

# Evaluation Insights



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## Haiti Earthquake Response Emerging Evaluation Lessons

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*“Every response is either developmental or counter-developmental;  
every decision affects everything else” – World Bank<sup>1</sup>*

This quick guide for humanitarian policy makers and practitioners distils key findings and emerging lessons from a selection of available evaluations on the response to Haiti’s earthquake in January 2010 which killed 220,000 people. Much went well. Haitians themselves responded immediately with life-saving initiatives and moved to areas of relative safety and security where assistance was, or could be made, available. There was a phenomenal response from a wide range of actors in the international community. Many lives were saved and livelihoods restored. Not all, however, went well. Old mistakes were repeated and new ones made.

The report is organised around the evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), as adapted for the humanitarian community by ALNAP.<sup>2</sup> These criteria are relevance and appropriateness; connectedness; coherence; coverage; efficiency and effectiveness.<sup>3</sup> This structure helps to reinforce evaluative thinking about the programmes and projects carried out (or underway) in Haiti. The report highlights emerging lessons and presents supporting findings.

The report forms part of a series of ongoing papers and inputs, and will feed into a more detailed synthesis work to take place at a later stage. This report was commissioned by the Haiti Evaluation Task Force comprising DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EVALNET), ALNAP and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) and reflects the DAC EVALNET’s effort to create accessible notes on evaluation findings, targeted at a broad audience.

Prepared from a limited number of evaluations and reports this paper makes no attempt to evaluate or summarise the response in its entirety but rather pulls together some of the key emerging lessons to make them available to a broader audience. Specific evidence is cited in footnotes and a bibliography is provided in the annex for readers requiring a more comprehensive treatment of the issues.

## HAITI'S UNDERLYING VULNERABILITIES AND NATIONAL RESPONSE CAPACITY

An earthquake registering 7.0 on the Richter scale struck Haiti at 16.53 local time on Tuesday 12 January 2010 at a shallow depth of 13 kilometres. The epicentre was near Léogâne not 25 km from the capital Port au Prince. Approximately 220,000 people died – or one in fifty of the population. Three hundred thousand were injured. Two million people (one in five) were suddenly made homeless. One million three hundred thousand of these relocated to spontaneous settlements.<sup>4</sup> These depressing figures were in part due to the earthquake occurring in a highly urban area, but also due to underlying vulnerabilities.

The challenge of the response was considerable and made more difficult by severe underlying vulnerabilities that existed in Haiti including systemic poverty, fragile governance, insecurity and a continual threat of natural disasters. The poorest country in the Caribbean, over half the population lived on less than USD \$1.25 a day. Child mortality rates were twice the regional average and roughly one in three of the population were considered acutely food-insecure. Rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation over the previous several decades were reflected in the poor quality of buildings and worsened by weak urban planning. Exposed to regular and frequent natural disasters, Haiti had suffered nine serious storms over the previous 20 years affecting 3.5 million people and killing over 7,000.<sup>5</sup>



*Photo: Presidential palace damaged in quake.  
(January 2010, Patrick McManus,  
Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland)*

The very actors who would normally be expected to lead and manage the response were themselves victims of the earthquake. Many national and municipal government buildings were destroyed and many civil servants died, were injured or were absent caring for their own families. Specifically the National Disaster Risk Management System, Emergency Operations Centre and the *Direction de la Protection Civile*, Port au Prince's main fire station and innumerable government vehicles were badly damaged or destroyed.

Haiti's important but weak private sector was also badly affected suffering 70% loss or damage. Many schools and hospitals were destroyed or badly damaged. The seaport was badly damaged and unusable while the control tower at the country's main airport was destroyed rendering the airport inoperative. Debris restricted road access throughout earthquake hit areas.

## SIGNIFICANT SUCCESSES

In spite of these underlying vulnerabilities, huge humanitarian needs and the challenges facing the national and international aid communities, a great deal was achieved. Overall targets across all sectors for the first six months of the emergency response operation were met. Short term targets, identified in the revised Flash Appeal, of providing



*Photo: Relief supplies from USAID distributed by GOAL.  
(January 2010, Patrick McManus,  
Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland)*

essential humanitarian support to at least 1.2 million earthquake affected people were exceeded in some sectors and largely achieved in many others. In the first six months: four million people received food; 1.2 million had access to safe water daily; 1.5 million people received emergency shelter materials; 2.1 million household non food item kits were distributed; 11,000 latrines installed; 90% of displaced people in Port-au-Prince had access to adjacent health clinics; 195,000 children benefited from temporary learning spaces; 550,000 children and pregnant or lactating women received supplementary feeding; one million people benefited from cash for work; 5,900 people relocated from imminently dangerous locations; 142,000 people received agricultural inputs for spring planting; 2,047 separated children received psychosocial support and 337 were reunited with their families.

Not everything went well, however, and there are lessons to be learned from the international community's responses to the Haiti earthquake. If the humanitarian and development communities are to improve disaster response, they need not only to draw out lessons from this experience, but also to translate those lessons into policy and practice.

## RELEVANCE AND APPROPRIATENESS<sup>6</sup>

### Emerging lessons:

Better to have moderately reliable **information** and “good enough” analysis on time than “perfect” information and analysis that comes too late. Late analysis, no matter how good, is of little use in designing immediate life saving humanitarian interventions.

**Base interventions not only on needs, but also context and capacity.** Each humanitarian intervention needs to be both customised to the particular scale and nature of needs and be cognisant of the local context and local capacities.

**Even the most devastated communities and governments retain capacities.** Even if the physical/material infrastructure is destroyed, the communities still have strong relationships, personal skills, organisational abilities, important norms and values, effective leaders and the ability to make decisions. Slow down to allow meaningful engagement of community and civic leaders in the assessments who will add significantly to the quality and timeliness of results.

**Private and institutional donors should be encouraged to give cash rather than assistance in kind.** Assistance in kind can be inappropriate, wasteful and take resources to dispose of. If used, inappropriate assistance can damage and detract from the humanitarian effort.

Haiti had little baseline data against which to plan and monitor a large scale humanitarian response. Its census data was out of date or else destroyed or rendered inaccessible. Widespread and multifaceted humanitarian and recovery needs necessitated the Rapid Initial Needs Assessment for Haiti undertaken by the international humanitarian community which was quick to implement, but slow to publish. As such many of its findings were out of date by the time they were widely available.<sup>7</sup>



*Photo: Organising relief distribution, Port au Prince. (January 2010, Patrick McManus, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland)*

Most individual agencies conducted their own needs assessments, but each followed different standards, methodologies and focus thus limiting the usefulness of the results for an overall analyses or strategic planning. Some excellent broader needs assessments were done at the cluster-level and complemented later by the European Union, World Bank and Inter American Development Bank and UN led Post Disaster Needs Assessment and Recovery Framework.

Largely missing from these assessments however were contextual analyses (particularly on political and economic issues) and capacity assessments of Haitian stakeholders<sup>8</sup> (most notably the Haitian government) which would have allowed the humanitarian community a greater understanding of Haitian social and political dynamics and of the capacities of their natural Haitian partners across government and civil society<sup>9</sup> to engage with and even lead recovery. Compounding these gaps in analysis, valuable studies and assessments conducted by Haitians themselves were largely ignored.<sup>10</sup> In addition to handicapping strategic planning and intervention design, the limited inclusion of Haitians in needs assessments and analyses missed an opportunity to build relationships with Haitian partners. Inclusiveness is not necessarily a barrier to speed.<sup>11</sup>



International humanitarian actors complained that the daily pressures to deliver did not allow enough time for strategic reflection and follow up on existing evaluation findings and lessons learned as they emerged.<sup>12</sup> Speed, necessitated by humanitarian imperatives, and inclusiveness, effective analysis, design and implementation are not, however, necessarily mutually exclusive. Humanitarian agencies are used to working in emergency settings and should be aware of the need and make suitable space for strategic analysis and lesson learning before and during interventions.

While the humanitarian agencies who responded initially were almost all supported by Haitian civil society counterparts and government-nominated cluster co-leads,<sup>13</sup> the absence of sound capacity assessments and weak situational analysis led many within the humanitarian community to wrongly assume there was no or very weak residual local capacity. As a result, insensitive to concerns and nascent capacities of local civil society and of the Haitian government, the humanitarian community made “strategic misjudgements and errors”.<sup>14</sup> At best this manifested itself as highly unclear roles and responsibilities between stakeholders<sup>15</sup> and at worst in a response designed to replace, not support, local actors. This served to further disempower Haitian society already severely weakened by the earthquake.

Largely unfamiliar with humanitarian natural disasters in urban areas and compounded by poor contextual understanding of Haiti’s society and economy and of the capacity of key stakeholders, the humanitarian community’s reaction was a classical response: self contained, working outside government systems and reliant on imported material and personnel,<sup>16</sup> supporting displaced individuals in internally displaced persons camps<sup>17</sup> with food and non-food assistance.

While the vast majority of donations to the Haiti earthquake response were cash donations in response to the UN Flash and other appeals,<sup>18</sup> many private and institutional donors, motivated both by well meaning compassion and by political considerations, sent some aid to Haiti that was inappropriate and had to be disposed of unused.<sup>19</sup>

## CONNECTEDNESS<sup>20</sup>

### Emerging lessons:

Understand and **build on Haitian resilience** and coping strategies to better inform recovery strategies.

**Recovery strategies should be articulated from day one** and integrated into humanitarian programming from the start. Such strategies should include serious consideration of establishing shelter in, or close to, former settlements and supporting community and individual efforts to provide shelter *in situ* thereby maintaining family and social groupings and support networks.

**Examine the unintended side effects** of the free provision of humanitarian goods and services and balanced with the risks of prolonging humanitarian aid.

**Serious and early examination needs to be made of the local procurement of humanitarian goods and services.** A greater focus on private sector support to the humanitarian response from day one could not only have accelerated the recovery process, but also made the immediate humanitarian response more robust, more durable and cheaper.

**Support and empower affected government and civil society however incremental,** to play a central role in the humanitarian response. Better capacity assessments of Haitian political and civil leadership should be undertaken.

**Building Haitian capacity to analyse and address problems will need systematic training.** This could include humanitarian principles, community driven participation, facilitation skills, leadership, budget and project management and procurement to empower Haitians to be able to manage the recovery process.

Recovery emerged as a recurrent theme in a number of evaluations and reports.<sup>21</sup> The principle actors in the earthquake were Haitians themselves. They dug out the vast majority of people buried under the rubble<sup>22</sup> and made key decisions and took immediate action to aid their recovery, including salvaging personal possessions, building materials and livelihood items.<sup>23</sup>

The perceived need for haste in the initial period after the earthquake was understandable yet risked bypassing the Haitian government and local people. This risked not only disconnecting the humanitarian response from its context but also undermining longer term recovery efforts.

The Haitian government, itself so badly affected by the earthquake was responsible for the coordination of relief efforts. Within days the government had made some important steps in resuming some core functions: making fuel available, repairing two of the four damaged electric plants, and reopening banks and paid public sector workers soon after.<sup>24</sup>

There was good cooperation with national government at the most senior level with top political, humanitarian, military and diplomatic representatives. Beneficiaries were easily accessible with no significant geographic, security or linguistic barriers inhibiting access by the humanitarian community.

It was quickly apparent however that the response of the international community and that of the Haitian government and civil society were poorly-coordinated and poorly-integrated.<sup>25</sup> Cooperation between the international community and government was not sustained or extended to lower tiers of Haitian national or local government and Haitians were largely excluded from assessments (see Relevance), design, planning and delivery of the response which would have allowed a more joined-up approach both between stakeholders and with the transition to recovery.<sup>26</sup> A cross-cluster service was available to the humanitarian community from the Communicating with Disaster-Affected Communities, which had a positive effect, but never reached its potential to have a more systematic and widespread effect. Yet Haitians were poorly consulted and local Haitian responses and coping strategies largely overlooked.<sup>27</sup>

The absence of robust capacity assessments of Haitian government and civil society and the international community's assumption of very weak residual capacity<sup>28</sup> would have contributed to this weak, but critical relationship that would have allowed a clearer and more solid link between the humanitarian interventions and recovery. Identified weakness in Haitian government and civil society capacity should have highlighted, not negated, the need to work through and empower government to promote long term recovery. Working through, and capacity building with, Haitian government did improve, but came late and was too little to make any significant difference to the early integration of recovery to the humanitarian response.



*Photo: Camp in Port-au-Prince.  
(January 2010, Patrick McManus,  
Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland)*

The overseas procurement of humanitarian goods and services (many previously provided by Haiti's fragile, but active private sector) and their free distribution<sup>29</sup> missed an opportunity to support business recovery in Haiti where 43% of the workforce is self-employed.<sup>30</sup>

The provision of goods and services free to end-users, but frequently expensive to providers (notable examples include water bladders and chemical toilets), with no medium or long term strategy for their operation and maintenance, put their sustainability starkly into question.

Displaced people largely settled with households or in small groupings close to their former homes with close to 80% finding refuge with extended family members. Those without these options were forced to relocate to displacement camps which were often established away from Haitians' normal place of residence and as such created further social dislocation hindering the recovery process and undermining local coping strategies.



*Photo: Car destroyed by debris, Port-au-Prince. (January 2010, Patrick McManus)*

It was reported that much of the later negativity surrounding the response emanated from Haitians trapped in between dependence on humanitarian aid on a daily basis and the desire to recover livelihoods lost in the earthquake.<sup>31</sup>

## COHERENCE<sup>32</sup>

### Emerging lessons:

**Support humanitarian leadership from the start.** Ensure that key experienced staff are in place and ensure that they are supported. Communicate roles and responsibility to non-humanitarian actors and establish operational protocols early.

**Engage with the military in advance** to establish protocols regarding division of responsibility, channels of communication and broad coordination mechanisms. Confirm these as early as possible on the ground following the emergency. Ensure that agreed protocols are robust and can survive articulated disaster scenarios.

**The humanitarian community needs to better explore how it can best learn from and implement previous lessons.** The situation in Haiti and experience from other disasters tell us that lessons cannot simply be learned but must be continuously studied, revisited and reflected upon. Articulate and implement a robust communication strategy to ensure that key stakeholders are aware of previous lessons learned.

The response to Haiti's earthquake involved a large number of actors including various UN agencies (including MINUSTAH), international and national civil society, the US and other international military as well as Haitian government and civil society. The capacities of many of these actors were severely affected as a consequence of the earthquake. Despite these constraints, policies to promote coherence among international actors in the event of a large scale disaster worked reasonably well.

The Special Representative of the Secretary General and a large number of UN staff died in the earthquake putting severe pressure on the Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator who was overloaded with multiple responsibilities and who received little support from OCHA headquarters.<sup>33</sup> The Humanitarian Country Team was only reconvened three weeks after the earthquake.

Weaknesses in the leadership was however quickly filled early on by the (largely US) military, which quickly established its own strategic, tactical and operational decision making for a functional short-term set up. Twenty six countries provided military assets in support of the response in the early phase including field hospitals, air and sea support, hospital ships, port handling equipment and troops.<sup>34</sup>

OCHA made a significant contribution to civilian-military coordination by establishing the Joint Operations Tasking Centre. But beyond that, the Humanitarian Coordinator, the Humanitarian Country Team and OCHA, "were not sufficiently strategic in managing civil-military coordination issues" remaining outside key strategic MINUSTAH and US military decision-making and coordination arenas too long.<sup>35 36</sup>



This civilian humanitarian leadership weakness was compounded by a weak division of responsibility between MINUSTAH and the UN Country Team working in the absence of policy guidance on how clusters work in integrated missions.<sup>37</sup>

Most agencies worked well with the US military, working against established protocols on the humanitarian community's engagement with military assets. However, a number of agencies were reluctant to work too closely with the military, most notably over the issue of military escorts in an environment perceived by the military to be insecure.<sup>38</sup> Beyond their task of managing the airport and airspace, the military were poorly used in the weeks immediately following the earthquake to clear roads and key areas of rubble, but were largely asked to provide armed escorts for humanitarian agencies.<sup>39</sup> The situation later improved and the military took on a greater range of humanitarian roles including rubble removal and other works.



*Photo: Local businesses destroyed in the earthquake, Port-au-Prince. (January 2010, Patrick McManus)*

The large number of international civil society organisations however placed huge pressure not only on the coordination mechanisms, but also on the coherence of the overall aid effort with many non-government organisations (NGOs) pulling in different directions, unaware of the efforts of others. Different aid packages were provided and there were reported overlaps and gaps in the delivery of assistance.<sup>40</sup>

There has also been widespread concern over the application of previous lessons to the coherence of the humanitarian response in Haiti.<sup>41</sup> A number of evaluations<sup>42</sup> made reference to this concern (and indeed many of the lessons noted here can be found in a number of evaluations and assessments of disaster responses predating the Haiti earthquake).

## COVERAGE

### Emerging lessons:

**Adapt humanitarian response to urban environments.** This requires the humanitarian community to explore and scale up effective alternatives and identify appropriate tools (including targeting), knowledge and partnerships to operate more effectively in urban environments.

**Better understand and support social and economic resilience.** This will require a better engagement with people affected by disaster to understand their strategies. At the least, interventions should strive to not exacerbate social tensions and avoid undermining social and economic resilience.

**Look beyond the immediately visible.** In large disasters, seriously examine the merits of a community based approach serving whole populations in specific geographic areas rather than individually selected individuals based on assessed need.

As already noted, the massive international response to the earthquake had considerable achievements.<sup>43</sup> However, with the considerable challenges facing the aid community and operating in an unfamiliar environment it was inevitable that the humanitarian response failed to cover a number of important areas.

The scale and nature of the earthquake in an urban environment displaying indicators of chronic poverty and deprivation rendered the classic typology of humanitarian need according to ‘displacement’ and the ‘directly affected’ only partially useful since many indicators of chronic deprivation exceeded thresholds used in acute emergencies such as the Haiti earthquake. “Targeting” was very difficult in a context where almost everyone was ‘directly affected’ to some degree and the level of disaggregation of available data did not allow for meaningful targeted interventions. Standard thresholds of emergency need for instance failed to capture a significant number of families hosting people displaced from Port-au-Prince and other urban areas.<sup>44</sup>

Inclusion biases appeared to be those needs and groups that were immediately visible and accessible to international programme staff. Those not immediately visible included rural ‘unaffected’ communities hosting urban displaced populations and the vulnerable traditionally cared for by Haiti’s social support network, who were strongly affected not so much by the earthquake itself but by the disruption of the quake, the relocation of populations and the effects of the international aid response on these support networks.

One notable gap in coverage was support for rural families hosting those dislocated from Port-au-Prince and elsewhere. With little additional resources to support household members,<sup>45</sup> host families were forced to deplete existing food, non-food and livelihood stocks; this led to tensions between resettlement camp residents and rural populations.<sup>46</sup>

The location of the camps for the internally displaced (established away from major urban population centres) and the structure of the spontaneous displacement camps, absent of traditional social support mechanisms found in established residential neighbourhoods, diminished the ability of Haitian society to care for its most vulnerable members. These included the elderly and street children.<sup>47</sup>

## EFFECTIVENESS AND COORDINATION

### Emerging lessons:

**Empower cluster leads** and ensure they are fully aware of and able to meet their responsibilities. Put in place back-up mechanisms for scenarios where persons in key leadership positions in-country are killed, injured or otherwise unable to perform their functions. Strengthen capacities and mechanisms for dealing with large numbers of often inexperienced humanitarian NGOs.

**Embed clusters with relevant line ministries** whenever possible and draw heavily upon existing Haitian capacity.

Strengthen coordination and **engagement with Haitian civil society**.

**Humanitarian coordination should accommodate non-humanitarian actors**, most notably military, private sector, host government and local community and civil society.

**Emergency preparation should be undertaken jointly with all relevant stakeholders** and should put in place agreements that outline how stakeholders should collaborate in the event of emergencies.

Typical of most large scale emergency responses, the multitude of actors in the Haitian earthquake response placed huge challenges on the humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms. A high level Coordination Support Committee comprising senior MINUSTAH, US Military, Haitian government, donor and UN representatives was established and oversaw strategic coordination and related subsidiary bodies translated strategic direction into action.<sup>48</sup> Coordination capacity was established at sub-national level and shadow clusters were established in the Dominican Republic. The absence of civilian led humanitarian leadership in the weeks immediately following the earthquake was quickly and effectively helpfully filled by the military.



There were some significant coordination successes, including the cluster system which was quickly established within 10 days of the earthquake, deploying experienced cluster leads early, in part due to their activation in response to the 2008 hurricane and in later contingency exercises. Many clusters proved responsive and imaginative, including the housing sub-cluster, which promoted people-centred, culturally-sensitive reconstruction of informal housing in Port-au-Prince and the health cluster, which issued a helpful statement on the improbability of an immediate epidemic.<sup>49</sup> Headquarters supported with policies, guidelines and resources.<sup>50</sup>

Novel information communication technology was used in the Haiti earthquake response including social media, crowd sourcing and user-generated content of assessments including mapping. However, serious delays in collating and sharing information on humanitarian agency activities were attributed to poor prioritisation of information sharing.

Effective humanitarian coordination in the chaotic environment immediately following the earthquake where much local capacity was badly damaged and where the number of agencies responding far exceeded the UN's capacity to coordinate them was always going to be a challenge.

As a consequence of coming late to the coordination table, OCHA took some time and effort to re-establish itself as the primary humanitarian coordination mechanism in Haiti. And the rapid and large influx of well intentioned, but relatively inexperienced NGOs with weak capacity coupled with a weak host government, a large military presence, a depleted and weakened existing UN leadership in Haiti placed great pressures on humanitarian coordination structures.<sup>51</sup> The capacities of clusters varied and many found coordinating the large number of humanitarian NGOs extremely difficult. These difficulties led to clusters having difficulty in making strategic decisions and managing the response adequately. Haitians expressed frustration about the lack of coordination and poor information on the response with overlapping NGO activities.



*Photo: United Nations forces in Port-au-Prince. (January 2010, Patrick McManus, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland)*

With a large number of international NGOs converging on Haiti in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, it was inevitable that the level of professionalism among humanitarian staff would vary significantly. The effects of this on general professional standards would have been further compounded by high staff turnover, poor living and working conditions and high stress levels (including post traumatic stress disorder). Language barriers, including the scarcity of Creole and French speaking staff would have further diminished the effectiveness of many.

More fundamentally, clusters created parallel structures to technical ministries leaving government disempowered.<sup>52</sup> This sense of disempowerment was further exacerbated by the use of English as the working language<sup>53</sup> and by holding large and frequent meetings in Log Base, an area difficult to access for most Haitians. The clusters were therefore unable to benefit from technical line ministries' extensive capabilities, contextual knowledge and cultural understanding and lacked a strategy of capacity building and empowering counterpart ministries.

### Emerging lessons:

**Examine the local economy and markets *prior* to making programming decisions** on assistance in order to determine the extent of market failure and what strategies are suitable for which target groups. Substitute local goods for imports at the earliest opportunity.

**Support the recruitment of national staff wherever possible.** This not only ensures maximum value for money but also promotes greater effectiveness and sustainability. Substitute international with national staff at the earliest opportunity.

Examine and monitor **unintended side effects** on Haitian society and economy.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, foodstuffs prices spiked on account of the destruction of Haitian's ports and the disruption to the transport network throughout the country. The spike in food prices coupled with lost incomes (both salaried and non-salaried) led to increased vulnerability and drove over half of all households severely into debt – primarily to buy food.<sup>54</sup> Households were put under additional financial pressure as household expenditure rocketed to replenish depleted productive and non-productive assets lost in the earthquake and to subsequent coping strategies that undermined long term productive capacities and reduced food security. These included asset disposal, early harvest and consuming seed stocks.

The shortage of cash in the Haitian economy in the aftermath of the earthquake was partially addressed by the government, which went to some lengths to ensure the restoration of the financial system, and by significant cash for work programmes. These cash for work programmes, initiated by the humanitarian community, allowed Haitians to make informed decisions not only on their immediate coping strategies, but also for longer-term livelihood recovery.

Most goods and services provided by the humanitarian community in Haiti were procured overseas and imported.<sup>55</sup> In many cases Haiti's fragile, but active and important private sector had previously supplied many of the goods and services. Overseas procurement without due consideration for the local market would have had value for money implications, as relatively inexpensive local goods – and particularly services – were substituted for high cost imported goods and services. For example, the substitution of local health professionals with international staff created value for money concerns, while the general absence of French or Creole language skills and little contextual knowledge of Haiti's health care system also created efficiency concerns.

There existed a conflict between immediate humanitarian imperatives of providing life and livelihood saving assistance and the 'Do No Harm' principle as it related to local markets. The *sustained* provision of free imported goods and services in a market previously catered for by the Haitian private sector (in a highly privatised Haitian economy) posed risks to Haitian businesses,<sup>56</sup> some of which went under when they were unable to find a market.<sup>57</sup>

### Emerging lessons:

**Disaster risk reduction** needs to be integrated into the recovery response as early as possible to capitalise on available funding and political interest.

**Don't rebuild vulnerability.** Examine and militate against plausible risks.

**Ensure that all interventions are gender sensitive.** Report against gender criteria and disaggregate beneficiary reporting by sex and age.

### Disaster Risk Reduction

In a country with significant underlying vulnerabilities, including chronically weak governance, insecurity and violence, systemic and desperate poverty, and frequent tropical storms, disaster risk reduction featured low on Haiti's development agenda. It focused, in any case, on mitigating the effects of its most common natural disaster: hurricanes. In a desperately poor country unaffected by earthquakes in almost 200 years, seismic monitoring and related earthquake response was a low priority for disaster risk reduction. There was no civil guidance on what to do in the event of an earthquake and no modern building codes to minimise damage and a weak enforcement capability in any case.

### Gender

The sample of reports had relatively little to say about the effectiveness of the international response in terms of addressing women's empowerment and the specific needs of Haitian women, men, girls and boys. Anecdotal reports indicate, however, that certain basic "good practices", such as involving female heads of household in food distribution, were not effectively integrated into the response. For example several Haitian women's groups felt that consultations with them were not adequately reflected in the Post Disaster Needs Assessment<sup>58</sup>.

While Practical steps were taken, there appeared to be no strategic approach to integrating gender considerations including support services to address violence against women.

### Protection

There were high levels of gender based violence prior to the earthquake which continued throughout the response. A joint security assessment conducted in March 2010 found evidence of widespread insecurity in displacement camps including rape and other violence and theft. Several reports have found disturbing gaps in protection of the rights and safety of children, women and disabled Haitians. Despite lessons from past disasters, basic safety measures such as the provision of adequate lighting were requested but unmet. Perhaps there was an over-emphasis on delivering aid safely (protecting convoys of food, etc.) to the detriment of basic human safety including protection from sexual violence.



- <sup>1</sup> World Bank response to the Haiti Earthquake: Evaluative Lessons. 2010.
- <sup>2</sup> *Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria. An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies.* March 2006. Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Aid (ALNAP).
- <sup>3</sup> Impact is deliberately omitted as no impact evaluations have yet been conducted.
- <sup>4</sup> These figures were taken from the *OCHA Real Time Evaluation*. August 2010. The figures should be considered approximations and are disputed.
- <sup>5</sup> *IASC, Achievements, Challenges and Lessons to be Learned.* IASC August 2010.
- <sup>6</sup> "Relevance is concerned with assessing whether the project is in line with local needs and priorities (as well as donor policy). Appropriateness is the tailoring of humanitarian activities to local needs, increasing ownership, accountability and cost-effectiveness accordingly." ALNAP 2006.
- <sup>7</sup> *Context Analysis – Haiti Earthquake response.* ALNAP/DAC/UNEG July 2010.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> *Real-time evaluation of the response of the Haiti earthquake.* Mission report. Group URD. April 2010.
- <sup>10</sup> *Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: Three Months After the Earthquake.* Group URD & GPPi Aug 2010.
- <sup>11</sup> As illuminated by the consultative Bristout-Bobin distribution which had waiting times of less than an hour and almost 100% post distribution monitoring success. Cited in *Real Time Evaluation*. Page 42. OCHA August 2010.
- <sup>12</sup> *Independent Joint Evaluation of Haiti Earthquake Response.* CARE International and Save the Children. Oct 2010.
- <sup>13</sup> *IASC, Achievements, Challenges and Lessons to be Learned.* IASC August 2010.
- <sup>14</sup> *Learning the Lessons in Haiti.* Sir John Holmes. Humanitarian Exchange #48. Oct 2010.
- <sup>15</sup> *Independent Joint Evaluation of Haiti Earthquake response.* CARE International and Save the Children. Oct 2010.
- <sup>16</sup> *Context Analysis – Haiti Earthquake response.* ALNAP/DAC/UNEG July 2010.
- <sup>17</sup> *Independent Joint Evaluation of Haiti Earthquake response.* CARE International and Save the Children. Oct 2010.
- <sup>18</sup> A fuller treatment of funds appealed and received can be found in the *Context Analysis – Haiti Earthquake response.* ALNAP/DAC/UNEG July 2010.
- <sup>19</sup> Of particular note was literally tonnes of out of date and otherwise unsuitable pharmaceuticals.
- <sup>20</sup> Related to the DAC evaluation principle of sustainability, "connectedness refers to the need to ensure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account" ALNAP 2006.
- <sup>21</sup> Including but not limited to: *Learning the Lessons in Haiti.* Sir John Holmes. Humanitarian Exchange #48. Oct 2010, *IASC, Achievements, Challenges and Lessons to be Learned.* IASC August 2010, *Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: Three Months After the Earthquake.* Group URD & GPPi Aug 2010.
- <sup>22</sup> The combined efforts of the various international Urban Search and Rescue operations rescued 130 people, the largest number ever rescued in a single disaster. Figures for local rescues are not available, but anecdotal evidence suggests these would be considerably higher.
- <sup>23</sup> *Achievements, Challenges and Lessons to be Learned.* IASC August 2010.
- <sup>24</sup> *Haiti: Stabilisation and Reconstruction After the Quake.* ICG March 2010.
- <sup>25</sup> See *Achievements, Challenges and Lessons to be Learned.* IASC August 2010.
- <sup>26</sup> *Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: Three Months After the Earthquake.* Group URD & GPPi Aug 2010.
- <sup>27</sup> *Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: Three Months After the Earthquake.* Group URD & GPPi Aug 2010.
- <sup>28</sup> *Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: Three Months After the Earthquake.* Group URD & GPPi Aug 2010.
- <sup>29</sup> Noted examples of imported goods included bottled water, pharmaceuticals and building materials. International staff can be regarded as imported services in this context.
- <sup>30</sup> *Haiti: Stabilisation and Reconstruction After the Quake.* ICG March 2010.
- <sup>31</sup> *Haiti Evaluation and National Food Security Coordination Unit* assessment. Cited in *CARE & SCF Joint Evaluation.*
- <sup>32</sup> "The need to assess security, developmental, trade and military policies as well as humanitarian policies, to ensure that there is consistency and, in particular, that all policies take into account humanitarian and human-rights considerations." ALNAP 2006.
- <sup>33</sup> *Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: Three Months After the Earthquake.* Group URD & GPPi Aug 2010.
- <sup>34</sup> *Evaluation of OCHA Response to the Haiti Earthquake.* January 2011.
- <sup>35</sup> *Evaluation of OCHA Response to the Haiti Earthquake.* January 2011.
- <sup>36</sup> OCHA was subsequently successful in recalibrating military dominated humanitarian coordination in favour of UN led humanitarian community.
- <sup>37</sup> *Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: Three Months After the Earthquake.* Group URD & GPPi Aug 2010. "The United Nations / IASC (2008) Guidelines and References collection mentions the clusters one time only in the terms of reference for Civil-Military Coordination Officers. The need to clarify the relation between the cluster approach and integrated missions, has already been pointed out by ICVA in 2006, see ICVA (2006)., Binder, A./ Grünewald, F. (2010), Steets, J./ Grünewald, F. et. al. (2010), Binder, A./ de Geoffroy, V., Sokpoh, B. (2010), Call, Ch. T. (2009)" on page 41.
- <sup>38</sup> Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in Haiti. IASC July 2010.
- <sup>39</sup> *Evaluation of OCHA Response to the Haiti Earthquake.* January 2011. Bhattacharjee and Lossio.
- <sup>40</sup> *Independent Joint Evaluation of Haiti Earthquake response.* CARE International and Save the Children. Oct 2010.
- <sup>41</sup> Documented in a number of previous evaluations, these were helpfully summarised in two ALNAP publications: *Responding to Earthquakes.* ALNAP 2008 and *Responding to Urban Disasters* ALNAP 2009.
- <sup>42</sup> Including but not limited to: *Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: Three Months After the Earthquake.* Group URD & GPPi Aug 2010; *Independent Joint Evaluation of Haiti Earthquake response.* CARE International and Save the Children. Oct 2010.
- <sup>43</sup> See introduction.
- <sup>44</sup> *Synthesis Paper CASE Studies – Manila, Nairobi, Eldoret and Haiti.*
- <sup>45</sup> *Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: Three Months After the Earthquake.* Group URD & GPPi Aug 2010.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid and *Independent Joint Evaluation of Haiti Earthquake response.* CARE International and Save the Children. Oct 2010.
- <sup>47</sup> *Independent Joint Evaluation of Haiti Earthquake response.* CARE International and Save the Children. Oct 2010.
- <sup>48</sup> *IASC, Achievements, Challenges and Lessons to be Learned.* IASC August 2010.
- <sup>49</sup> Notwithstanding the later cholera epidemic.

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<sup>50</sup> *Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: Three Months After the Earthquake*. Group URD & GPPI Aug 2010.

<sup>51</sup> *Learning the Lessons in Haiti*. Sir John Holmes. Humanitarian Exchange #48. Oct 2010.

<sup>52</sup> *Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: Three Months After the Earthquake*. Group URD & GPPI Aug 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Including coordination material in French.

<sup>54</sup> Haiti Post Disaster Needs Assessment.

<sup>55</sup> No mention is made in evaluation reports of the extent to which tenders were sought locally and no evaluation reports any significant local procurement.

<sup>56</sup> For a more detailed treatment of this issue see: *Independent Joint Evaluation of Haiti Earthquake Response*. CARE International and Save the Children. Oct 2010 and *Haiti Humanitarian Aid Evaluation Structured Analysis Summary*. University of Haiti and Tulane. Jan 2011.

<sup>57</sup> Private health care (particularly in the top tier referral system) and education providers were among the most notable casualties mentioned in evaluation reports.

<sup>58</sup> *Context Analysis – Haiti Earthquake response*. ALNAP/DAC/UNEG July 2010.

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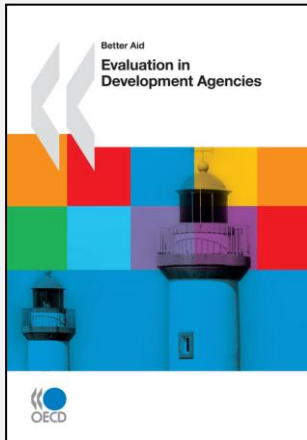
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**Evaluation Insights** are informal working papers issued by the Network on Development Evaluation of the OECD DAC. These notes present emerging findings and policy messages from evaluations and share insights into the policy and practice of development evaluation. This first note draws on available evaluations of the Haiti earthquake in January 2010 to highlight emerging lessons for those working to support a sustainable recovery in Haiti and future emergency responses elsewhere.

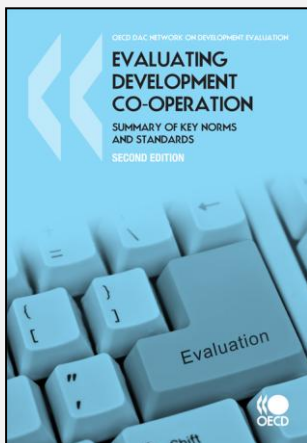
### Further reading on development evaluation



#### Evaluation in Development Agencies

December 2010

The evaluation of official development programmes has grown tremendously over the past two decades; the public and taxpayers increasingly demand credible evidence on whether aid “works” to improve the lives of the world’s poorest. In this context, this study describes the role and management of evaluation in development agencies and multilateral banks, based on questionnaires, findings from peer reviews and a literature review. The study includes information about the specific institutional settings, resources, policies and practices of each of the DAC Evaluation Network’s 32 members.



#### Summary of Key Norms and Standards - Second Edition

June 2010

This concise document contains the main elements of the OECD Development Assistance Committee’s approach to evaluation, including core principles for the evaluation of development co-operation, a description of the five main evaluation criteria and internationally agreed evaluation quality standards. A working tool for assessing evaluation systems and the use of evaluation in development agencies is also presented. The last section points to other resources, including specific guidance on various types of evaluation.

**These free publications and more information on the DAC’s work on evaluation and development co-operation can be found on the website:**

[www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation](http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation)