Association of Agricultural Technicians of Limbe (ATAL)



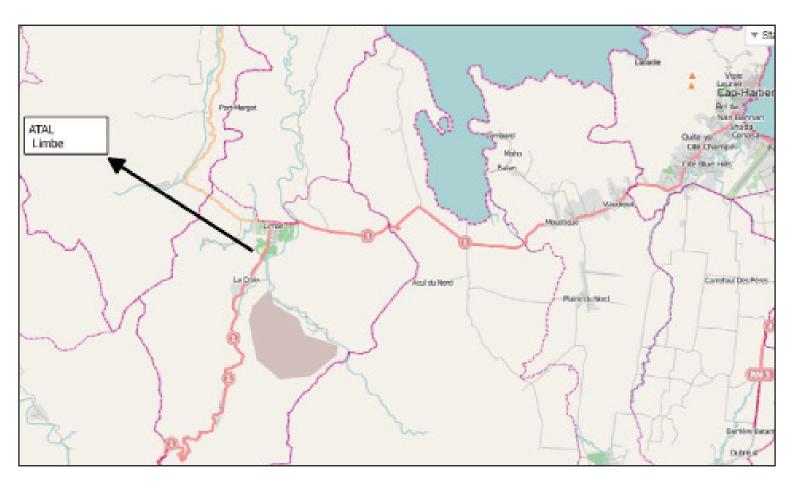
Department: North

The Association of Agricultural Technicians of Limbe (ATAL) is an organization located in Calumette, in the North Department. Its objective is to promote community reforestation and increase the productivity of local farmers. They have also developed a small womens micro-lending program.



What can other communities learn from ATAL?

- * Tree nursery management and reforestation
- * Starting up womens micro-credit programs



History of the organization

The Association of Agricultural Technicians of Limbe (ATAL) is an organization located in Calumette, the 4th section of the commune of Limbe, approximately an hour and a half to the west of Cap Haitian on Rt National #1. During the period of political instability in 2001, a group of young men from the area went into hiding in the mountains of the North department. There they were trained by a group of agronomists in agricultural techniques. In 2007 this group of men decided to form ATAL to contribute back to their community.

Summary of the work

ATAL started with a small tree nursery, giving plants to schools and community members.

Its activities with the nursery expanded as it won contracts to prepare saplings for organizations like USAID-DEED. The legal status of ATAL allowed it to become a stable partner of several large organizations involved in reforestation activities in the region.

The funds ATAL earned from these activities were used to increase the agricultural productivity across the section communale. It began implementing trainings to teach farmers in the community more effective ways of planting, as well as lending them seeds or starters of certain plants.

The farmers were expected to give a certain amount of seeds back to ATAL in order to allow it to reach even more farmers the next season.

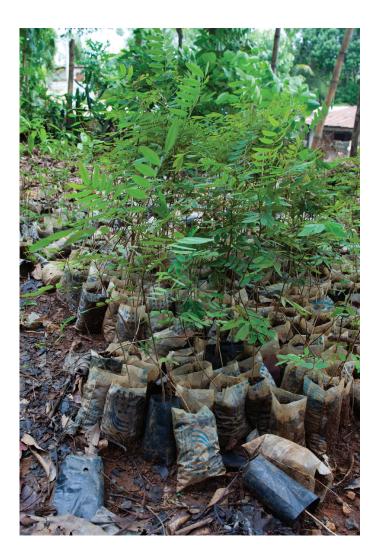
ATAL also includes a small micro-credit program for women in the community. In light of the lack of access to credit, ATAL reinvested some of the profits from the nursery to give out small loans with very low interest rates to 5 women at a time. Thus far, ATAL has lent money to over 60 women to start or reinforce their small businesses. ATAL hopes to scale up this small lending program.

It is important to note that ATAL has also begun to branch out and scale up their activities beyond their community. It has established partnerships with community tree nurseries across the commune, and has formed a Federation with rural organizations across the commune.









What can other communities learn from ATAL?

ATAL is clearly skilled at tree nursery management and reforestation, as this is the basis of their organisation. Their knowledge is extensive and built by many years of practical experience. They also have a great deal of knowledge in improved agricultural techniques, especially on cultures such as yams and beans.

With its women's group, ATAL has begun to experiment with its own model of community micro-credit within women's cooperatives.

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