and the mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution related to their productive activity were reinforced. This has endowed the process with a certain degree of continuity, reinforcing specific actions that have been taken to move from conflict to cooperation through the technical assistance given by Dominicans to Haitians.

**Final recommendations: How to unleash the border’s potential**

Throughout this report we emphasize the need to dedicate efforts toward the promotion of strategies focused on turning the Haitian-Dominican border into a catalyst of development for the rest of the island. In this last section, we provide key perspectives (the product of seven years of work in the region) that should be taken into consideration in materializing the opportunities the border has to offer.

**Dominicans and Haitians hold a series of misperceptions and stereotypes of one another that must be recognized and understood**, since they greatly affect cross-border and binational work and make it more complex. To ignore them would be to ignore the rules of the game under which they interact and operate. However, this situation does not limit the potential for achieving real and profound changes in the dynamic between the two countries. The obstacles can be overcome, and consequently, an expanded impact can be made that can definitely facilitate peaceful coexistence.

**The development of the border involves a commitment requiring work sustained over an extended period of time**, with the creation of short-term and middle-term objectives directly related to long-term goals.

Short-term interventions that respond to critical needs are necessary because they address specific changes in the context. However, in order to ensure that attractive potentialities become realistic scenarios, it is important to commit human and financial resources over an extended period of time. Otherwise, the vulnerabilities inherent to existing gaps become more pronounced.

Along these lines, **one of the maxims of intervention should be to focus on the strengthening of capacities within target groups to build strong ties of trust in the area.** It is the leaders and the members of the local organizations who should be the protagonists of their own development. The work of the actors who spearhead interventions must be focused on coordinating with the leaders and members of local organizations on responses contextualized to local needs, in order to generate their appropriation of the processes.

The formation of the work team takes on a vital importance in this context. **The decision to have a multinational work team has resulted in a tendency to exercise balanced interventions.** Also, the tendency to impose biased actions based on the involvement of active parties on one side or the other is minimized. Having an intercultural approach in a multicultural intervention strategy ensures that contemplated actions are carefully weighed and thought out, in consideration of the differences on each side of the border, promoting mutual respect through the actions taken and encouraging harmonization.

**The project team was staffed by people not only from both countries, but other countries as well.** It was critical that both countries be represented at the highest levels in the project so that the needs and interests of each country were clearly represented. The presence of nationals from other countries—the United States, Colombia, Venezuela, and others—gave a neutral perspective to cross-border issues. The national staff helped to provide a deep understanding of problems in each country and the international staff helped to provide balance. By combining the three groups into an effective team, the project was able to see through the stereotypical problems and to help the local communities to find common ground.

**It has also proven to be highly valuable to integrate third parties into the work teams who are not influenced by the stereotypes and prejudices held by each culture.** This has maximized the utilization of the technical and human capacities of people who offer viewpoints without exacerbating moods or sentiments that are not a part of their bias, thereby allowing them to contribute to defining action strategies in the field with key actors. As a result of a multicultural work team and an on-site presence over time, a perception of
neutrality has been established that allows actors to participate mainly as arbiters and then as facilitators in cross-border interactions concerning highly sensitive issues. Thanks to all this, there is no hint of suspicion concerning the motivations of the work team and their role in cross-border dynamics; instead, new channels of approach are opening up among the members of each country’s organizations.

Carrying out binational activities, especially training sessions and meetings among groups with shared interests, must be preceded by a preliminary phase of negotiation among the parties and the definition of objectives in accordance with their needs. The imposition of agendas does not contribute to the strengthening of relationships. Thanks to the diverse range of training programs held on the border, Dominicans have been able to receive training on how to do business with Haitians and a transfer of knowledge has taken place through technical assistance of great added value. This is taking time, but it is very necessary.

However, the main objective of binational activities is to create a suitable space for interchange between the two countries, so that they can become familiar with one another and build bridges of interaction through the business activities they share or the common problems that affect them. This allows the inhabitants of both sides of the border to identify more with their counterparts, thereby opening up new channels of dialogue and helping to eliminate the misperceptions they hold about one another, and attacking the border conflict head on.

PADF’s greatest impact has been in the area of improving cross-border inter-institutional cooperation through the institutionalization of actions aimed at promoting cross-cultural understanding, communication and cooperation. This has allowed mitigation of the conflict and has heightened development and economic cooperation along the border. PADF has also cooperated successfully with the various international cooperation agencies intervening in the area, to the benefit of the program and in order to carry out coordinated actions based on acquired experience.

Lastly, to ensure the success of border interventions it is necessary to recognize the situation of each side individually. This involves interventions that are focused on determining the separate needs of Dominicans and Haitians in order to develop different solutions within the framework of joint interventions. The objective should center on working together to execute differentiated actions with clearly accepted, recognized and identified organizations.
Since the reopening of its DR office back in 2004, PADF has fulfilled its role as the “OAS community arm for disaster services”. The first support was given for the emergency response after the floodings caused by the rivers Soleil and Blanco, in Fonds Verretes and Jimani, and the river Pedernales, in Anse à Pitre and Pedernales, both in 2004.

The previously mentioned floodings revealed a clear need to increase transborder collaboration between authorities and the populations in general in terms of risk and disaster mitigation. To tackle this, from August 15th - 19th, 2005, missions of the World Bank, the Pan American Development Foundation, the Dominican Republic Civil Defense office and Haiti’s Civil Protection office, held a series of workshops along both sides of the border, with over 400 participants from both countries, including community leaders, staffs and volunteers from Defensa Civil and Protection Civile, local authorities, and representatives of several other humanitarian institutions.
Part of the outcomes was the definition of priorities in terms of risk and disaster management, in a framework of transborder collaboration, with key recommendations that included: translation into Creole, French, and Spanish of a series of studies already produced in both sides of the border considered to contain relevant information from different stakeholders; capacity building; expansion of current reforestation programs; safe building codes and control, and linking border communities from both sides by improving communications and implementing early warning systems.

Equally, support was given to the Dominican Government to expand its humanitarian assistance to the Northern border region due to the floods caused by the storms Noel and Olga in 2008. PADF has also worked with cooperatives nationwide (through COOPSEGUROS and FUNDESCOPP) and the Association of Easter Hotels and Touristical Zones (AHZTE). For all cases, PADF partnered with the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) and enterprises from the private sector such as Chevron-TEXACO, Citibank, Esso, Cargill, Philip Morris, Caterpillar/IMCA, Stanford Financial and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines.
1. Paul Duret, “Studies of the potential of borderland production”

In a series of three studies conducted by Mr. Duret in Anse-à-Pitre, Belladère and Ouanaminthe, a general exploration was made of each one of the departments, based upon which various production projects have been identified as having great potential for being implemented in each area. A preliminary viability study of the most important opportunities is being carried out.

2. Dr. Alexis Stervins, “Report on the diagnostics and action plans of borderland organizations after the January 12, 2010 earthquake”

After the January 12 earthquake, it was necessary to change the focus to intervention on the Haitian-Dominican border as a result of this emergency creating a whole new set of priorities. Within this context, Dr. Stervins carried out some diagnostics with each one of the target groups of the initiative in the three departments receiving intervention (Belladère, Ouanaminthe and Anse-à-Pitre) in order to identify specific short-term actions to carry out in the area.


CEFINOSA has conducted market studies on specific agricultural products based on the border groups that were a part of this project. As a result, it has come up with five interesting market studies on the situation of these products in the national market of the Dominican Republic, their current situation with respect to foreign trade, and the position of the group with respect to these markets: Sanin Yogurt from the Federation of Northwestern Ranchers (COOPFEDEGANO); honey from the Salvador Ferrer Beekeepers Cooperative of the Northwest; sea fishing, Agustín Munoz Fishing Association of Pedernales; specialty coffees, Las Tres Hermanas Coffee Growers Cooperative of Pedernales; and avocados from Fundación Castillo (FUCAS) in Elías Piña.

4. Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), “Agribusiness centers on the border” and “Profiling four agribusiness chains”

IICA carried out three training sessions in the provinces of Elías Piña, Pedernales and Dajabón on organic agriculture, phytosanitary and zoosanitary measures, and the management of agribusinesses. As a result of its work, it has come up with designs for three agribusiness centers in each one of the above mentioned provinces and has created profiles for four business chains (coffee, avocados, Persian limes and fishing) in connection with the production of the border associations and cooperatives in the initiative.

5. Yacine Khelladi, “Ecotourism for Young Tour Guides in Pedernales”

Mr. Khelladi has performed a study focused on identifying potential national and binational ecotourism routes for the Asociación de Naturaleza de Pedernales (Pedernales Nature Association or AGUINAPE in Spanish). This study emphasizes the potential of the country’s southern area and analyzes the different factors that must be taken into consideration in order to maximize the opportunities that the zone has to offer, mainly for the members of AGUINAPE, and their consequent impact on the border community.

6. Sobeida de Jesús, “Formal legal structure to regulate the trade in goods between the Dominican Republic and Haiti”

The researcher Sobeida de Jesús has performed an analysis of the laws regulating the trade in goods from the Dominican Republic to Haiti for the purpose of identifying the gap between the legal framework governing binational trade and the current mechanisms under which binational trade is carried out in practice.

7. Dr. Gerald Murray, “Sources of Conflict along and across the Haitian-Dominican Border” and “Dominican-Haitian Racial and Ethnic Perceptions and Sentiments: Mutual Adaptations, Mutual Tensions, Mutual Anxieties”

The American anthropologist with over 30 years experience on both sides of the island of Hispaniola, Dr. Gerald Murray, spent over eight weeks conducting field research on both sides of the border to develop an overview of the sources of conflict in the borderlands and a detailed look at cross-border perceptions between Haitians and Dominicans.

The results of his study are compiled in these two reports. In the first, he examines the sources of conflict in the borderlands. He finds that most relations are marked more by cooperation than by conflict. The main sources of conflict are the management of the border markets and cross-border theft. He updated this report following the January 12th earthquake to highlight the changes in attitudes brought about by that event. The second report examines how Haitians and Dominicans view each other. He concludes that the skin color is not a significant factor in cross-border perceptions.

These studies are available at the program website: www.Our Border.org

THREE LANGUAGES, TWO COUNTRIES, ONE BORDER
PADF supported the opening of the DR branch of the International NGO Network against Desertification and Drought (RIOD-RD), in the framework of the International Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). In the picture, Cesáreo Guillermo, from PADF, handles a recognition and accreditation plaque to Melba Grullón, from the Sur Futuro Foundation, founder member, in the presence of former Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Max Puig, and Vice-Minister for Soil and Water, Ernesto Reyna, 2006.

Coffeegrowers from Pedernales and Hondo Valle share experiences with the well-known and successful coffee project KAROMA, in Las Lagunas, Santiago. In the picture, Ms. Begoña de Paliza (Kromo), Ramón Felipe (Pedernales), Mario Amador (Hondo Valle) and Cesáreo Guillermo (PADF), 2008.

Rafael Abel, former DGDF deputy director, and Cesáreo Guillermo, from PADF, with Alcibiades Ledesma, agriculture from Pedernales, during a field visit to evaluate the cleaning efforts of the Pedernales irrigation canal, done in support of INDRHI, 2006.

A Management Accounting for NGO (MANGO) training by Sebatían Mulano, PADF program coordinator.

Parliamentarians from Haiti during a visit to FUNGLODE, 2006.

Most of the trainings included practical sessions, including experience exchanges with producers from other provinces, as the one in the picture, part of a field visit organized along with IICA and organizations from San José de Ocoa, where PADF was pretty active during the 90’s, supporting late Pather Quinn with agroforestry and other environmental projects, 2008.

In 2006, during a field visit to the border area: PADF-DR director, Daniel O’Neil, OAS Deputy Secretary and PADF Vice-CEO, Ambassador Albert Ramd ‘in, the Ouanaminthe Mayor, Rony Pierre, former PADF President of the Board, Ruth Espay Romero, the Haitian Ambassador to the DR, Fritz Cineas, and the PADF Executive Director, John Sanbrailo.