


12-2017

Cluster Approach: Gaps and shortcomings in UN coordination of humanitarian actors in post-earthquake Haiti and implications for policy concerns of the New Humanitarian school of thought

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Recommended Citation

Vinbury, Naomi, "Cluster Approach: Gaps and shortcomings in UN coordination of humanitarian actors in post-earthquake Haiti and implications for policy concerns of the New Humanitarian school of thought" (2017). *International Development, Community and Environment (IDCE)*. 178.

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Envisioning Disaster Resilient Communities

Cluster Approach: Gaps and shortcomings in UN coordination of humanitarian actors in post-earthquake Haiti and implications for policy concerns of the New Humanitarian school of thought

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December, 2017

A Master's Paper

Submitted to the faculty of Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the department of International Development Community and Environment

And accepted on the recommendation of

Anita Fabos, Chief Instructor

ABSTRACT

Envisioning Disaster Resilient Communities

Cluster Approach: Gaps and shortcomings in UN coordination of humanitarian actors in post-earthquake Haiti and implications for policy concerns of the New Humanitarian school of thought

This research analyzes the role of the UN OCHA Cluster Approach in the context of Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. Gaps and shortcomings of the current humanitarian model are identified and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach is considered as a model to be used as an instrument to inform the New Humanitarian school of thought. A recent history of Haiti and the political relationship to the international community will be reviewed as context that outlines the vulnerabilities that created a risk society leading up to the disaster. A brief history of the recent trajectory of humanitarian aid will be reviewed and the current model critiqued with examples of partnerships between the private business sector and the UN. Specific examples from the Agriculture and Shelter Clusters will be provided. Finally, policy recommendations will be made to better align the UN actions with its mission of building disaster resilient communities.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my parents, Nancy Lyon and Peter Vinbury, for their ever consistent and positive support. Your words of encouragement and faith in me have lead me in a direction to pursue my dreams. You instilled in me from a young age a sense of wonder, perseverance, and the humility of a life-long student. You have set examples of the importance of following your heart and taught me that a life dedicated to the service of others is true fulfillment and honor. I never could have accomplished this piece without your support. I love you both all the world and more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely acknowledge the tireless efforts of both Anita Fabos and Jude Fernando in supporting the completion of this research. Thank you for sharing your great wealth of knowledge with me. I appreciate your patience and guidance through my learning process. The lens through which I view the world has greatly been influenced by your experience, your efforts, and your intellects. Thank you for facilitating unique opportunities for me to expand my perception and knowledge of our global community. I am eternally grateful for our connection and your commitments to social change.

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Introduction

On January 12, 2010, a shallow, magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti, the small island nation in the Caribbean. The earthquake revealed deep vulnerabilities in the country, tipping the already struggling nation into a state of disaster, and triggering a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions. There was immense damage to the capital city of Port-au-Prince and the surrounding municipalities and the loss of Haitian life was reported at over 200,000, with over 300,000 injured and 1.5 million people rendered homeless¹. The tragedy of this catastrophe will not be forgotten and it can only be hoped that this massive failure of the global humanitarian system can be a very urgent reminder that as a global community, we must and can do better.

The structure of international humanitarian aid is flawed. It serves the interests of the powerful. Instead of adequately analyzing local capacity and effectively transitioning power to those it is mandated to serve it consolidates power and creates harmful negative externalities. Haiti has been sidelined in an international system of capitalism that rewards the powerful in a competition driven model. Haiti has been actively underdeveloped to serve the international powers for more than two centuries. Greed, power, control and good intentions by some of the world's most privileged people and organizations, inadvertently contributed, through action and inaction, to the resulting death and destruction in this tiny island nation.

The loss of human life and physical capital resulting from the disaster, and the ensuing humanitarian crisis, cannot be attributed to "natural" causes alone, as contributing factors that lead to the disaster are entrenched in the history of the country. Haiti, commonly referred to as, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, did not become so poor on her own. Haiti's history is one steeped in structural violence from colonialism to globalization. These forces set the stage for the devastation of 2010. In the aftermath, large companies who are contracted by the humanitarian industry, profited from the ensuing chaos. Vulnerabilities seated deep in the economic structure of the country existed prior to the earthquake and compounded the devastation.

There are many shortcomings in the relief efforts including; unfair prioritization in the coordination of actors, lack of support for bolstering local capacity, and issues with streamlining standards and training. These issues result from a concentration of funds in the emergency phase of humanitarian aid, inadequate investment in disaster risk reduction and prioritization of the international business sector. The UN OCHA model for coordinating humanitarian actors is called the Cluster Approach and there is room for improvements to more successfully meet the sustainable development objectives of the UN agenda.

¹ Oxfam International, *Haiti Earthquake - Our Response*, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/haiti-earthquake-our-response>, (Accessed 2017)

The humanitarian machine descends on a country when it is in a state of emergency. The new humanitarianism depends on the perception of catastrophe as unexpected and unpredictable, when, in fact, if the focus is on existing vulnerability, not only is a disaster predictable, it is avoidable. New Humanitarianism seeks to address the root causes of vulnerability. In order to do so, it is important to take a look at the root causes of disaster by examining the actions and inactions of the central governing body and the international community prior to the catastrophe and determine where those who hold the power fell short in supporting a resilient population. This paper aims to address the shortcomings of the current humanitarian model and suggests the use of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach as an instrument of humanitarian relief to inform the current model of the Cluster Approach and better align field results with the UN mandate. The ultimate goal is to improve the UN presence and actions in order to increase the resilience of communities to disaster.

New Humanitarianism

This discussion is situated within the current doctrine of humanitarianism concerning disasters associated with natural hazards. Humanitarian principles are based on two main pieces of work; the UN resolution 46/182 and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Code of Conduct. The principles of classic humanitarianism are based on impartiality, neutrality, and independence, but in the 1990's 'neutrality' and respect for state sovereignty became increasingly elusive especially in the case of complex humanitarian emergencies, an extreme example being that of the Rwandan genocide².

The UN describes disasters as 'sudden onset emergencies' and this is the point at which the humanitarian machine is activated in response to a disaster. Appeals for funding are activated by the emergency "shock" situation. Funding for humanitarian emergencies is organized immediately following the shock event through Flash Appeals and CERF (Central Emergency Revolving Fund) requests. If the disaster persists more than six months then the CAP (Consolidated Appeals Process) is considered.³ The CAP is informed by the collaboration of host governments, NGOs, the UN agencies, IOM, The Red Cross Movement, donors, and aid agencies. These stakeholders produce a Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) that informs the development of the CAP⁴. Basically,

² Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi, *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 48.

³ United Nations, *Central Emergency Response Fund CERF Rapid Response Window and Flash Appeals*, https://www.unocha.org/cerf/sites/default/files/CERF/CERF_and_FA_20.11.08.pdf, (accessed 2017)

⁴ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP)*, <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/consolidated-appeals-process-cap>, (accessed 2017)

the global supply chain for humanitarian relief starts with a disaster and a “needs assessment”, then the donors and suppliers (government, companies, foundations) pledge money that goes into the recipient agencies (government, NGOs, Red Cross, WFP etc.) then it is passed to the implementing agency (government agencies, global and local NGOs, local organizations, military) and finally delivered to serve the people in need.

New humanitarianism is politically involved in that it has an influence on the political economy of the recipient country and is dependent on the decisions of member states of the UN and the “permanent observers” involved in the UN system including intergovernmental organizations like The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) a grouping of twenty countries, fifteen Member States and five Associate Members; The Organization of American States (OAS); The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and specialized agencies such as The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank (WB).

In situations where the state has become weak, new humanitarianism perceives state sovereignty as secondary to the responsibility of the international community to intervene. “The ‘new humanitarian’ paradigm authorizes intervention, recognizing the limits of sovereignty, especially in the case of weak and failing states and promoting the international norm of the ‘responsibility to protect’ (R2P). The R2P framework is based on the idea that sovereignty is not a privilege, but an international responsibility. Accordingly, if a state fails to fulfill its responsibilities to protect its people from harm, the international community has the responsibility to intervene”⁵.

With the perception of disaster focused on the shock event as the main cause, the humanitarian machine is activated once the conditions are already extreme. In line with the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Sendai Framework, natural hazards are separate from the effect the event has on the population and the use of the expression “disasters associated with natural hazards” will take the place of “natural disasters”. By associating the disaster with the natural hazard, such as an earthquake, hurricane, tornado etc., the cause of the damages is dismissed as natural and uncontrollable, and the responsibility is deflected away from the authorities meant to protect the population. Natural disaster is therefore a politically desirable term for the media to use as the blame is focused on natural causes. The preventable root causes of the disaster, many times political and economic, are dismissed and the focus is on saving the ‘helpless victims’. Therefore, disaster associated with natural hazards correlates to the level of human action or inaction taken to address vulnerability and strengthen the coping capacities of a population. In other words, the actions and funding dedicated to Disaster Risk Reduction and building resilient communities determines the level of the disaster, not the natural hazard itself.

⁵ Madalina Elena Nan, “New Humanitarianism with Old Problems: The Forgotten Lesson of Rwanda”, *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, (2010), <https://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/780>

Two definitions of vulnerability apply to the situation in Haiti. The Hyogo Framework for Action defines vulnerability as “the conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards”⁶. Similarly, vulnerability is discussed as “the characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the impact of a natural hazard”⁷.

Haiti: History of vulnerability that lead to disaster

Haiti was in a state of disaster before the earthquake. The risk society that had been the norm for so long in Haiti prior to the earthquake, is the undeniable result of imperialism, neoliberal economic structural adjustment, and globalization. The majority of the country was hanging by a thread long before the earthquake. The health and education levels of the country were extremely low as there was widespread poverty and it is estimated that one half of the population was undernourished before the earthquake.⁸

The reason that there is a focus on relief is because the structure of humanitarian assistance is such that the relief phase is activated by a shock event and any issues prior to emergency have been regarded as the responsibility of the state. The capacity of the state to invest in the reduction of vulnerability to disaster is weakened by increasing debt peonage to the international lending institutions inextricably linked to the international private business sector. The US has more voting power at the IMF because it has a higher quota and is therefore able to influence how the IMF money is spent.⁹ When the very services that would create a healthy, resilient population are cut to pay debts, it is near to impossible for poor nations like Haiti to get a foothold in the global economy and to adequately protect their citizens from harm and fund disaster risk reduction.

The earthquake, as are many ‘natural disasters’, was broadcast to the global community as a natural, unexpected, shock event that created all the suffering and death that ensued. The reasons for the damage are not just because of the earthquake. The damage is because of inadequate funding and planning for disaster risk reduction and resilience

⁶ Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster, UNISDR. 2004. <https://www.unisdr.org/2005/wcdr/intergover/official-doc/L-docs/Hyogo-framework-for-action-english.pdf>

⁷ Piers Blaikie, Terry Cannon, Ian Davis and Ben Wisner, *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People’s Vulnerability, and Disasters*. (Routledge, 1994), 9.

⁸ Mary Mederios Kent, *Earthquake Magnifies Haiti’s Economic and Health Challenges* <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2010/haiti.aspx> (accessed 2017)

⁹ International Monetary Fund, *IMF Quotas*, <http://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2016/07/14/12/21/IMF-Quotas> (accessed 2017)

building prior to the earthquake. This means actions taken to ensure buildings are up to code, that there are emergency plans in place, that there are early warning systems in place etc. A shift towards analyzing the risk factors present in a society will activate the UN system before a shock event unleashes the built up tension. This idea was discussed in the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005-2015, as well as in the Sendai Framework, 2015-2030. The main priority of the Sendai Framework is “Understanding Disaster Risk” so that humanitarian assistance can play a role in creating cultures of prevention.

Haiti, a small island nation occupying the margin of our global community, faces unique threats to natural hazards because of its geographic location. The location of Haiti in the Caribbean makes it susceptible to hurricanes, tropical storms, and earthquakes. This compounded by existing vulnerabilities, sets the stage for immense and devastating effects from geological and hydrometeorological events.

In 1994, the idea of measuring environmental vulnerability entered the development dialogue at the Global Summit on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) held in Barbados. Specifically focused on the heightened vulnerability of SIDS, this conference proposed the creation of a vulnerability index to determine which countries were at higher risk of disaster. This model was globalized by 2003.¹⁰ The EVI vulnerability report is organized into a scoring classification for each nation analyzed from less than 215 points representing a Resilient nation to more than 365 points representing an Extremely Vulnerable nation. Haiti ranked 343 in 2004 on the EVI as Highly Vulnerable.¹¹ SIDS, in regards to natural hazards, are considered among the most vulnerable in the world. The economic, social and environmental impacts are disproportionate among these small nations.¹²

In Haiti, deforestation and soil erosion increase the risk of landslides during a hazard event¹³. This issue of environmental vulnerability is explicitly seen in Haiti where exploitation of natural resources has resulted in environmental and socio-economic concerns such as deforestation largely due to agricultural exploitation over the past few centuries. The plantation system of intensive monocropping of crops such as cotton,

¹⁰ SOPAC, The Environmental Vulnerability Index, 2004. <http://www.vulnerabilityindex.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/EVI%202004%20Technical%20Report.pdf> (accessed 2017)

¹¹ SOPAC, The Environmental Vulnerability Index, 2004. <http://www.vulnerabilityindex.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/EVI%202004%20Technical%20Report.pdf> (accessed 2017)

¹² United Nations, International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, January 10-14, 2005, http://www.un.org/smallislands2005/A-CONF207-L_1.pdf (accessed 2017)

¹³ United Nations, International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, January 10-14, 2005, http://www.un.org/smallislands2005/A-CONF207-L_1.pdf (accessed 2017)

indigo, tobacco, sugarcane, and coffee stripped the land of its fertility.¹⁴ The environmental vulnerability of the country is of serious concern but it is not the only factor contributing to the risk society.

Haiti: History of structural violence and oppression

Structural violence is the harm caused to people from the social and economic structural arrangements of our world. Those who are denied access to the basics of survival and who are unable to take advantage of scientific progress are the victims of structural violence. It is not the fault of culture or individual will but rather it is the result of historical structures that allow for inequity to persist.¹⁵

Haiti, previously called the “pearl of the Antilles”, was the most profitable of the French colonies. The small nation has been economically squeezed since its beginning with the successful slave revolt against France in 1804. France did not recognize Haiti as a free state until two decades after its founding and the US and England followed France’s lead. When France did finally recognize Haiti’s hard fought independence the recognition came with a caveat. France insisted that Haiti pay 150 million francs for the losses that Haiti’s independence cost France. This is the equivalent of 3 billion dollars in today’s currency.¹⁶ Haiti took loans from French banks to pay this debt. By 1898, 50% of Haiti’s budget went to France. In 1914, 80% of Haiti’s budget went to France. To pay the first installment of 30 million francs, Haitian president Boyer, closed all the schools.¹⁷

The people of Haiti have long endured foreign occupations and structural violence that continually set the country back developmentally. Vulnerabilities created by political maneuvering and structural violence are what lead to the devastation of the earthquake in 2010. Fanmi Lavalas, created in 1996, is the leftist, pro-democracy political party started by Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a liberation theologian, grass-roots activist, and leader of the people’s movement who became the first democratically elected president. Aristide won the first democratic election held after Jean-Claude Duvalier was overthrown and promised sweeping changes to shift the government from an oppressive, violent state, to a state that would support the people.¹⁸ Since the early 1980s, Aristide spoke out against

¹⁴ Nathan C McClintock, *Agroforestry and Sustainable Resource Conservation in Haiti: A Case Study*, <https://projects.ncsu.edu/project/cnrint/Agro/PDFfiles/HaitiCaseStudy041903.pdf> (accessed 2017)

¹⁵ Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003)

¹⁶ Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*, (Picador, January 2013)

¹⁷ Jean-Bertrand Aristide, *Eyes of the Heart*, (Common Courage Press, 2000)

¹⁸ Justin Podur, *Haiti’s New Dictatorship: The Coup, The Earthquake and the UN Occupation*, (London, Pluto Press, 2012)

US policy and was one of the most prominent voices of protest.¹⁹ Aristide was a leader of the people which positioned him against the interests of the elite and the foreign powers. On September 30, 1991, he was overthrown less than eight months after his inauguration by a coup organized by the Haitian army supported by the countries elite. In the aftermath of the coup thousands of Lavalas supporters were killed.²⁰

1994, Aristide was returned to the presidency, escorted by the US. The US and the UN took over the duties of the Haitian army and the “international financial institutions insisted that Aristide follow the neoliberal economic doctrine and remove all protectionist tariffs.”²¹ This pressure to liberalize the markets ultimately served the interests of foreign business and devastated Haitian rice growers and created a dependency on imported foods. When Aristide tried to resist the neoliberal doctrine he was threatened with withheld loans and aid. It was difficult for Aristide to implement state projects to improve the livelihoods of the people because of the crippling debt to foreign lenders.²²

In 2000, Aristide is reelected for another term and Fanmi Lavalas wins the legislative and local elections. Aristide refused to implement neoliberal policies. “The government was weakened by trying to hold the empty middle ground between its popular base and the depraved demands of the ‘international community’ .²³ A massive disinformation campaign in the media to discredit Aristide was formulated to prepare for a coup. The paramilitary death squad, FRAPH, had ties to the CIA and instigates terror and violence that creates the necessary chaos to transition power. The Convergence Democratique, an anti-Lavalas coalition, is formed with the assistance of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the intention of discrediting Aristide and the Lavalas electoral success.

Under the pretense that Aristide is corrupt, Canada, US, and France meet in Ottawa to plan regime change in Haiti through the Canadian doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) “which gives strong countries license to intervene in weak countries.”²⁴ The R2P report was established in 2001 by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) which was set up by the Canadian Government. It was

¹⁹ Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*, (Picador, January 2013)

²⁰ Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*, (Picador, January 2013), 363.

²¹ Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*, (Picador, January 2013), 363.

²² Justin Podur, *Haiti's New Dictatorship: The Coup, The Earthquake and the UN Occupation*, (London, Pluto Press, 2012)

²³ Justin Podur, *Haiti's New Dictatorship: The Coup, The Earthquake and the UN Occupation*, (London, Pluto Press, 2012), 41.

²⁴ Justin Podur, *Haiti's New Dictatorship: The Coup, The Earthquake and the UN Occupation*, (London, Pluto Press, 2012), 42.

created as a response to criticism of the failure of the international community to affectively respond to the atrocities committed in the 1990's, namely that of the Rwandan genocide. Kofi Annan challenged the Member States to come up with a solution to the issue of state sovereignty preventing intervention when there are systematic violations of human rights that the state is either not willing or able to prevent or is in fact the perpetrator of such crimes. The R2P reframed sovereignty as state responsibility as opposed to a protection against intervention. Of course, like any doctrine, this reversal of what was previously a protection for weak states against strong states can be used as it was intended or can be manipulated as a way to intervene and take advantage.²⁵

The European community and the US respond to the weakened Haitian government by cutting aid to Haiti. The Bush administration urges the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to cancel \$650 million dollars in development assistance to Haiti and the IDB demands that Haiti pay debts of \$1.134 billion dollars (40% which was money lent during the corrupt Duvalier dictatorship). In 2003, Haiti sends 90% of their foreign reserves to Washington to pay interest on this debt. In 2004, a coup overthrows Aristide through a combination of economic pressure, paramilitary violence, co-optation of civil society organizations, and media disinformation campaigns.²⁶ The strategic weakening of the government gave way to the transfer of power.

Aristide was kidnapped by the American military in the coup d'état on February 28th, 2004. Aristide said, "One could say that it was a geo-political kidnapping. I can clearly say that it was a terrorism disguised as diplomacy."²⁷ The American military personnel told Aristide that the paramilitary army (funded by the CIA) was stationed in Port-au-Prince and preparing for a massacre of thousands of Haitians if Aristide did not go with the military personnel. Aristide was then removed from Haiti and brought against his will to the Central African Republic. Podur reports that, "The kidnapping and the invasion by the US, Canadian and French troops was the key to the entire coup."²⁸ Venezuela, South Africa, and the Caribbean Community of nations CARICOM, condemned the coup.²⁹

²⁵ United Nations, *Responsibility to Protect*, <http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.html> (accessed 2017)

²⁶ Justin Podur, *Haiti's New Dictatorship: The Coup, The Earthquake and the UN Occupation*, (London, Pluto Press, 2012)

²⁷ Justin Podur, *Haiti's New Dictatorship: The Coup, The Earthquake and the UN Occupation*, (London, Pluto Press, 2012), 55.

²⁸ Justin Podur, *Haiti's New Dictatorship: The Coup, The Earthquake and the UN Occupation*, (London, Pluto Press, 2012), 56.

²⁹ Justin Podur, *Haiti's New Dictatorship: The Coup, The Earthquake and the UN Occupation*, (London, Pluto Press, 2012), 57.

Once Aristide was removed, actions were immediately taken that threatened labor rights, such as the case of Grupo M. The production facility operating in the Dominican Republic and Haiti free trade zones refused to negotiate with labor union, SOKOWA, and 254 workers were fired. SOKOWA had to fight to get Grupo M to come to the negotiation table to reinstate the workers.³⁰ The workforce went on strike and paramilitary forces disbanded the workers with force and destroyed one hundred buses used for a transportation co-operative created under Aristide's government.³¹ This violence is structural in that Grupo M, an example of a much wider trend, was under contract funded by a \$20 million dollar loan on January 15, 2004, from the World Bank's private sector arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) under the guise of helping improve Haiti's economy. This loan was approved after the company came under investigation in 2003 in the Dominican Republic for abuse of workers' rights. The IFC reported that the "project deserves continued strong support given its development impact, even if some wrongdoing was demonstrated."³² This "Development impact" was not people-centered development to improve the resilience of the communities in Haiti, it was Development for the financial benefits of the already powerful. The ideology that a capitalist free market model will lift all boats is the definition of neoliberalism and this example shows how it is violating instead of upholding the rights of those it proposes to support.³³

Making connections: The US, UN, and Haiti

When an economy is squeezed tightly by structural adjustment and international debt peonage designed by the IMF and the WB, a nation-state is kept powerless and more easily utilized as a passive labor force (such as in garment factories in free trade zones like Grupo M in Haiti). The weak local economy creates dependence on international stakeholders and when a hazard strikes, the humanitarian machine is activated to bring the country back to the status quo of a weak state serving the interests of the private and state international powers. The increasingly securitized humanitarian regime is intimately connected to the perpetrators of this narrative.

The complexity of the UN's involvement in Haiti is undeniable. The evidence begs to argue that the ousting of Aristide was a CIA backed US led coup that the UN supported through a securitization mission. The US pays approximately 22% of the UN budget

³⁰ Haiti Support Group, *Haiti: Update on Grupo M*, September 27, 2004. <http://www.labournet.net/world/0409/haiti1.html> (accessed 2017)

³¹ Justin Podur, *Haiti's New Dictatorship: The Coup, The Earthquake and the UN Occupation*, (London, Pluto Press, 2012), 58.

³² Bretton Woods Project, *IFC Haiti Project Funding goes ahead despite investigation's "mixed results"*, <http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2004/02/art-35235/> (accessed 2017)

³³ Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003)

annually. In 2010, the US paid \$517,133,507 into the UN budget.³⁴ A report from the UN Foundation shows that the UN Secretariat procured more than \$832 million from US companies in the same year.³⁵ This means that for fiscal year 2010, the US economy benefited from the relationship with the UN by approximately \$314,866,493 in private profits. The United States relationship with the United Nations has clear financial benefits for the US economy. How much money did US companies make from UN contracts in the reconstruction of Haiti after the earthquake? If US companies did not get the contracts, how many Haitian companies could have? How many more Haitian run companies could be competitive if there had been adequate funding for schools and public services?

In 2015, NPR reports, "USAID has spent about \$1.5 billion since the earthquake. . . . Less than a penny of every dollar goes directly to a Haitian organization."³⁶ A growing reliance on U.S. and other international contractors helps explain why the payoff of foreign aid in Haiti often seems so low. For instance, it cost more than \$33,000 to build a new housing unit in one post-earthquake program, a report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office said last year. That's five times more than one nonprofit, called Mission of Hope, spends per house, using local contractors. "International companies had to fly in, rent hotels and cars, and spend USAID allowances for food and cost-of-living expenses," Johnston wrote in the Boston Review last year. So-called danger pay and hardship pay inflated salaries by more than 50 percent.³⁷

The weakening of the national government, the influx of international support, the coordination of the UN, and the profits gained by US companies... this trajectory, whether by predatory design or not, is not meeting the UN agenda of eliminating poverty. In fact, the current model depends on poverty and "helpless victims" to continue functioning. There is a shift happening that recognizes the importance of bolstering local capacity and pushes back against the paradigm of saving the helpless victims and shifting towards treating people as dignified human beings within a global community. First though, let us look at the reason why companies are able to operate unregulated in poor nations.

³⁴ United Nations Secretariat, *Assessment of Member States' advances to the Working Capital Fund for the biennium 2010-2011 and contributions to the United Nations regular budget for 2010, December, 2009*, https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/Member_States_Assessment_for_Regular_Budget_for_2010.pdf (accessed 2017)

³⁵ UN Tribune, *As Obama heads to General Assembly, US debt to UN balloons to \$3 billion*, 2014 <http://untribune.com/as-obama-heads-to-general-assembly-us-debt-to-un-balloons-to-3-billion/> (accessed 2017)

³⁶ NPR, *5 Years After Haiti's Earthquake, Where Did The \$13.5 Billion Go?*, January 2015, <http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2015/01/12/376138864/5-years-after-haiti-s-earthquake-why-aren-t-things-better> (accessed 2017)

³⁷NPR, *5 Years After Haiti's Earthquake, Where Did The \$13.5 Billion Go?*, January 2015, <http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2015/01/12/376138864/5-years-after-haiti-s-earthquake-why-aren-t-things-better> (accessed 2017)

Histories of corruption that have created mistrust of national government serve to justify the involvement of international companies. The history of corruption within the government of Haiti still lingers in the global consciousness and creates an avenue for unregulated involvement in the development of the nation.

The perception of corruption in Haiti is not unfounded and arises from the 29 year French dictatorship of the Duvaliers, the father-son rule that stole an estimated \$900 million from the Haitian people, the rightful benefactors, and funneled the money into their own private accounts. After the end of the brutal Duvalier dictatorship, Jean Bertrand Aristide, and his political party, Fanmi Lavalas, began to dismantle the structures of military oppression. Aristide met severe opposition from the countries elite who desperately supported the military presence. In 1991 the army overthrew Aristide and hundreds of his supporters were killed. “The Convergence Democratique, the US-funded pro-army opposition group, demonized the Haitian government of Fanmi Lavalas as corrupt and provided the funds to create an impressive propaganda exercise to compare Aristide with his tyrannical and violent predecessor Francois Duvalier and his paramilitary squad the Tontons Macoutes”³⁸. Leading up to his abduction in 2004, widespread media coverage portrayed Aristide as a failure in establishing democracy, and accused him of falling into the same authoritarian style as the Duvalier dictator he fought against³⁹. The history of corruption, both real and contrived, has been instilled in the collective memory of the people living in Haiti as well as abroad. The legitimacy of the Haitian national authorities has been damaged by this perception of corruption, spreading an impression of inadequacy to the international community and instilling a perception of mistrust.

This mistrust of national authorities in Haiti, some would say, was by design⁴⁰ and others simply recognize it as an impediment to development. Institutional responsibility taken over by the international community, NGOs working in the specific sectors instead of government run and regulated sector coordination, poses a concern of accountability to the Haitian people, especially when the international community is so closely linked with foreign business interests. In the humanitarian aid framework, the system first and foremost is a post-disaster subsidiary support for the national government to help coordinate humanitarian actors and mitigate disaster. In the case of Haiti, this responsibility, almost entirely lies in the hands of the UN because of weak national capacity. There are mechanisms set up in the Cluster System to interface with the national authorities and assist the government in the arduous task of coordinating hundreds of organizations and humanitarian workers and the humanitarian branch of the UN works with national governments to strengthen preparedness and prevention measures.

³⁸ Peter Hallward, *Damming the Flood: Haiti and the Politics of Containment*, (Verso, 2007)

³⁹ Peter Hallward, *Damming the Flood: Haiti and the Politics of Containment*, (Verso, 2007)

⁴⁰ Justin Podur, *Haiti's New Dictatorship: The Coup, The Earthquake and the UN Occupation*, (London, Pluto Press, 2012)

The national capacities are often side-stepped even when they do exist because of the history of corruption. Decision making power is cornered by the international actors, and legitimacy circumvents the government along with the money⁴¹. This is the challenge in Haiti, where the bulk of aid money has been funneled through international NGOs and agencies. Less than 1% of proposed funds flowed through the hands of the GoH. Considering the damaged government capacities, it is not surprising that funds have skirted the GoH, yet without the oversight of national authorities there is the concern of accountability to the Haitian people. Podur argues that this perception of mistrust is by design to justify the money circumventing national authorities.

Dr. Maryse Narcisse, the Haiti presidential candidate from the Lavalas party, spoke in Oakland, California in the Spring of 2017 about the international involvement in the country stating, “There is a lot of interference in the internal affairs of Haiti a lot of meddling by the countries like the US by the UN the OAS. These are countries that call themselves ‘friends of Haiti’ those countries, their meddling, is creating instability in the country and they create a weakness in the institutions of the country.”

The perception of corruption and the ‘meddling’ the Narcisse speaks of have contributed to, and justified, circumventing the government and stripping it of responsibility and decision-making power. The perception of government corruption suggests that the international actors such as the UN IASC (United Nation Inter-Agency Standing Committee) are better equipped to manage the relief than the Haitian authorities. The aid money circumventing the government is detrimental to relief being carried out because NGOs and international corporations are not necessarily accountable to the Haitian people and by not supporting the capacity of the national authorities creates an unregulated market that makes it easier for corporations to implement projects without being held by regulation. The cluster system attempts to remedy this problem by clustering these organizations and creating a cohesion of objectives but there are powerful stakeholders connected to the Cluster Approach that raise questions of impartiality.

UN OCHA Cluster Approach Framework

The Cluster Approach is a sector and needs-based system used to multilaterally coordinate the UN and non UN humanitarian organizations working in a disaster setting. This system is a humanitarian mechanism that aims to strengthen global and field level capacity to respond efficiently to disasters caused by natural hazards and conflict situations. Its first implementation was in 2005 and it has since been activated globally in

⁴¹ United Nations General Assembly, *2005 World Summit Outcome*, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf (accessed 2017)

30 countries.⁴² The Cluster Approach is activated to respond to complex humanitarian emergencies in order to facilitate sector-based coordination with national and international humanitarian actors including intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental and private sector organizations as well as national partners. These entities are grouped according to sector, such as health, agriculture, shelter, etc. in order to streamline relief, fill gaps, share resources, and reduce duplication of projects. In theory, this approach functions as a supporting structure to the national government and aligns the clusters of humanitarian actors with the national authorities. The key objectives are to ensure adequate global capacity to respond to the emergency, “alleviate human suffering in disasters and emergencies, advocate the rights of people in need, promote preparedness and prevention, and facilitate sustainable solutions.”⁴³ The Cluster System creates a space for humanitarian organizations to cooperate in information sharing in order to identify and act upon the strategic priorities of the cluster. The members work to mitigate the impact of a hazard and respond to the needs of the vulnerable population. The UN cluster approach is like the scaffolding built to repair a damaged or deteriorating structure of Haiti, yet there was little national structure to build on and inequitable power dynamics inherent in the international approach have inadvertently created barriers to the participation of important local stakeholders whose capacity the UN is mandated to support.

OCHA operates out of two headquarters located in Geneva and New York. The top-down structure of OCHA originates with the Secretary General at the top and then directly beneath, the Under Secretary General (USG) who is also the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). The USG/ERC is responsible for humanitarian policy development and the coordination of the international humanitarian response as well as being the focal point for governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental relief activities. The ERC chairs the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) which is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance involving the major international humanitarian actors. This committee leads the inter-agency forum where humanitarian dialogue, decision making and policy development takes place among the major humanitarian actors including UN, governmental, and non-governmental organizations. The Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) is guided by the USG/ERC to ensure that the response is organized and the HC works with government, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and affected communities. An OCHA office is created in support of the DSRS/RC/HC and the cluster system is under the direction of the DSRS/RC/HC.

⁴² Trude Kvam Ulleland, *The Cluster Approach for Organizing Emergency Response: A Case Study of Myanmar and Haiti*, 2008, <http://bora.uib.no/bitstream/handle/1956/7763/116215926.pdf?sequence=1> (accessed 2017)

⁴³ OCHA, *Who We Are*, <http://www.unocha.org/about-us/who-we-are> (accessed 2017)

Within the context of post-disaster Haiti, there were numerous uncoordinated actors occupying the humanitarian space with various ideologies, promoting a variety of best practices for assistance. OCHA has the responsibility of coordinating national and international actors and utilizes the cluster approach to manage the relief efforts. The limitations of this approach will be measured through an analysis of participatory components including the support for local capacity building as well as mechanisms that focus on strengthening national authorities.

The Cluster System in Haiti is made up of 11 clusters and 2 sub-clusters. The clusters activated after the earthquake were Agriculture, Education, Food, Health, Nutrition, Protection, Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, Shelter, Water and Sanitation, Early Recovery, and Camp Coordination Camp Management (CCCM).

Each Cluster is lead by a Cluster Lead Agency (CLA). The lead agency has the responsibility of coordinating the humanitarian organizations working within a specific sector. The CLAs activated in Haiti after the earthquake are:

Global Cluster Leads	CLA in Haiti
CCCM IOM	CCCM/Shelter – NFI IOM
Early Recovery UNDP	Early Recovery UNDP
Education UNICEF	Education UNICEF
Emergency Shelter UNHCR	
Emergency Telecommunications WFP	Emergency Telecommunications WFP
Food Security FAO	Agriculture FAO
Health WHO	Health WHO/PAHO
Logistics WFP	Logistics WFP

Global Cluster Leads	CLA in Haiti
Nutrition UNICEF	Nutrition UNICEF
Water Sanitation and Hygiene UNICEF	WASH UNICEF
Protection UNHCR The line ministries	Protection OHCHR - Protection sub cluster: Child Protection UNICEF - GBV UNFPA

The majority of the CLA's are UN agencies. Sometimes at the country level there are other organizations or private entities that work in conjunction with the CLA. In Haiti, the cluster coordinator is a member of the lead agency and has the responsibility of organizing the cluster meetings. Cluster meetings are periodic, weekly or bi-weekly meetings that are set up by the cluster coordinator to collaborate with the humanitarian organizations working in the specific sector to construct strategic plans for humanitarian relief. The purpose of cluster coordination is to bring all of the actors to the table to decide on consistent objectives in order to mitigate the possibility of duplicated projects and fragmentation of resources. In order for the organizations to arrive at a consensus, the Cluster System requires that individual agencies cooperate in aligning programmes with strategic objectives agreed on by the Cluster⁴⁴.

Coordination is an essential component to humanitarian assistance but it is not without challenges. In addition to providing basic needs resources to the people, one of the main challenges facing the humanitarian efforts in post-disaster Haiti is the hindered capability of the national authorities. In December of 1991, UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 designated government and national actors of the affected state as having the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within the state.⁴⁵ For varying reasons, such as lack of capacity, damaged ministries, language barriers, inconsistent recovery plans, corruption, and deeply embedded mistrust, the coordination between national authorities and

⁴⁴ James Shepherd-Barron, *Inter-Cluster Coordination*, July 2011, <http://james.shepherd-barron.com/clusterwise-2/6-inter-cluster-coordination/> (accessed 2017)

⁴⁵ Humanitarian Response, *Who Does What?*, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/who-does-what> (accessed 2017)

international humanitarian actors in post-disaster Haiti has been a critical barrier to recovery.

Components of the Cluster Approach itself, such as the powerful role of the CLA, have undermined the ability of the system to fully support local resiliency. Examples from the Agriculture Cluster as well as the Shelter Cluster will be discussed. The aim here is to identify the gaps in the cluster system and provide recommendations to improve the participatory elements of the system to utilize and rebuild local capacity and establish resiliency.

Partnerships with the government and local stakeholders are necessary for bolstering national capacity. By ensuring a strong local system, dependency on foreign capacity can be minimized. Sustainable development objectives can be compromised when the international humanitarian stakeholders work independently of the national government. Without the involvement of local entities true accountability to the people comes into question. Additionally, international actions are often donor driven and not adequately informed by the local realities. This trajectory of aid circumventing the national authorities and local stakeholders is predicated on a false narrative that the local stakeholders are unable to carry out the development objectives. The question is raised: Is the international community unwilling to relinquish its profitable position of power over the Haitian people in order to prioritize the true mission of resilience? Haitians have called for the opportunities for self-determination in their own country. The people are tired of being perceived as helpless victims and the passive recipients of assistance. The Haitian people want to have a say in how the country recovers and develops.

The Haitian people and other ‘beneficiaries’ of aid will not have their voices heard in the aid process as long as access to the humanitarian industry continues to be a challenge for local participants. There were gaps in the national government oversight of the international aid operations. For example, the shelter cluster was run by the IFRC out of an office established at the MINUSTAH Base in Port-au-Prince. Engagement by the central government was low and the Shelter Cluster had no government counterpart.⁴⁶ There was limited participation of Haitian organizations in the humanitarian decision making process and project funding cycle. OCHA reported that the clusters operated in deliberations and planning almost completely excluding the national government. For many Haitian organizations access to the MINUSTAH Logbase was limited because it was challenging to get to and put an extra strain on their time and budgets. OCHA reported that only organizations with surplus staff could send people to Logbase for meetings. Representatives from organizations were finding it difficult to access the area and it would sometimes take members of NGOs 3-4 hours to navigate the streets of PAP and reach the cluster meetings many of which were being held bi-weekly. Additionally,

⁴⁶ Sara Davidson, *A Review of the IFRC-led Shelter Cluster Haiti 2010*, April 2011, http://www.ifrc.org/docs/Evaluations/Evaluations2011/Americas/HaitiShelterCluster-April2011_Final.pdf (accessed 2017)

many meetings (such as in the Shelter Cluster and initially the GBV Cluster) were held in English, limiting the participation of national organizations who operate in French and Haitian creole. GBV meetings under the Protection cluster switched to French and saw an increase in local NGO participation.

The circumventing of the national government on the premise of mistrust and corruption has been a common avenue for aid programs that seek to take advantage of the Haitian environment and labor force. By delegitimizing the capacity of the Haitian government, aid organizations can justify implementing projects independent of government. For example, USAID in Haiti spent \$270 million of aid money in 2013. 40% went to American NGOs and 50% went to US based corporations. Chemonics International received \$58 million claiming that they would promote the recovery of Haiti and invest in “laying the foundation for long term development”.⁴⁷ The presence of corporate interests that were well intentioned, but not truly people-centered, and were largely focused on profit, emerged as USAID and Chemonics attempted to establish a biofuel agro-industry in Haiti by planting *Jatropha curcas* under the humanitarian auspice of USAID’s WINNER project. The main objective which was to secure eroded hillsides in order to improve irrigation and crop success. Mint Press News reported on this as the “only long term foundations that are being laid are for the total corporate annexation of Haiti’s economy”.⁴⁸ On USAID’s website there is no mention of the WINNER project objective to grow a biofuel agro-industry in Haiti. There are successes in improving yields of edible crops and improving the watershed use on the hillsides of the Cul-deSac, Cabaret, Mirebalais, and Arcahaie regions, but information regarding these regions as biofuel plant test sites was not mentioned. What else was not explicitly mentioned is Chemonics’ partnership with Monsanto to bring in GMO corn to one location.

Haiti: Agriculture Cluster

The annexation of Haiti’s agricultural sector by a foreign power is not new. In 1915, US marines landed in Haiti to ‘reestablish political order’ after a bloody coup. The US stayed for twenty years. Structural violence and abusive political paternalism hide behind the promise of improving infrastructure, roads and schools. The dark side of US occupation was the takeover of the agricultural sector.⁴⁹ There was rural to urban migration in Haiti when the US agricultural companies entered and deprived the peasants of their land. This occupation displaced local small scale farmers, deepened Haiti’s dependence on outside powers, and depleted the soil over generations of intensive agriculture.

⁴⁷ Chemonics, <http://www.chemonics.com/OurWork/OurProjects/Pages/Haiti%20Recovery%20Initiative%20II.aspx> (accessed 2017)

⁴⁸ Mint Press News, *Corporations are the New Conquistadors: Haiti*, February 2015, <http://www.mintpressnews.com/MyMPN/corporations-new-conquistadors-haiti/> (accessed 2017)

⁴⁹ Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*, (Picador, January 2013)

UN OCHA Cluster Approach and disaster capitalism: Chemonics

The narrative of Chemonics was to assist USAID in improving crop yields for small scale Haitian farmers and assisting in securing eroded hillsides with the Jatropha plant. On this premise, Chemonics was justified in working on the assistance program. Once they secured aid money from the agency they implemented the objectives with a few additional unapproved actions such as starting to incorporate international seeds supplied by Monsanto as well as planting out massive amounts of the Jatropha plants to be test sites for growing them as biofuels. An initial evaluation was done that proved that using the plants for biofuels would not enhance the long term security of the farmers. The economic incentive for Chemonics in partnering with Monsanto and testing the implementation of biofuel crops diminished their ability to fully realize food security goals. The for-profit model of this company incentivizes profit driven actions. In the process, Chemonics violated the UN Global Compact anti-corruption principle.

Socially responsible business practices in sustainable development is meaningless if the company is not transparent with all of their objectives. With the poor track records of companies like Chemonics, it is a challenge to regulate and ensure that they are operating according to their mandates and not prioritizing free-market solutions that go against their proposed sustainable development mission. To meet humanitarian and development objectives, it is crucial that businesses adhere to the UN Global Compact and are able to operationalize on objectives to improve livelihoods in recovery settings.

There were protests of approximately 10,000 Haitians against the introduction of patented corn seeds donated to the WINNER program by Monsanto. Importing seeds can lead to dependency and because the seeds are not acclimated to the local environment, they can require higher priced inputs. Not only were the seeds treated with chemicals, but they do not reproduce for the security of the next season's crop. This can create a cycle of dependency, indebtedness and poverty for already poor farmers.⁵⁰ The objectives of planting crops for biofuels and allowing the integration of highly contentious genetically modified organisms to enter through this project were not clearly highlighted in the project goals, and the beneficiaries of this project were not involved or informed of the full scope of the project. The inability of USAID and Chemonics to be transparent and accountable, created a failed humanitarian/corporate partnership that is inadequate to meet the needs of the most important stakeholders, the Haitian people.

This example of USAID's contract with a private company shows how the actions of humanitarian agencies can be contradictory to the mission of the UN sustainable development goals. The structure of the UN OCHA cluster approach has gaps that allow

⁵⁰ Office of Inspector General, USAID, Concerns 1-4 regarding WINNER program, 2012. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PBAAD773.pdf (accessed 2017)

for these concerning contracts to be made. Issues of unequal power and impartiality arise with the CLA and are a serious concern for the objectives created for the cluster. The CLAs are partnered with the private sector from small organizations and cooperatives to the largest international corporations. The private partnerships are not inherently problematic they only become so when the UN and government counterparts are unable to hold the companies accountable to the local population and aid money is squandered in the process. In the UN literature, the local organizations are often referred to as the 'implementing organizations' but are often excluded from the decision making process. The unequal power dynamic and issue with impartiality of the CLAs has prevented the UN from fully realizing its humanitarian objectives.

With the USAID example in mind, let us look at the Cluster Lead Agency for the Agriculture Sector, the FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN. The actions of the humanitarian model and what is proposed is also important to consider. Here is an excerpt from the literature of the UN sustainable development agenda:

- Agriculture is the single largest employer in the world, providing livelihoods for 40 per cent of today's global population. It is the largest source of income and jobs for poor rural households.
- 500 million small farms worldwide, most still rainfed, provide up to 80 per cent of food consumed in a large part of the developing world. Investing in smallholder women and men is an important way to increase food security and nutrition for the poorest, as well as food production for local and global markets.
- Since the 1900s, some 75 per cent of crop diversity has been lost from farmers' fields. Better use of agricultural biodiversity can contribute to more nutritious diets, enhanced livelihoods for farming communities and more resilient and sustainable farming systems.⁵¹

With these statistics in mind and the UN literature promoting the support of small scale agriculture, let us look at the current relationship between the FAO, the UN and the 'beneficiaries' of aid. In 2013, the FAO put forth a Strategy for Partnership with the Private Sector. Can the FAO be a neutral stakeholder in the humanitarian arena when it is partnered with the private sector? One of the largest contributors to the FAO budget and also a major resource partner is the United States. The US supports the FAO through cooperation in emergency assistance, building resilience, food security, sustainable agriculture and the management of natural resources. ⁵² The US agency that oversees foreign assistance is USAID. The relationship of USAID and Haiti, as previously shown,

⁵¹ United Nation, *Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/> (accessed 2017)

⁵² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, <http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en/?iso3=USA> (accessed 2017)

is heavily influenced by corporate interests. The program through which USAID supports Haiti in a disaster setting is the United States Department of Agriculture Food For Peace program (FFP). Through this program, the US sends American crops abroad on American owned ships, to be sold as a source of revenue for aid operations. The U.S. Congress mandates that fifteen percent of food aid be monetized through this model.⁵³ The Maritime Administration (MARAD) is the entity which controls US flag ships that carry food aid abroad. These vessels are also equipped with military capabilities in times of war. ⁵⁴ One sentiment from the small scale local agricultural sector of Haiti is “why can’t the donors buy food from us and distribute that food to the affected regions?” ⁵⁵

Through the partnership of USAID and the FAO, 90,000 metric tons of American crops were sent to Haiti as part of the Food for Progress program and Food for Peace. ⁵⁶ USAID reports that nearly four million people in the first three months post-earthquake were provided with emergency food relief, the largest distribution ever. ⁵⁷ The food needs of many people in Haiti were met by the distribution but as Jean-Baptiste, Director of the Haitian farmers collective Peasant Movement of Papay, states “After the earthquake, the country needed food to help the victims in some places. But it’s not really necessary to send to Haiti a lot of food from the United States. We received too much food, when locally it was possible to find food to buy to help the people.”⁵⁸

The purchase of US agricultural products for foreign food aid began in an attempt to expand US markets in 1954 with the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act. The program required the US to spend a certain amount each year regardless of the humanitarian needs of foreign nations. Haiti Justice League’s Yaffe said he believes this

⁵³ Government Accountability Office, *Funding Development Projects through the Purchase, Shipment, and Sale of U.S. Commodities Is Inefficient and Can Cause Adverse Market Impacts*, June 2011, <http://www.gao.gov/assets/330/320013.pdf> (accessed 2017)

⁵⁴ United States Department of Transportation, *MARAD- Links to Business Services*, <https://www.marad.dot.gov/about-us/links-to-business-services/> (accessed 2017)

⁵⁵ Paul Farmer, *Haiti After the Earthquake* (Public Affairs, 2011) 270

⁵⁶ Pulitzer Center, *U.S. Spent \$140 Million of Haiti Earthquake Aid on Controversial Food Exports*, January 2012, <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/us-spent-140-million-haiti-earthquake-aid-controversial-food-exports> (accessed 2017)

⁵⁷ USAID, *Earthquake Overview*, <https://www.usaid.gov/haiti/earthquake-overview> (accessed 2017)

⁵⁸ Pulitzer Center, *U.S. Spent \$140 Million of Haiti Earthquake Aid on Controversial Food Exports*, January 2012, <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/us-spent-140-million-haiti-earthquake-aid-controversial-food-exports> (accessed 2017)

shows the U.S. government's first priority was to recoup costs of the program, not helping foreigners in need.⁵⁹

The US Government Global Food Security Strategy of 2017 states that “through diplomacy and programmatic support, we will continue to work closely with governments and with national and local stakeholders to advance and help implement an evidence-based policy agenda consistent with international obligations and U.S. policy objectives”.⁶⁰ The problem is that US policy objectives are flawed. USAID admitted that the program was flawed, and urged the US congress to allow for direct cash assistance to be provided to Haitians. USAID officials estimated that two to four million more people every year would benefit if more of the budget could be spent on procuring food aid locally.⁶¹

Haiti would benefit more if the US sent its food security humanitarian payments directly to the Agriculture Sectors of the Haitian government to support the local resources. The capacity of the Haitian government could then be supported by the humanitarian actors as is the UN mandate. According to the GAO, about half of all global food aid is donated by the US and it is responsible for what is called ‘food dumping’ or sending a surplus of heavily subsidized food like what happened in Haiti.⁶² The current model usurps the power of the Haitian state, hurts the people it is meant to protect, while financially supporting American grain and shipping industries. USAID, the USDA, and Congress can play a very important role in alleviating poverty in Haiti if this flawed model is repaired. Foreign assistance is crucial in an emergency to get food aid to a population if no food is available locally, but it should be a system that supports the local capacity, not one that undermines it through a predatory relationship of disaster capitalism.

Having food reserves is important. The influx of food aid after the shock event is problematic when it is done in excess. The ‘food dumping’ model creates a humanitarian machine that is reactive instead of preventative⁶³. Fiona Terry, author and relief worker

⁵⁹ Pulitzer Center, *U.S. Spent \$140 Million of Haiti Earthquake Aid on Controversial Food Exports*, January 2012, <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/us-spent-140-million-haiti-earthquake-aid-controversial-food-exports> (accessed 2017)

⁶⁰ USAID, *US Government Global Food Security Strategy FY 2017-2021*, September 2016, <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1867/USG-Global-Food-Security-Strategy-2016.pdf> (accessed 2017)

⁶¹ Jacob Kushner, *In Haiti, all eyes on US to reform ‘unjustifiable’ food aid program*, January 2014, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-01-13/haiti-all-eyes-us-reform-unjustifiable-food-aid-program> (accessed 2017)

⁶² Jacob Kushner, *In Haiti, all eyes on US to reform ‘unjustifiable’ food aid program*, January 2014, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-01-13/haiti-all-eyes-us-reform-unjustifiable-food-aid-program> (accessed 2017)

⁶³ Papa Seck, UNDP, *Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world*, 2007, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/seck_papa.pdf (accessed 2017)

who has been based in the thick of Northern Iraq, Somalia, Africa's Great Lakes region and the Sino-Korean border, suggests, “the duty to provide humanitarian assistance occurs only once the duty to avoid depriving and to protect from deprivation have failed to be performed”⁶⁴. Terry continues, “Humanitarian assistance is necessary only once governments have been unwilling or unable to shoulder their respective responsibilities”⁶⁵. “It is as if to say, we will tolerate brutal regimes and human deprivation unless and until conditions are so severe that only the military can rescue the victims.”⁶⁶ The funding for relief is much greater than that for prevention, and the UN has traditionally intervened when things have already fallen apart. This framework of emergency relief rather than prevention is important for this system of disaster capitalism to flourish. When the global community wants to help the people suffering from disaster, it is easy to only see the surface level of aid, like flooding a market with cheap food. We have to look beyond the initial need. Fulfilling the needs of people suffering from disaster is one thing but filling the needs to the point that the aid completely undermines the local capacity is another. There is a lot of money being made as these points of chaos. With the bolstering of local capacity before a natural hazards strikes, there will be less of a need for the involvement of the international resources like subsidized US rice. Decreasing dependence on foreign humanitarian resources means increased funding for disaster prevention measures.

Disaster prevention measures have been underfunded in comparison to emergency relief. Disaster Risk Reduction is currently guided by the Sendai Framework for Action. Previously it was the Hyogo Framework for Action which succeeded the 1990's that were deemed the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction by the UN General Assembly. It has been reported by UNDP that “disaster relief will have a propensity to be overzealously funded while disaster risk reduction will remain the poor cousin in development cooperation”.⁶⁷ Papa Seck of the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) describes the arena of disaster relief as being rife with “perverse incentives” and “opportunistic behavior”.⁶⁸ Policy changes that focus more funding on disaster prevention, and the support of local capacity to decrease disaster risks can mitigate future emergency situations. In the final section of this paper I will discuss the ways in which

⁶⁴ Fiona Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?: The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2002), 17.

⁶⁵ Fiona Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?: The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2002), 17.

⁶⁶ John Tirman, *The New Humanitarianism*, 2004, <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/154/26042.html> (accessed 2017)

⁶⁷ Papa Seck, *Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world*, 2007, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/seck_papa.pdf (accessed 2017)

⁶⁸ Papa Seck, *Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world*, 2007, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/seck_papa.pdf (accessed 2017)

mandated community engagement and participation might push back against the corruption of disaster capitalism and help to support local capacity building.

Haiti: Shelter Cluster

The earthquake revealed the weakness of physical structures. Many of the buildings that existed before the earthquake were not earthquake safe and many being rebuilt are not earthquake safe increasing the risk and vulnerability of the population. The infrastructure in the city was significantly damaged. The Presidential Palace, the Parliament, the national assembly building, Law Courts and many other key ministries as well as subsidiary buildings. 30 of 49 hospitals in the capital region as well as 80% of schools were destroyed.⁶⁹ Thousands of people were killed by falling cement blocks. Building with cement cinderblocks and rebar is relatively cheap and is a well-known building practice in the country.

UN OCHA Cluster Approach and disaster capitalism: Caracol EKAM

The IFRC was the Cluster Lead Agency of the UN Shelter Cluster from February, 2010 - November, 2010 when the position was handed over to UN Habitat. Top government donors to UN Habitat from 2010 to 2016 were Japan (249.4 million), EU (146.8 million), and the US (132.2 million). “Housing has been the most urgent priority, yet the one most ignored or mismanaged by foreign donors,” said Odnell David, a housing division chief with the Haitian government’s Unit for Housing Construction and Public Buildings.⁷⁰

The safe construction and retrofitting of residential homes, schools and government buildings should be the priority in building back better. There are examples of construction projects in post-earthquake Haiti that have gone against what the population want and are pushed through by powerful NGOs and banks regardless of the local desires. An example of this is the Caracol Industrial Park (CIP) project. The project was planned by the US and Haitian governments with IDB and the Clinton Foundation. The project is in Caracol, Haiti and involves an industrial park with an adjacent housing project to house the people displaced by the earthquake. The park was constructed as part of the 2010 National Action Plan to spur economic development outside of Port-au-Prince. The CIP is owned by the Government of Haiti and is managed by the National Society of Industrial Parks (SONAPI) under Haiti’s Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The public-private partnership includes the Government of Haiti, the IDB, The US Government, and Sae-A Trading Co. Ltd. (Korea’s leading garment manufacturer who

⁶⁹ Humanitarian Response, <http://haiti.humanitarianresponse.info/Default.aspx?tabid=208> (accessed 2017)

⁷⁰ Claire Luke, *The twisted tale of Caracol housing*, January 2015, <https://www.devex.com/news/the-twisted-tale-of-caracol-housing-85109>

supplies US companies like Walmart, the Gap and Old Navy).⁷¹ The mixed-use light manufacturing facility was touted as a major site for job creation, claiming it would create 60,000 jobs. It only filled 5,300 because Haitians do not want to work there and were not considered in the design and implementation of the project. There were also a lot of questions about the 1,500 farmers who were displaced by the project and whether they received adequate compensation for being displaced. ⁷² They had been promised land but then were delayed in receiving it because the land promised was, actually, not available.

USAID views garment factory jobs as beneficial employment for the Haitian people yet there were no local studies done to determine the type of work that the local population desires. The goal is to increase domestic and foreign investment, and the model is to create incentives for the international apparel industry. The garment sector is re-emerging as a source of employment for Haitians whether it is what the local population wants or not. This emergence of new job opportunities is related to the US trade preferences enacted through the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act (HOPE) and Haiti Economic Lift Program Act of 2010 (HELP). The US Government is funding the construction of a 10-megawatt power plant adjacent to the park through the USAID in the name of strengthening the economic development of Haiti. The project is sold on the justification that CIP, according to Sae-A, will serve thousands of Haitians who have never been employed. The reality is that the Haitians who are employed by CIP will continue to make minimum wages that just barely allows them to eek out an existence while foreign companies extract major profits from their labor.⁷³

The Caracol EKAM project is the housing development adjacent to the CIP and power plant. The budget for design and construction was \$31.5 million and the community development budget was \$1.5 million. The life of the project was design and construction first (2011-2013) with the two years following the project implementation as the community development phase (2013-2015). The implementing Partners were the US contractors, CEPCO Contracting, THOR Construction, and Global Communities.

⁷¹ USAID, *Caracol Industrial Park*, July 2017, <https://www.usaid.gov/haiti/caracol-industrial-park> (accessed 2017)

⁷² Claire Luke, *The twisted tale of Caracol housing*, January 2015, <https://www.devex.com/news/the-twisted-tale-of-caracol-housing-85109>

⁷³ Marylynn Steckley and Yasmine Shamsie, "Manufacturing corporate landscapes: the case of agrarian displacement and food (in)security in Haiti", *Third World Quarterly*, 36, 1 (2015) <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01436597.2015.976042?journalCode=ctwq20> (accessed 2017)

“Haitian contractors should be used to design houses according to local taste, using local materials and labor”, said Let Haiti Live Founder Melinda Miles, who called the IDB and USAID’s housing projects “a total mess, a total failure with very poor planning.”⁷⁴ The guidelines of the UN and the Business Sector specify that there should be no unfair advantage for any particular business sector entity. A priority on local capacity in relief efforts will be more in line with longterm development goals.

The USAID-built homes in the Caracol project have been called ‘culturally inappropriate’ and have resulted in plenty that remain either empty or subletted by the original beneficiaries. “Donors are not doing their homework to understand preferences and lifestyle of Haiti’s population,” said Gesly Leveque, director general of Banque Populaire Haitienne. “The houses being built look nice but are not adaptive.”⁷⁵

The examples of corporate influence shown here in the Agriculture Cluster and the Shelter Cluster are rife with corruption and unfair business advantages. The proposed mandates of supporting local capacity are not being determined by the beneficiaries of aid but rather imposed by the powerful in the name of the poor. The mandate to eradicate poverty is not being upheld and the actions taken on behalf of the mandates are, in fact, actively undermining the agency and livelihoods of local stakeholders. If the future of humanitarianism is to meet its proposed goals of eradicating poverty and bolstering local capacity, alternative methods to these corrupt, traditional, humanitarian partnerships must be considered.

Alternatives that help build resilient communities

Elizabeth Hausler, CEO of Build Change, has laid out a model that is participatory and focused on local capacity building. She suggests a homeowner-driven model of rebuilding as opposed to a donor-driven development model. A study done by Elizabeth Hausler, CEO of Build Change, on geodesic domes in India supports the importance of culturally appropriate solutions which empower homeowners.⁷⁶ Hausler takes rebuilding after the earthquake to address not only the structure, but the cultural elements of shelter. The benefits are that the people are more satisfied with the end results and are more likely to have a house that fits their individual or family needs.

⁷⁴ Claire Luke, *The twisted tale of Caracol housing*, January 2015, <https://www.devex.com/news/the-twisted-tale-of-caracol-housing-85109>

⁷⁵ Claire Luke, *The twisted tale of Caracol housing*, January 2015, <https://www.devex.com/news/the-twisted-tale-of-caracol-housing-85109>

⁷⁶Elizabeth Hausler, *Building Earthquake-Resistant Houses in Haiti: The Homeowner-Driven Model*, 2010, http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/INOV_a_00047 (accessed 2017)

Training for building should be done through a process of homeowner-driven development in the same model as Build Change. The Haitian construction firms can be supported with technical support and training instead of sidestepped by international contractors. Once the local market is utilized to capacity then funding can be used for international support but not until all local capacity is utilized.

Donor-driven projects have the potential of being carried out without the context specificities necessary for culturally appropriate development. The donors role is to provide the funding and it is the role of the local government and policy in collaboration with civil-society organizations and local NGOs to guide the design and actions of the development process. The UN cluster approach is designed specifically to prevent situations like the Caracol fiasco from ever getting permission to implement the poor designs in the first place. How is it that this project was approved? Donors need to be directed by strict guidelines enforced by strong local government that protect the interests of the people. More power and resources in the hands of local government with no donor strings attached will help to tailor the donors 'good intentions' and funding to project designs that bolster local capacity and support the needs of the Haitian people. This will not happen until the international aid machine prioritizes the support of local capacity and stops prioritizing the interests of foreign private business and sidestepping and excluding the local stakeholders. More international aid money and training funneled to the local municipal governments of Haiti is one step in empowering the self-determined livelihoods of the local. Efficient and thorough surveying of the beneficiaries of aid will ensure the relief and development actions are serving sustainable livelihoods of Haitians. Stricter government oversight of international business involvement and policy designed with the interests of the Haitian people at the center will decrease vulnerability to disaster and create a productive functioning society that can participate in and contribute to the global community. Enforced UN policy such as the 10 Principles of the UN Global Compact are what will restrict actions of corruption and ensure that donor interests do not undercut local interests.

The UN Cluster Approach can be an entry point for these measures to be carried out but the unhealthy relationships to business interests need to be changed. The UN already has the relationship with the local elite and the international community. It is time for the people to have a place at the table, be respected as citizens of a sovereign nation and be the center of the design and implementation of projects that will shape the future of Haiti.

With a country prone to earthquakes and hazards, a preventative measure that the UN can take for the future is to ensure that the government of Haiti has the adequate resources and technical support for the ministry of public works to assist the country in setting up building practices in line with the National Construction Code of Haiti (CNBH) and the International Building Codes (IBC).

The earthquake broke the struggling nation made weak by the meddling of the international community through actions of structural violence carried out by powerful international states and companies. Disaster capitalism is present in post-earthquake Haiti in the form of free market competition capitalized on by international actors such as the companies contracted by USAID and allowed by the UN through their neoliberal UN and Business Sector Guidelines that state that no company will be given unfair advantage. When there is local capacity that can be supported and utilized in the relief efforts, it should be given priority, 'fair advantage', over international companies. The UN could prevent the excess spending and undermined local capacity by ensuring that local businesses are given contracts first and if they do not meet operational standards, then training and support should be funded. The model that already exists for humanitarian relief coordination could be modified to more adequately fit the sustainable development agenda of the UN.

Resilience and participation

NGOs, often frustrated with the Cluster Approach, voice their concern that the approach is too centralized, with the power dynamic heavily weighted on the side of UN agencies, and increasingly securitized relief, rather than prevention, are the focus. The UN 2010 Executive Summary identified gaps and shortcomings in the Cluster Approach. They include exclusion of national and local actors, failure to support existing coordination and response mechanisms, lack of sufficient analysis of local structures and capacities prior to cluster implementation, and the weakening of national and local ownership. These failures are linked to the framework of action on which the Cluster Approach is based. One crucial limitation is the inattention to social capital as a critical component of successful participatory humanitarian response.⁷⁷

Social capital improves the resilience and capability of a population and mitigates risk and vulnerability to disaster. Social capital is characterized as: bonding social capital (connections to kinship groups); bridging social capital (connections beyond kinship groups); or linking social capital (connections to people in power). It is theorized as a set of norms and networks utilizing relationships of trust to access and mobilize resources which enable the community or individual to recover more quickly from a disaster and to design a more secure future. Social capital that functions both vertically and horizontally throughout community on the local to the global scale is necessary for sustainable disaster prevention, relief, and recovery. When international involvement damages the connections of social capital such as undermining local markets, it works against resiliency.

A national pre-disaster asset, capacity, vulnerability, and needs assessment can determine

⁷⁷Andrea Binder and Francois Grunewald, *IASC Cluster Approach Evaluation, 2nd Phase Country Study*, April 2010, <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/IASC-Haiti-USA-2010-016-2.pdf> (accessed 2017)

the risk factors present in a population that can cause disaster when compounded by a shock event. One of OCHA's main themes is 'needs assessment' that claims to provide a holistic view of the local situation. The Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) is created to inform the Programme Cycle and Strategic Planning. Humanitarian response is largely designed around these incomplete initial assessments. The actions that follow, because they are based on insufficient information, are not fully or holistically meeting the needs of the population encouraging a victim-provider relationship in which handouts are the norm.

Due to a lack of initial analysis of local capacity and assets, the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) gives the perception that the local population is helpless and resource poor and drives the clusters to fill the needs through international resources. When free resources are dumped on a struggling nation it ruins local markets and creates negative externalities by putting local businesses under. Rather than strengthening local capacity, it is undermined and weakened by the international actions taken to fill the need. The local government and organizations embedded in the machine should be granted the positions of decision-making power and adequately funded and trained within the humanitarian arena as the UN mandate designates. This will guide the relief in a direction that is focused on meeting the needs of the local beneficiaries.

An emphasis on capacity and assets, in addition to vulnerability and needs, can best inform people-centered humanitarian assistance. The contemporary humanitarian analysis is excessively focused on needs assessments. How can the humanitarian approach "register the other side of the coin"⁷⁸? A needs based framework creates a narrative where the beneficiaries of aid are often viewed and treated as passive victims. When the people affected by the disaster are rendered powerless through this model, the humanitarian actors assume the powerful role of provider and have the power and the responsibility to protect and fulfill these needs. This is not to say that the local population in a disaster setting has all the resources to recover from a hazard event. The international community is exceedingly important in the relief. The balance between providing international assistance and bolstering local capacity could be better informed by a more thorough initial analysis of the local capacity. A population has local knowledge of resources that would benefit them if access to those resources is supported. Power is concentrated in the hands of the provider as resources flow in from the international community. A local capacity and asset assessment can determine how local resources can also help to fulfill local needs.

International resources, in the form of aid money, funneled through the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) and the Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBFP) can better serve the population by first and foremost addressing the immediate needs of the

⁷⁸ Ben Wisner et al., *At Risk: Natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters*, Second Edition, Routledge, 1994.

affected population with the knowledge that over-flooding a market with aid can have negative externalities for the local markets and addressing and supporting local capacity is imperative for the transition to long term sustainable development.

The work of Michele Montas in post-disaster relief analysis is an example for a model that can be operationalized and used to better inform the aid process. Previously a radio journalist for Radio Haiti and then Spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Montas was asked to join the UN team after the earthquake as Special Advisor to the Secretary-General's Special Representative.⁷⁹ Montas spent the first few months after the earthquake holding focus groups and recording the opinions and aspirations of the ordinary people of Haiti; the market women, the farmers, the tradespeople. In March 2010, she presented her national survey report at the UN-sponsored post-earthquake Donors' Conference.⁸⁰ Her work summarized "clear messages for more participation and an end to exclusion; decentralization and deconcentration of public services; greater investment in ordinary people; aid that respects Haiti's sovereignty; equal treatment, with dignity, for all Haitians."⁸¹ Qualitative reporting such as the information gathered through Montas' study, can best inform the response. The intended result is that the coordination after an emergency will be directed by a thorough knowledge of the local context.

In agriculture, some local needs include training, equipment, seeds, easier access to credit, and the introduction of modern agriculture techniques. Agriculture is viewed as a legitimate source of employment in Haiti and can be supported by the international community if the jobs are not outsourced to the foreign private sector. The international food suppliers undercut these local efforts, capacity, and aspirations when they fill this gap themselves instead of taking their place in a supporting role for the local farmers. Aid money provided to subsidize local produce and implement a modern system of agricultural production using appropriate technology has the potential of increasing sustainable accessibility. By shifting the humanitarian aid towards the local, for-profit, private agricultural sector, local resource capacity can be fully engaged. Social capital of the population will increase around local market hubs, reducing the risk of future disasters, and the negative externalities of neglecting the local agricultural market economy can be avoided. The research done by Michele Montas resembles the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, a model that if it is more integrated into the UN OCHA Cluster System, has the potential of decreasing the division between good intentioned private businesses and the aspirations of the local people.

⁷⁹ Paul Farmer, *Haiti After the Earthquake* (Public Affairs, 2011)

⁸⁰ *A Voice for the Voiceless*, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/F74FC62B3590027B492576F7001C9E1E-Full_Report.pdf (accessed 2017)

⁸¹ George Washington University, Elliot school of International Affairs, <http://media.elliott.gwu.edu/content/voices-haiti%E2%80%99s-voiceless-post-earthquake-aspirations-achievements> (accessed 2017)

Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

SLA is a people-centered framework for humanitarian and development efforts at poverty reduction by addressing vulnerability. The approach focuses on the different types of capital that people in vulnerable situations have and how these case specific assets can be used to identify aspirations and opportunities from the perspective of the vulnerable population themselves. Everything revolves around these aspirations and opportunities to cater to the specific needs of the population involved. The framework emphasizes the importance of looking at the vulnerable populations relationship with the different processes that govern their lives and how specific characteristics of the population such as age, gender, class, and ethnicity can have a large impact on how these processes affect livelihoods. This approach to working with vulnerable populations asks the important question of how vulnerable populations can access their self-defined livelihood assets with the support of enabling agencies and service providers.

The idea of the sustainable livelihoods framework was first introduced by the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development and it was expanded upon by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992⁸². The definition used here is taken from Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway's original definition that has been reworked by the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) and the British Department for International Development (DFID).

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources), and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base. According to Chambers and Conway, there are three main elements of livelihoods. The first is human capabilities (education, skills, health, psychological orientation), the second is access to tangible and intangible assets; the third is access to economic activities. With these three fundamental elements of livelihood in mind, placing emphasis on empowerment of the poor to take initiative and secure their own livelihood is the ultimate objective. Strengthening the agency or the capabilities of the poor to improve their own livelihoods is sustainable in the long term as opposed to the model of hand outs that can create dependency.⁸³ DFID talks about poverty reduction in a people-centered approach that is responsive, participatory, multi-level, conducted in partnership, sustainable and dynamic.

⁸² Lesse Krantz, The Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Poverty Reduction, <https://www.sida.se/English/publications/121288/The-Sustainable-Livelihood-Approach-to-Poverty-Reduction/> (accessed 2017)

⁸³ Lesse Krantz, The Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Poverty Reduction, <https://www.sida.se/English/publications/121288/The-Sustainable-Livelihood-Approach-to-Poverty-Reduction/> (accessed 2017)

This framework for poverty reduction is an approach that attempts to go further than the conventional approaches to poverty reduction. The sector-based approach, of which the Cluster Approach is an example is focused too narrowly on providing resources at one point of access to the vulnerable population. Although there are cross-cutting issues that are addressed, on a system wide scale, it is not succeeding in the empowerment of the vulnerable population which is necessary for resiliency. The beneficiaries of the aid become passive in receiving assistance. The integration of partnerships at the home country level is crucial for aid to be distributed in an equitable and sustainable way.

In the OCHA strategic framework overview for 2010-2013 a key point was made that “there will increasingly be a need to transcend traditional definitions of what is ‘humanitarian’ and ‘developmental,’ to create what scholars and aid professionals refer to as the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. This will assist in moving toward more integrated country plans and partnerships that may simultaneously promote actions that increase resilience in the short-term and reduce overall vulnerability in the long-term”.⁸⁴ Getting at the root of the problem and doing Disaster Risk Reduction measures through the SLA can help prevent the trigger event from causing a disaster in the first place. If livelihoods are improved prior to the shock event, they will be better equipped to cope with the stress of the shock. It is necessary to look at poverty from a people-centered approach which analyzes different types of capital the population can access. This can unveil structural limitations in the society at the root of poverty, preventing people from achieving sustainable livelihoods.

The UN is beginning to incorporate sustainable livelihood rhetoric into the framework of disaster relief. Recently, the term Community Engagement, has entered the UN literature and is used to encourage the system to communicate with communities and set up processes that further participatory measures in the planning of humanitarian action. “Community Engagement should be a part of all humanitarian programming; it is the means by which aid organizations attain accountability as an end.”⁸⁵ The three pillars of Community Engagement according to the UN are participation, feedback and complaints, and providing information. To ensure that humanitarian needs are addressed effectively, Community Engagement should be continuous and happen at every stage of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle.⁸⁶ The reductions in risk and vulnerability will improve the lives of the most vulnerable people, and they are essential to ensuring that

⁸⁴ OCHA, *Strategic Framework 2014-2017*, <https://www.unocha.org/publication/strategic-framework/strategic-framework-2014-2017> (accessed 2017)

⁸⁵ OCHA, *Community Engagement*, <https://www.unocha.org/themes/community-engagement> (accessed 2017)

⁸⁶ OCHA, *Community Engagement*, <https://www.unocha.org/themes/community-engagement> (accessed 2017)

development progress is accessible to all communities, including those affected by crises.⁸⁷

The one component that is missing from the UN framework is strict policy that limits the engagement of the international private sector by ensuring that the local capacity is utilized first. “Community Engagement” is critically needed but if contracts are still signed between the UN and international businesses before the local businesses are contracted or supported, community engagement means little. The system has not achieved true participatory decision making and the beneficiaries of aid do not have an equal voice in the process. The UN OCHA themes of ‘Community Engagement’ and ‘Needs Assessment’ can still benefit from the introduction of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) which emphasizes the need for capacity and asset analysis in the beginning phases of a disaster to inform sustainable strategic planning from the outset.

Policy considerations for the UN

In Haiti, there were warning signs that were not heeded. Eric Calais, a geophysicist at Purdue University in West Lafayette who took a leave from his work at the university to lead the UN disaster risk reduction programme in Haiti, comments on the lack of prevention measures taken before the earthquake saying, "Aid agencies usually focus on response. It's a new thing to spend money on prevention and mitigation . . . It's sad it takes 250,000 people dead to get to that point, but we're there now."⁸⁸ Lessons learned in this context have indeed spurred actions by the UN in collaboration with the national government of Haiti and the DPC Direction de la Protection Civile to prevent a future disaster of this magnitude, only it comes a few years too late for those who perished in the earthquake.

One key issue is that prior to the 2010 earthquake, there existed no National Disaster Risk Reduction Platform in a country widely recognized as extremely susceptible to natural hazards. By unpacking the vulnerability and risk factors for disaster and defining assets and stakeholders involved prior to a hazardous event, a more streamlined and integrated support framework from the international community can better mitigate disaster like the horrendous suffering that occurred in Haiti. With the severe impacts of climate change that we are seeing, emergency relief is crucial but to create long-term stability, sustainability and resilience, the New Humanitarian school must analyze and act with strong people-centered policies focused on prevention and livelihood assessment to prevent future disasters.

⁸⁷ OCHA, *Humanitarian Development Nexus*, <https://www.unocha.org/themes/humanitarian-development-nexus> (accessed 2017)

⁸⁸ Nicola Jones, *Haiti to improve quake preparedness*, 2010, <https://www.nature.com/news/2010/101213/full/news.2010.670.html> (accessed 2017)

What we have seen in the case of Haiti is little preventative measures to reduce risk and vulnerability from massive disaster. When an emergency situation happens, the humanitarian response should be connected to the long-term development goals of the country. One change that could help this process become more streamlined is an adjustment to the Humanitarian Needs Overview. Currently, it does not include an analysis of the local capacity, but rather gives an overview of the population needs. The UN and allied business sector fill the needs through contracted business deals that are often not aligned with the priorities of the local population. The Least Developed Countries(LDCs) cannot compete on the global market with large companies that are supported by wealthy developed nations. Therefore, in humanitarian emergencies, an analysis of local resources and business protection for the local capacity are in order.

A proposed amendment to the Humanitarian Needs Overview

Humanitarian Needs and Capacity Overview: It is suggested that The Humanitarian Needs Overview HNO be renamed as the Humanitarian Needs and Capacity Overview HNCO to be carried out immediately following an emergency event. It is recommended that OCHA fill the needs primarily with the local capacity that exists, work to bolster local capacity with funding and technical support, and supplement local capacity with the international community resources.

The UN and Business Sector Guidelines currently state: “Partner selection will be subject to due diligence processes established by the UN entity considering the partnership. UN entities are encouraged to consult with each other as part of the due diligence process. UN entities reserve the right to choose their partners on a case by case basis and to undertake research in support of such decisions.”⁸⁹ The UN and Business Sector guidelines further support the “No unfair advantage principal” which refers to the right of every member of the Business Sector community to have the opportunity to propose cooperative arrangements, within the parameters of these Guidelines. The UN can collaborate with the Business Sector for the purposes of development and provision of goods and services that explicitly support and accelerate achievement of UN goals. However, cooperation should not provide exclusivity in its collaboration or imply endorsement or preference of a particular Business Sector entity or its products or services.⁹⁰ It seems that the UN has not upheld these principals in the case of Haiti in regards to the USAID projects that were approved.

⁸⁹ United Nations, *Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector*, November 2009, <http://www.un.org/en/ethics/pdf/Guidelines-on-Cooperation-with-the-Business-Sector.pdf> (accessed 2017)

⁹⁰United Nations, *Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector*, November 2009, <http://www.un.org/en/ethics/pdf/Guidelines-on-Cooperation-with-the-Business-Sector.pdf> (accessed 2017)

As previously shown, the UN partnerships were insufficient to serving the UN mandate. In Haiti, the Caracol project and the FAO contracts with US businesses exemplify this point. In an attempt to prevent a more powerful business entity from undermining local capacity, it is recommended that a balancing of power through fair advantage be given to the local business sector entities in order to foster local resilience in humanitarian settings.

A Proposed amendment to the US and Business Sector Guidelines

Local Business Sector Engagement Policy: It is recommended that local business capacity be analyzed and given priority and resources in training before the international business sector is engaged by the UN for humanitarian and development projects. The international business sector has beneficial resources that ought to be engaged as an “implementing partner” only in emergency situations when the local capacity is unavailable as determined by the HNCO. If an international business is contracted as an “implementing partner”, part of the mandate is that ownership is transitioned to the local stakeholders once capacity is attained. The international business sector can be hired by the UN as consultants to train local businesses so long as the international business ideology is aligned with the local culture and is approved by the local community. The HNCO will inform the actions of the local and international businesses engaging in each cluster.

Conclusion

The earthquake triggered the collapse of an already struggling society and the prevailing vulnerabilities in the country became even more obvious after the earthquake. The effects of the natural event are directly linked to the preexisting vulnerability of the population resulting from decades of underdevelopment. The earthquake or ‘trigger event’ which shook the foundation of Haiti revealed to the world the weakness of the government as well as the severely compromised livelihoods of the population. The harmful effects of the free market economy on the local communities of Haiti are entrenched in the history of the country and the damaging relationships of the United Nations. To unveil the deeply rooted vulnerability in Haiti and look at the core causes of the disaster, rather than focusing on the natural hazard itself, will contribute to the plans for mitigation and preparedness measures for the future. The United Nations OCHA Cluster Approach and the prioritization of private business interests have contributed to unsatisfactory results in the attempts to operationalize the mandates regarding local participation, community engagement and capacity building.

The depraved and ruthless capitalist model that justifies profits in the name of helping the poor by enslaving the people is becoming increasingly defunct. Private businesses and private investment have a very important role to play in the development of nations but these entities must be more strictly regulated. The ultimate hope is that the international

business community will be humbled by regulatory measures enacted by the United Nations that strive for a balance of power. With UN policy shifts towards utilizing local capacity and bolstering local businesses in disaster settings, the short-term, UN humanitarian agenda can be more aligned with the long-term, development agenda.

The UN structure of the Cluster Approach could be positively informed by the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. The solution lies in these efforts to balance global power dynamics and foster communities where people have access to necessary resources, agency and self-determination. The goal is for the root causes of vulnerability to be determined before disaster strikes and addressed with a people-centered approach that builds communities of resilience therefore preventing future disasters. By working with the vulnerable population and recognizing self-defined livelihood assets, enabling agencies and service providers can model their assistance from this foundation of local knowledge and capacity.

In these challenging times, the narrative of profiting from disaster and the desperation of impoverished laborers is brutal, outdated, and of an old world order. To render this old structure obsolete, recognition of its violent nature is necessary along with a shift in power through the implementation of enforced and appropriate policy adjustments. This means the UN must stop prioritizing big corporations who have no loyalties to the local people. Markets alone are unable to solve social problems and above all are unable to mediate and regulate the influences of private corporations. We have to look behind all of the perceived benefits of these global economic trends and support communities in strengthening their own economies. The challenge is that equality to the privileged feels like oppression and the privileged hold the cards. It is about bringing more of the power back to the local, profits for the most wealthy will decrease and the lifestyles of the rich and powerful will have to determine what it means to have humility as a member of this global community.

Appendix

Building homes in a homeowner-driven model with design criteria for reconstruction efforts. Example from research done by Elizabeth Hausler and Build Change in Gujerat, India.

In Gujerat, India, “most homeowners didn’t actually build a house themselves; instead, they hired local masons or teams of builders and took advantage of technical assistance provided by government-trained engineers.”⁹¹ There is room in the homeowner-driven model for people to determine what works best for them which aside from ensuring that the building meets the anti-seismic and hazard resistance building codes is ultimately the main goal. Hausler argues that the donor-driven models are often seismically stable but because the homeowner was not empowered to make construction and design decisions and work directly with the builders, there was an issue of trust and perception that the house might not actually be safe. In Gujerat, some homes were abandoned soon after the construction was completed because the elements of the house were not functional for the lifestyles of the people occupying them (the toilet was inside the house instead of outside so it was not used) or the houses were modified by the homeowner to fit certain cultural specificities which then made them seismically unsafe undoing the initial efforts.

Hausler proposed a set of criteria for the reconstruction efforts in Haiti based on work done in Gujerat, India. The mission is based on the idea that “empowering homeowners, builders, construction professionals, and local governments to drive change is a more cost-effective and lasting solution than building houses for people.”⁹²

Design Criteria for Permanent Housing Reconstruction

Technology

- Disaster resistant design—compliant with standards and guidelines
- Disaster resistant construction—built with quality workmanship
- Durable and permanent
- Built with locally available materials and skills
- Easily expanded and maintained using locally available materials and skills

Money

- Competitive in cost with common local (but vulnerable) building methods

People

- Environmentally neutral, using no illegal materials

⁹¹ http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/INOV_a_00047

⁹² Elizabeth Hausler, *Building Earthquake-Resistant Houses in Haiti: The Homeowner-Driven Model*, 2010, http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/INOV_a_00047 (accessed 2017)

- Suitable to the climate
- Culturally appropriate in architecture, space, and features
- Secure from break-ins and pests
- Designed and built with the participation of the people
- Trusted by inhabitants, who must believe their house will survive a disaster⁹³

⁹³ Elizabeth Hausler, *Building Earthquake-Resistant Houses in Haiti: The Homeowner-Driven Model*, 2010, http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/INOV_a_00047 (accessed 2017)

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