



Heather A. Lair

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Summary

Senior Mediator and Program Manager at Meridian Institute with more than 15 years of experience facilitating policy dialogues, negotiations, and strategy development processes. Serves as Chief of Staff to AGree: Transforming Food and Ag Policy. Additional expertise in sustainability, community resilience, global stability, and chemicals and toxic substances. Previously, worked to “green” a major university campus and served as a Peace Corps volunteer. Holds an M.B.A. and an M.S. in Natural Resource Policy and Administration from the University of Michigan.

Meridian Experience

Meridian Institute

2000–2008 and 2010–Present

Meridian Institute designs and facilitates collaborative processes that help diverse parties identify critical issues, build relationships and trust, construct innovative solutions, and implement durable decisions. These collaborative processes address challenges at the local, state, national, and international levels, and involve leaders from government agencies, industry, nongovernmental organizations, and international institutions. Meridian also assists organizations in conducting strategy development and planning.

Senior Mediator and Program Manager

Manages and facilitates policy dialogues, negotiations, and strategy development projects involving teams of facilitators. Conducts convening assessments, designs collaborative processes, plans and facilitates meetings, helps participants develop consensus documents, and conducts implementation activities. Selected highlights are summarized below:

- Serves as Chief of Staff to AGree, a Meridian-led initiative focused on transforming food and agriculture policy. Funded by nine leading U.S. foundations, AGree seeks to improve agricultural productivity, food security, and environmental performance at the national and global levels; enhance the availability of and access to nutritious foods; and promote opportunities for rural communities to succeed economically.
- Designed and facilitated a partnership between agricultural technology companies, public-sector African scientists, and the international donor community to create the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), a not-for-profit organization based in Nairobi, Kenya. Provided initial secretariat support to the AATF, including oversight of business plan development, budgeting, and staffing.

- Co-facilitated dialogues involving foundations and universities and other research institutions that resulted in the formation of the Public Intellectual Property Resource for Agriculture (PIPRA), the purpose of which is to improve access to agricultural innovations for improved staple crops for poor farmers in developing countries as well as specialty crops for regional agricultural economies worldwide.
- Served as Meridian project manager for a high-level dialogue of senior African leaders and distinguished guests convened at the African Union Commission (AUC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to discuss African agriculture and food systems. Coordinated a planning group that included senior staff from the AUC, the Kofi Annan Foundation, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that provided input on process design and meeting materials, selected participants, and advised on logistics.
- Please see <http://merid.org/staff/hlair> for a full list of projects completed.

Previous Experience

University of Maryland, Office of Sustainability

College Park, Maryland 2008–2010

Project Manager

Worked to make the University of Maryland a national leader in campus sustainability. Served as a campus facilitator and resource to departments working to “green” the University’s operations, culture, curriculum, and research. Managed the development of the university’s Climate Action Plan and was responsible for tracking the plan’s implementation. Provided technical support to campus departments seeking to reduce their environmental impacts and measure results.

Battelle Memorial Institute

Columbus, Ohio Summer 1998 and 1999

Consultant and Life Cycle Management Associate

Conducted extensive interviews with farmers, distributors, companies, and academics to better understand the agrochemical supply chain. Presented findings on related business development

opportunities to senior management as part of the business development assessment process. For a Fortune 500 life sciences company, evaluated the social benefits and impacts of two food products. For a global produce client, benchmarked the industry’s environmental management practices and made recommendations to improve the client’s marketing efforts.

Monsanto Life Science Company

St. Louis, Missouri Summer 1997

Sustainable Development Strategy Associate

Created “Down to Earth, Down to Business,” a company-wide training program on life sciences-based sustainable development business activities. Authored nine case studies illustrating Monsanto-specific opportunities. Collaborated on sustainable development metrics to assess new product impacts.

Academy for Educational Development

Washington, DC 1994–1996

Environmental Education & Communication (GreenCOM) Project Associate

Worked for this U.S. Agency for International Development client, managing marketing communications and outreach to developing country environmental educators and environmental communications specialists. Projects included the development of a website, the production of quarterly environmental bulletins, and the design and implementation of an information system to manage environment and development publications.

U.S. Peace Corps

Honduras 1991–1993

Rural Development Specialist

Formed multi-stakeholder strategic partnerships to facilitate the reforestation of 4,400 trees on primary school grounds using student volunteers and donated materials. Co-authored a national Honduran environmental education curriculum. Trained 30 teachers to use the curriculum, and supervised its implementation.

Education**University of Michigan**

M.B.A., Business

M.S., Natural Resource Policy and Administration

1999

Miami University

B.Phil., Interdisciplinary Studies

1991