

Nan Sipa is a community irrigation scheme that has administered the irrigation of thousands of hectares of plantations around St. Raphael, benefitting over 3,000 farmers.



What can other communities learn from Nan Sipa?

*Management, administration, and maintenance of a large community irrigation system



History of the organization

St Raphael is a commune located in the southern region of the North Department, a cross-roads between Cap Haitian, St Michel (in Artibonite), and Port au Prince. It lies along Route Nationale 3, but road improvements and electricity have not yet reached St Raphael. It does, however, have one of the newest and largest public markets in the region, and is a hub for trade (particularly in rice and vegetables). This is partly because of an immense irrigation scheme that was installed in 1952 (called Nan Sipa), which supplies over 3,000 farmers with water for vegetable production (in the dry season) and rice production (in the rainy season).

Summary of the work

In 1991, the Irrigation Block Committee system was formed to allow the farmers in Nan Sipa to have more control over the resources needed to maintain the canal. The irrigation system comes from the River Bouyara, where it is captured and funneled into a central canal that runs for 15.7 km, which then empties into 19 secondary canals. Each secondary canal is divided into 3 tertiary canals, and each of those tertiary canals has 3 representatives of the farmers who use that water that serve on the 9-person committee for each block (a block is all the land supplied by a secondary canal). Each of the 19 committees sends 1 representative to a central committee that manages the canal.

The committees collect contributions from the farmers every year (800 gourdes per hectare) so that they have funds to maintain the system and fix when problems arise. There is also a surveillance committee (which is separate from the central committee) which is responsible for overseeing the expenditures that the committee makes and ensuring they are well-spent. There is also a small field team which regularly walks the perimeter of the irrigated fields to keep an eye on the functioning of the system. In general, when there are problems, the farmers who are affected call a konbit to make the system work. When there is a conflict among the farmers, the central committee plays mediating role. This system has been able to maintain the canals for the past 2 decades; 3,000 farmers benefit from the irrigation system.





What can other communities learn from Nan Sipa?

The Central Committee of Nan Sipa has over 2 decades of experience in running and maintaining an irrigation system on a large scale. This includes the day-to-day management of the system, managing water conflicts, collecting dues, fixing infrastructure problems, and working with partners for overall system improvement.

They would like to receive more knowledge and support in the transformation of their agricultural products into commercial goods, and guidance on the most productive ways of producing rice.

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