



# **RESTRUCTURING USAID: A CASE STUDY ON HAITI**

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## LETTER FROM THE POLICY FELLOWS

The role of foreign aid as a foreign policy tool has long been a contentious debate. ‘Development’ is distinct from the other two ‘big D’s’ of Defense and Diplomacy yet to what extent is it subject to the strategic objectives of these bigger policy and political imperatives? In his Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development, President Obama laid out a vision for America’s development efforts to be one of three equal pillars of America’s foreign policy portfolio with the other two. However, the extent to which this can be realized in practice is still unclear. Promising steps, most noteworthy of which is the inclusion of the USAID Administrator at National Security Council, have been taken but appropriately placing development’s voice in the context of American foreign policy remains challenging.

One thing that is clear, however, is that foreign aid and development efforts are extremely important. Nonetheless, foreign aid has come under frequent attack for being ineffective, misdirected, or even for creating perverse incentives and fuelling corruption and, ironically, underdevelopment. Therefore, a frank, open, and innovative debate on aid effectiveness is much needed. Such a debate within the development establishment is already ongoing and many initiatives have been launched to achieve and manage results for improved development outcomes.

What this White Paper seeks to do is not to replicate this ongoing process but rather to provide fresh perspectives on several of the many current development challenges. This research is by no way meant to be comprehensive or to provide a single formula for improved aid effectiveness. Indeed, at the core, this White Paper desires to underscore the essential need for context-driven aid policies and activities. It is the sincere hope of the writers’ that this work becomes a contribution to the wider efforts to reframe aid and improve development effectiveness through improving the mechanisms of aid planning, delivery, and management.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The current model of foreign aid for disaster relief employed by USAID needs to be redeveloped. Following Haiti's 7.0 earthquake in January 2010, USAID was highly influential in providing immediate relief. As time progressed, USAID shifted to providing for long term reconstruction and redevelopment. However, USAID policy in Haiti focuses on consequences and not their root causes. Shifting USAID's focus to addressing the causes would allow problems to be resolved in the long-term and would facilitate Haitian development. In addition to restructuring USAID's programs, US foreign policy itself must buttress USAID goals if USAID measures are to be effective.

USAID's four projects in Haitian redevelopment address issues of agriculture, education, credit, and healthcare. Over 67% of working Haitians are employed by the agricultural sector, so improved agricultural practices and yields would directly affect most Haitians. This paper proposes several recommendations to restructure USAID's assistance in Haiti. USAID should decrease food aid to decrease dependence on foreign imports, allowing farmers to have a market and an incentive to be more productive. Governmental relationships with private schools should be restructured to create a more unified school system. Stimulating the economy by turning it into a growing new market would attract more foreign investors.

## II. THE PRESENT SITUATION OF AID IN HAITI

Immediate aid in Haiti set the foundation for any long term relief to address the need of the people. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster or humanitarian crisis, aid floods into the affected area. However, this influx of aid overwhelms the capacity of existing infrastructure due to the fact that it was never used for the transportation of such quantities of goods. This leads to large amounts of supplies being stuck at their point of arrival. These clogged supplies prevent other supplies from arriving, and are themselves wasted. They can also prevent even more vital supplies from reaching their intended destinations. This is especially important when multitudes of victims need immediate medical attention.

USAID has four main projects for long term recovery and redevelopment in Haiti. The first project focused on managing the water supply in order to assist in the recovery and development of the Haitian agricultural industry. The second project focuses on reforming and expanding the capacity of schools in Haiti. The third project is geared toward expanding access to financial services. The final project is improving the quality of the health care system.

### AGRICULTURAL REDEVELOPMENT

Most Haitians who have jobs are employed in the agricultural sector, which accounts for over two thirds of Haiti's jobs.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the first long term USAID project in Haiti is to both sustain agricultural capacity and to supplement the incomes of farmers. The proposed methods of doing so are to improve the management of the watersheds and natural water resources available to the Haitian farmers. In addition, Haiti is infamous for its rampant deforestation; its border with the Dominican Republic is one of the few national borders which can be seen from the air due to the fact that the Haitian side is comprised of denuded hills which meet the protected forests of the Dominican Republic. Another point of interest is the restoration of trees, which help protect the precious fertile soils from erosion and which help replenish the soils with vital nutrients. This project is meant to tackle the practices of Haitian farmers which are detrimental to the natural resources, especially the deforestation and inefficient use of water. USAID has stated that it would like to create partnerships between the government and farmers' associations as well.

In regards to its first project, USAID has made steps in the right direction. It has indeed assisted Haitian farmers increase their crop yields through its Watershed Initiative for National Natural Environmental Resources program, or WINNER. This program, which is slated to last through 2015, has provided expert advisors and agronomists to farmers across Haiti to help teach them good farming practices, especially in terms of planting, fertilization, and seed selection. This has translated into a 75% increase in the sorghum, corn, bean, and potato crop yields from last year's harvest. This project is assisting 1,500 farmers directly and has allowed for parallel projects to assist 50,000 more farmers across Haiti.<sup>2</sup> Another project allowed for the construction of two mango packaging centers, which are designed to streamline the preparation of mangos for export.<sup>3</sup> Previously, farmers lost 30-40% of their mango crop due to poor packaging methods and little to no infrastructure or training. These packaging centers will increase almost 10,000 farmers' income by 20% by streamlining this process, while creating jobs at the facilities themselves.

### FOOD AID

USAID's Office of Food for Peace contributed over \$188 million in aid to Haiti in the 2010 fiscal year.<sup>4</sup> This has met the need for food supplies in severely hit areas. However, this method of food supply is based on American-grown crops. Furthermore, the only col-

laboration with other aid organizations that this office allows is the distribution of the American grown produce to areas in need. This severely restricts collaboration with other organizations, preventing the Office of Food for Peace from funding other efforts to efficiently deliver emergency food supplies.

## **EDUCATIONAL REDEVELOPMENT**

The second project is focused on increasing the educational infrastructure of Haiti. Prior to the earthquake, Haiti had an adult literacy rate of only 52.9%.<sup>5</sup> This was one measure which indicated the poor quality of the national education system: enrollment in primary school was very low - one report done by the Institut Haïtien De L'Enfance indicated that only 55% of children of primary school age were actually enrolled in a primary school.<sup>6</sup> This issue is compounded by the fact that fewer than 30% of those children enrolled in primary school continue through the sixth grade.

Over 90% of Haitian schools are private, most of which are run by nongovernmental agencies, religious organizations, and local communities. Despite their overwhelming prevalence, most private schools do not receive funding from the Haitian government. Also, schools in Haiti face some severe handicaps in terms of capability: educational supplies are very limited, and qualified teachers are scarce.<sup>7</sup>

The earthquake in 2010 resulted in the destruction of over 80% of the schools in and around Port-au-Prince, which comprised 28% of all primary schools in Haiti. Most of these schools were located in Port-au-Prince, Léogâne, and Petit Goâve.<sup>8</sup> The primary goal of USAID was to expand the capacity of the primary school system for the approximated 2 million students who lost their schools.<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> This was accomplished by providing supply and learning kits to classrooms to allow them to accommodate extra students. In the aim of strengthening the primary education system, USAID focused on improving school support organizations, increasing parent involvement in the system of education, and increasing the degree of cooperation between the private and public sector via the development of the accreditation system for private schools. In addition, USAID provided for the training of teachers with psychosocial strategies in order to help students cope with the aftermath of the destruction.<sup>11</sup> This measure was intended to allow for an easier transition back to normalcy for the children.

## **ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT**

Eight out of every ten of Haitians currently live below the poverty line. Furthermore, over half of all Haitians live in abject poverty, a fact which continues to make Haiti the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. This lack of ability to bounce back economically after the disaster has exacerbated the earthquake's impact and caused the Haitian economy to contract by eight percent. Having little before the disaster means Haitians have little incentive to actively rebuild. Haiti has very limited infrastructure and lacks the security necessary to attract significant foreign investment. These have all contributed to Haiti's large trade deficit.

The third project of the USAID long term recovery and redevelopment plan in Haiti is focused on the expansion of Haitians' access to financial services. This project is focused on the creation of jobs via the creation of better financial products and services. The intent of this project is to increase savings and reduce risk for the average Haitian family. The urban population of Haiti is relatively low, currently at 47%, and the rate of urbanization of 4.5% is relatively very high.<sup>12</sup> This indicates that people are moving into the cities, putting pressure on the already limited financial services that are offered in these urban areas. Also, the rural areas of Haiti are still full of people who have no access whatsoever to any financial services.

USAID plans to increase the accessibility of finance to rural and agricultural areas of Haiti. To do this, USAID is implementing the Haiti Integrated Finance for Value Chains and Enterprise.<sup>13</sup> One method utilized by HIFIVE is increasing the capability of financiers. This will be accomplished by developing a nationwide mobile banking program to extend the reach of financiers to those lacking access to financial services. This avenue of banking is designed to safely allow participants to execute money transactions via their mobile phones. This would make it much easier to save money and buy insurance. Furthermore, it is safe, quick, and stable as this system will remain intact regardless of the state of infrastructure (in the case of future disasters.) HIFIVE is working with institutions which specialize in microfinance in order to target rural Haitians. This program hopes to allow more people to build and use credit, which would help stimulate the Haitian economy.

## **HEALTHCARE REDEVELOPMENT**

Healthcare in Haiti prior to the earthquake was very poor. Haiti had one of the highest infant and child mortality rates in the world, as well as a very high rate of mortality due to childbirth. USAID has been working to provide basic healthcare services, and these efforts reach 47% of the Haitian population. USAID has been working to improve the administrative capacity of the Haitian Ministry of Health. In conjunction with several other aid organizations, USAID has been working to treat the infectious diseases which have become more rampant in the temporary camps in the earthquake's aftermath.<sup>14</sup>

USAID has also been involved in immunizing the Haitian population against communicable diseases. It has also been trying to screen Haitians for tuberculosis and for sexually transmitted diseases. USAID is working to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS, as well as the use of contraception. The brunt of the long term effort is going into rebuilding the damaged Haitian healthcare infrastructure.

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### III. ASSESSMENT AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS

#### IMMEDIATE RELIEF

USAID has been very effective in terms of delivery of rapid relief to the affected area. In the case of Haiti, USAID and its affiliate organizations have built over 48% of all transitional shelters, housing nearly 48,000 victims. In its relief efforts in Haiti, USAID has collaborated with few other aid organizations. However, this seems to have been the best approach given the current circumstances. After the institution of a system for organizations to integrate efforts to a greater level, there may be scope for collaboration with more other organizations. However, the decision to collaborate with fewer rather organizations on several projects seems to have been the most efficient method to approach the goals which USAID outlined for Haiti.

One suggestion to prevent incoming aid from overwhelming the existing infrastructure is to assess the supplies in aid and prioritize their delivery. More importantly, this assessment should include an evaluation of how the supplies will be used, and how they will be transported to their point of use. This is critical, because even if they are vital supplies and are delivered first, but cannot reach their point of use, the supplies could have been used more effectively in another affected area. An assessment of local infrastructure would provide this information. Furthermore, stations should be set up at the points of delivery of supplies in aid. These stations could be responsible for the coordination of the delivery of supplies among the various aid organizations. This would be a more direct means of collective organization among multiple international aid organizations than coordination at the higher, more bureaucratic levels of the organizations.

#### LONG-TERM PLANNING

USAID has proven effective in conducting official assessments of the habitability of 83-95% of all structures which were affected by the earthquake.<sup>15</sup> USAID funds were used to fund several groups of engineers in the project. Included were engineers from Haitian Ministry of Public Works, Transport, and Communication. These groups developed a central methodology and standards for habitability in order to standardize the process. This collaboration between multiple non-governmental institutions and the Haitian government on both the fiscal as well as the technological level were coordinated successfully in this model.

#### AGRICULTURAL REDEVELOPMENT

Though USAID programs have yielded marked gains in agriculture, they have some major drawbacks. WINNER addresses the cultivation of crops such as sorghum, beans, corn, and potato, while neglecting staple foods of the Haitian diet, such as rice, poultry, pork, and sugar. In fact, Haiti is the world's fourth largest importer of American grown rice, and the leading Caribbean destination for exported American food crops.<sup>16</sup> Eighty percent of food in Haiti is imported; food imports alone have created half of Haiti's trade deficit. Furthermore, several major sugar mills have been closed down or are producing well under their full capacities due to lack of farmers growing sugar cane because they are too poor to expand beyond subsistence farming. Sugar mills in other countries, including Brazil and India, serve not only to refine sugar but also produce a significant amount of electricity by using the used cane husks as biomass. It is estimated that reopening two of the largest closed sugar mills would reduce Haiti's need to import sugar by almost 70%.<sup>17</sup>

#### FOOD AID

The delivery of foreign crops as aid has been shown to undercut local agricultural industries.<sup>18</sup> This is especially true in areas which are less economically developed and in which agriculture makes up the livelihood of such a large proportion of the population. Unfortunately, these areas are generally those who are the beneficiaries of international food aid.<sup>19</sup> In Haiti, the influx of foreign food aid and subsidized food has devastated the domestic farmers, who cannot economically compete.<sup>20</sup> However, the process of transporting food is not very efficient in itself, making this a lose-lose situation.

The delivery of food grown domestically in America as aid to other countries has grown more and more inefficient over the years. The cost of transporting the food includes trucking, shipping, air freighting, and subsequent costs related to the logistics of distribution within the country. This process has been shown to be highly inefficient by recent Government Accountability Office reports on the rapidly increasing costs involved.<sup>21</sup>

The Bumpers Amendment to the US Foreign Assistance Act of 1981 prohibits the use of aid money going to assist industries in competition with domestic industries, a clause which is emulated across the globe by several other foreign aid departments.<sup>22</sup> The Bumper Amendment is a protectionist measure designed to preserve the interests of domestic industries, and there is little scope for it to be overturned in the near future. However, this has precluded sustainable aid investment in the Haitian agriculture infrastructure. One alternative that has been proposed is to make Haiti an exception to the Bumper Amendment. Though this is a step in a more

sustainable direction, this is far too narrow to affect aid to other regions.

The US Food for Peace program has become dominated by four main producers, who provide the main resistance to any change in the current scheme for food aid. These companies have interests in keeping a steady stream of business from the US government, and have exercised their influence in the US Congress to defeat any measures to reform the current system over the past several years. There was some progress under the Bush administration, but a great deal of change in policy is needed before this aspect of US foreign assistance can be considered sustainable by any means.

Structural changes should be made to USAID policy on food aid. Once the initial, immediate demand for food has been met in the areas affected by disaster, the supply of food aid from outside the country should be stopped. Other options should be used, preferably those which utilize domestically grown produce. A viable alternative to imported food as aid would be to use the same funds and transport domestically grown produce to feed the victims. This would lead to the foreign aid money being spent in a more sustainable manner, because this would channel the money into the country's domestic infrastructure. This is especially beneficial in lesser developed areas of the world, such as Haiti, or lesser developed regions in more developed nations, like Baluchistan in Pakistan.

## **EDUCATIONAL REDEVELOPMENT**

There is considerable emphasis and importance placed on education of children in the Haitian culture. Roughly 15% for the average household's income in Haiti goes towards education for each child.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, in the US the percent of annual income spent on education is a meager 1.9%.<sup>24</sup> This indicates the commitment of Haitian parents to the education of their children. They can therefore help create a better learning environment for their children, and their involvement could be used to help strengthen Haitian schools.

Currently, there are over 150,000 educational professionals who are unemployed in America, due to both temporary budget cuts, but more importantly because of a much higher volume of applicants than there are positions. Though the educational field is not in exceptionally high demand, newer educators are constantly being certified, while current professionals stay in the field for an extended period of time. This has led to several issues with retaining professionals who are simply more experienced and not hiring newer talent.<sup>25</sup> Regardless, this means that USAID could utilize the vast pool of educational professionals, including teachers and administrators, in the USA as a reserve of human resources for educational aid. These professionals could be deployed in times of humanitarian assistance in order to keep the educational system running as soon as the area is safe. In this case, new and current teachers in Haiti will need to be trained, which will take a significant amount of time. If USAID developed a pool of American educational professionals, then they could be used to run schools while permanent Haitian teachers are being trained. This would minimize the disruption of the educational systems of the affected area.

One of the largest issues which USAID must face is the fact that the Haitian education system is virtually entirely privatized. This increases the difficulty of making a standardized system of education, which increases the complexities of rebuilding the education system. Therefore, the entire Haitian system of education should be revamped. Because of the lack of government involvement in the education sector, there has not been a formal school system beyond the secondary schools. This has led to a scarcity of trained teachers in schools across Haiti. This creates a self-perpetuating cycle which exacerbates the issue of poor education across Haiti. This problem is aggravated by the fact that almost 80% of teachers in primary schools across Haiti are estimated to be lacking any formal teacher training.<sup>26</sup> The effect of this is that even those few students who are enrolled in any primary school in Haiti are not really learning very much. Seven in every ten primary school students showed levels of learning that fell below their grade level by two years.<sup>27</sup>

In order to address these issues, the government should strengthen its role in the education sector. This can be accomplished through the provision of standards for each grade level being generated by USAID in conjunction with officials from the government of Haiti. This will allow for the creation of standards that will be more relevant to Haitian students. The cooperation of the Haitian government and USAID in helping to create the standards will be ensuring that they are indeed created and that the proper needs of Haitian students are taken into account and relevant curriculum is prescribed.

Furthermore, if most schools continue to be privatized, the Haitian government must increase its level of involvement. It should provide funding for private schools in places which lack public schools in order for these schools to provide adequate supplies and properly trained teachers. At the present, the Haitian government is in charge of professional training programs for education staff, but there are eight separate ministries of the government which are in charge of various aspects of the training. This has resulted in a highly fragmented system, which is very inefficient. The government should still continue to provide certain public services for Haitians, including teacher training, distance education, etc. However, the Haitian government should not try to pursue this through the traditional method but should instead contract the work out to the private sector. The private sector already possesses much of the infrastructure and organizational framework to take on these roles as contractors.<sup>28</sup>

The Haitian government should decrease tuition prices by subsidizing tuition for private schools. This will make enrollment in school much more affordable and possible for many more people, and can help increase the low enrollment rate. However, time is essential

in making these changes. The Haitian children need to begin to get their education as soon as possible. In addition, there is a greater likelihood that these changes will become institutionalized if they are implemented soon enough after the disaster. The people of Haiti will associate the reforms more with the rebuilding process and less as an unwelcome intrusion of the government pressing its influence into their lives. This strategy of focusing on making the institutional changes has been found to be successful when implemented in other developing countries.<sup>29</sup>

As recently as 2008, severe food shortages caused riots that threatened Haiti's stability. Education of women specifically has been shown to make the greatest difference in the reduction of malnutrition. One study compared the factors contributing to child malnutrition in several developing countries and found that increases in education rates for women decreased child malnutrition the most.<sup>30</sup>

## **ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT**

Development of the Haitian economy would lead to increased stability and security. This would also increase the purchasing power of Haitians, which would transform the Haitian economy into one much more attractive to foreign investors. However, the development of the Haitian economy would require significant investment spending by the government of Haiti to expand and improve the national infrastructure. The Haitian government is not well positioned to undertake that role at the moment, however.

HIFIVE, places too much emphasis on trying to woo diaspora as investors. Several of its high profile activities are specifically designed to convey the value of remittances to the diaspora of Haiti. However, this will simply strengthen a current trend. Remittances are currently in the magnitude of 25% of Haiti's GDP, making them the primary source of foreign exchange.<sup>31</sup> More emphasis needs to be placed on increasing exports and addressing the significant trade deficit. Currently, remittances are worth over twice the value of exports.

The overwhelming majority of Haitians who are employed work in the agricultural industry. Therefore, improvements here would affect the most people. Most Haitian farmers are poor subsistence farmers because they do not have a market to buy their crops. If food aid to Haiti was gradually phased out and tariffs on Haitian produce were repealed, then Haitians would have markets for their crops. This would be an incentive to be more productive. They would take advantage of the new microfinance and other credit opportunities to invest in their farms. This would allow them to expand and become more economically prosperous. Also, the increased lending would have a multiplier effect on the Haitian economy. This would increase general economic activity and investment across Haiti as those who earned more money began to spend or invest their money. Increased savings would increase the stability of the country by providing people with economic security. This would make Haiti seem more attractive to foreign investors as a new market full of potential opportunities. Foreign investment would in turn lead to more economic development.

Another problem rampant in Haiti is unemployment. Over 67% of Haitians lack formal jobs.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, HIFIVE should focus on creating avenues for Haitians to have formal jobs. This could mean the creation of job training centers, increased adult education programs, etc. Also, alleviating the high illiteracy in Haiti through an improved education system may assist in decreasing the unemployment rate by giving Haitian's basic skills attractive to foreign investors.

## **HEALTHCARE REDEVELOPMENT**

USAID's efforts in healthcare redevelopment are primarily focused on the populations of the temporary camps. However, the issues which are prevalent there come from the poor conditions of these camps themselves. Instead of trying to immunize everyone in shelters from the diseases which prevail because of the tight, cramped quarters, USAID should focus on providing better permanent living environments for the victims. Even if this takes longer to build, it will be more permanent and will also be more cost-effective. Improved living conditions will decrease the prevalence of so many communicable diseases and improve general living conditions. These improvements include cleaner, more organized households, with established infrastructure for access to town centers. Also, these will allow for people to get to work more quickly.

# **IV. INFRASTRUCTURE REDEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF LÉOGÂNE**

Léogâne is a coastal town on the southern peninsula of Haiti. A suburb of the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, it was home to 134,000 inhabitants. The epicenter of the Haitian earthquake was in Léogâne, causing it to be the worst affected area, according to a team of UN surveyors. Eighty to ninety percent of its buildings were flattened, including all government infrastructure. Twenty to thirty thousand people died as a result of the earthquake.

In Léogâne, the aid was directed almost entirely at building and improving temporary shelters. The focus has remained on addressing the immediate, temporary issues. One organization involved with USAID in Haiti has reported that it is still building temporary shelters at a rate of 96 per week.<sup>33</sup> The emphasis of the aid has not shifted or begun to shift to development of more permanent living structures. A shift in focus towards constructing permanent residential facilities, such as apartment buildings, would be more

effective in terms of helping Haitians get back on their feet. This would enable the Haitians to return to work and continue with a productive lifestyle. Due to the influx of so many foreigners associated with the ongoing relief efforts, there would be plenty of opportunities for Haitians to get involved in the service industry. Furthermore, in this time of rebuilding, there would be several opportunities created for Haitians to get work rebuilding the infrastructure of their country. This would reduce the need for some aid in the future because this opportunity could be used to push Haitians to improve their economic status from what it was prior to the earthquake. It has been shown that the introduction of permanent housing projects to poorer areas result in increased employment rates. Furthermore, over the course of time, these areas with permanent housing projects have been shown to develop more characteristics associated with “developed areas.” This includes a decrease in gender inequality, more efficiency in home-based economic activities, and growth of small.<sup>34</sup>

Experts have also looked into the cultural effects of the introduction of housing projects to impoverished areas. The cultural argument has analyzed the changes in social institutions and norms in areas in which housing projects have been introduced. The housing projects seem to form a new institution in the “psychology ecology” of residents. Prior to the introduction of housing projects, the residents of the area in question lived in traditional housings, which consisted of mud, thatch, and timber. These materials have very low value in alternative use. The introduction of the orderliness of a permanent, structured living environment seems to translate into a more structured lifestyle. L. O. Thayer argues that this frame of mind has contributed to the cultural development of 3rd world nations, as thought by the Modernization Theorists.<sup>35</sup>

The placement of permanent housing projects is also vital to their effectiveness. If the permanent housing projects are placed in areas of high land value, this will take away from the economic potential of the area, and will decrease their effectiveness in helping the Haitians get back on their feet.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, it is crucial to zone the land properly and build the projects in areas which are lower in land value. The need for more permanent dwellings would mean that the international aid organizations should work more with local Haitian contractors. In this way, the international aid would be providing a stimulus for economic activity to get started in some areas. This would increase the effectiveness of the aid money, as well as assist in providing jobs for Haitians. In the long term, this is a more sustainable and beneficial approach to provide aid money to the Haitians.

## SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

In the aftermath of Haiti’s devastating earthquake of January 2010, USAID has played an influential role in the relief efforts as well as in the reconstruction and in contributing to the long-term direction of Haiti’s development. It is in this critical phase following such a severe shock to Haiti that major institutional changes can be implemented successfully. As the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has several areas which would benefit from such changes.

USAID has adopted four main projects in its effort to redevelop four different sectors of Haiti: agriculture, education, credit, and healthcare. The first project focuses on improving agricultural practices. WINNER, is mainly focused on improving sorghum, corn, bean, and potato crop yields. A parallel project has been focusing on mango production. However, none of these crops are staple foods in the Haitian diet. Food imports account for half of Haiti’s trade deficit. This issue is exacerbated by USAID’s donation of food as aid to Haiti, which should be replaced with Haitian crops.

The Haitian educational system is plagued by low enrollment, inadequate funding, and a lack of training. Most schools are private, and little standardization exists. USAID is trying to assist in the training of new Haitian teachers. It is also building new schools and providing supplies. However, this is only addressing the effect, and is not attacking the fundamental disarray in the Haitian education system. USAID should focus on restructuring the government’s relationship with the multitude of private schools to achieve a more unified school system.

The Haitian economy contracted 8% because of the earthquake. Even before this however, Haiti’s economy was very slow in terms of growth. USAID’s third project is aimed at expanding access to credit, especially to rural, more agricultural areas. However, there is far too much focus on attracting investment from diaspora and increasing remittances. Instead, USAID should expend its efforts in stimulating the Haitian economy by turning it into a growing new market that will attract foreign investors. This can be accomplished via decreasing dependence on foreign imports by decreasing food aid, allowing farmers to have incentive to be more productive.

The Haitian healthcare system is still recovering from the impact of the earthquake, and many people, especially those in temporary camps, rely on international aid. USAID’s focus in this area is on providing primary care; however, the diseases which are primarily being treated are results of the poor conditions of the temporary camps. This would be addressed through cleaner environments. USAID policy in Haiti is currently focused on treating the consequences of problems. Instead, it should shift to a focus on the causes of these problems. This would allow the problems to be resolved for the long-term and not plague Haiti’s development as recurring issues. Also, US foreign policy should support USAID goals if USAID measures are to be effective. There is a very brief window after the crisis in which significant changes to institutions can be enacted. Therefore it is imperative that USAID swiftly and thoroughly revise its strategy in order to be more successful in long-term redevelopment in Haiti’s case, as well as future humanitarian crises.



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