

Rebuilding Haiti Through Gender-Responsive Policies On
Governance and Economic Empowerment

Robin Lush

International Relations Master's Program

McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies

University of Massachusetts, Boston

May 16, 2011

I. **ABSTRACT**

This paper contends that Haiti never fully recovered from crippling financial obligations to foreign powers and the ineffectual and often corrupt regimes that have oppressed the country for more than two centuries. Countless natural disasters have weakened or destroyed the already fragile infrastructure and despite decades of international intervention and foreign aid, inept governance persists and Haiti's economy remains in a state of collapse.

I will demonstrate how Haiti became a post-conflict society after the ousting of Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004. By viewing the country through that lens rather than merely as a post disaster society, this new measure allows for full consideration of all the adversity that has contributed to this island nation's state failure.

Haiti's issues of enduring poverty, weak governance, crumbling infrastructure, large-scale gender inequity and intransigent lawlessness closely resemble the initial post-conflict climate of Rwanda. Pertinent economic and governance policies now make it a compelling model from which to duplicate successful strategies to rebuild Haiti. I will review Rwanda's Community Development Policy and demonstrate the importance of implementing it in Haiti to strengthen economic progress for all citizens. In addition, I submit that by applying Rwanda's 2003 Constitutional Quota to Haiti's governance structure, Haiti will build more competent and representative government that will be focused on meeting the needs of its population rather than reinforcing systemic failure.

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II. INTRODUCTION

Haiti broke from colonial ties to France after a brutal thirteen-year slave revolt, which ended in 1804. This revolution was the first of its kind in world history (Shaw, 2010) and should have marked the beginning of a strong and independent nation, brimming with courage, hope and possibility. Instead Haiti fell prey to the deceptive practices of international financial institutions and the pillaging of resources by its countless leaders. The country's debt burden was onerous from the start. That obstacle combined with often mismanaged or corrupt development policies helped create the failed state we know today.

This paper will argue that Haiti never fully recovered from its overwhelming financial obligations nor the weak, corrupt and often brutal leadership that have oppressed the country since it gained independence. Earthquakes, tropical storms and floods have contributed to the already fragile infrastructure and despite receiving billions of dollars in international aid over decades, weak governance persists and economic opportunities are few.

After a violent uprising that overthrew Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004, The United Nations sought to restore security to the lawless state by passing Security Council Resolution 1542, which established the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Some progress has been made in terms of breaking the cycle of military coups in the two democratic elections held since 2004, however, lack of security is still one of the biggest issues that contributes to Haiti's instability. If the term post conflict is defined as "an intervention by a third party under an internationally recognized mandate" that has brought an end to *formal* violent conflict, albeit not all

conflict, then it is clear that Haiti meets the criteria of a post-conflict society (Rausch & Banar, 2006). By viewing Haiti in these terms rather than merely as a post disaster society, this shift in paradigm allows for full consideration of all the issues that have contributed to Haiti's state failure, particularly in the last century.

Haiti's issues of enduring poverty, weak governance, devastated infrastructure, lack of gender equity and intractable lawlessness are analogous to the initial post-conflict climate of Rwanda. Sound economic and governance policies now make it an exemplary model from which to borrow effective strategies to rebuild Haiti. By analyzing what worked in Rwanda and applying those methods to Haiti's economic and governance sectors, I am confident that Haiti could duplicate similar positive outcomes and arrive at a formal economy and government that is more representative of all of its citizens.

In Haiti, 83% of women who work do so within the informal economy and women are vastly underrepresented in parliament ("Women & Gender | Haiti," n.d.). I will review Rwanda's Community Development Policy and examine the importance of implementing it in Haiti to bolster economic progress for all citizens.

I respectfully submit that by applying Rwanda's 2003 Constitutional Quota to Haiti's governance structure, Haiti will build a stronger, more effective government that will be focused on meeting the needs of its population rather than perpetuating systemic failure.

Many successful gender-responsive policies like those in Rwanda have shown that women in leadership roles and positions of power can have an overall positive affect on society. Women empower all citizens to get involved in decision-making and

discourage corruption in governance, which if left unchecked only undermines stability and breeds' chronic chaos in Haitian society.

III. GLOSSARY

Gender-Responsive Policies	Policies that recognize that women have different needs and face different obstacles than men. The policies are therefore designed and implemented to take those differences into account so that all citizens have equal access and equal opportunity to be successful.
Post-conflict	“Refers to situations in which violent conflict has formally ceased. Such situations are commonly marked by a peace agreement and/or an intervention by a third party under a UN or other internationally recognized mandate. Using the term ‘post conflict’ does not mean that all violent conflict has ended, however. Although conflict may have officially ceased, some level of violent conflict may well persist” (Rausch & Banar, 2006).
Umudugudu Imidugudu	The Core formal community addressed in Rwanda’s Community Development Policy and aggregated to form the Akagari, Umurenge, Akarere and Nation of Rwanda communities.
Akagari Community	The Cell level of Rwanda’s Community Development Policy
Umurenge Community	The Sector level of Rwanda’s Community Development Policy
Akarere Community	The District level of Rwanda’s Community Development Policy
Nation of Rwanda Community	The highest formal level of Rwanda’s Community Development Policy

III. ACRONYMS

CDP	(Rwanda's) Community Development Policy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERAC	Centre for Commitment, Responsibility and Capacity Building
CFW	Cash for Work (Program)
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
IFI	International Financial Institution
IHRC	Interim Haiti Recovery Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFI	Microfinance institution
MINALOC	The Ministry of Local Government (Rwanda)
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OGA	United Nations Office of the Gender Advisor
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

IV. BACKGROUND

Haiti as a Failed State

Haiti ranked number 11 of 177 countries analyzed on Foreign Policy Magazine and The Fund For Peace's Failed State Index in 2010. The index ranks these countries based on 12 measures of state degeneration including economic collapse, human rights violations, outside intervention and human flight ("2010 Failed States Index," 2010).

Haiti is surrounded by states on the index that are either currently in conflict or are in the process of narrowly recovering from it. State failure has been chronic for decades and the January 2010 earthquake was merely the latest opportunity the world has had to shine a spotlight on the decay of Haitian society and explore solutions that perhaps haven't been considered in this context before. Haiti has an opportunity to set a new precedent for post-conflict support that was not available to Bosnia, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Collier, 2010).

Haiti as a Post-Conflict Society

Ineffectual governance, economic collapse, fragile infrastructure, insufficient security, weak judiciary systems, criminal groups, food insecurity, inequality for minorities and lack of economic opportunities all play significant roles in countries that have experienced conflict rather than just disaster. According to Rausch and Banar, the term "post conflict" can be defined as "an intervention by a third party under an internationally recognized mandate" that has brought an end to formal violent conflict, albeit not all conflict (Rausch & Banar, 2006).

Weak governance often provides fertile breeding ground for conflict and Haiti has known little else in its short history. Of the 34 times the role of Haitian President changed hands during the 20th century alone, only six leaders completed a full term in office. It should be noted that three of those were during the United States' military occupation of Haiti from 1915-1934. Thirteen heads of state were overthrown, one President was assassinated and three leaders died during their tenure in office ("List of Haitian Heads of State," 2011).

For nearly one third of the twentieth century, the brutal father and son team of dictators known as Papa (Francois) and Baby Doc (Jean-Claude) Duvalier governed the country with a reign of terror and impunity. Fifteen years after handing over leadership to his son upon Francois' death, Jean-Claude fled to France as his government collapsed in 1986.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide and Rene Preval took turns ruling Haiti amidst democratic elections and military coups from 1991 until present day. This political instability has kept the nation and the international community on edge and has detrimentally affected its ability to quell violence, impose rule of law and gain legitimacy on the world stage. After less than a year in office, Aristide was overthrown in a military coup d'etat in 1991, which led to a three-year embargo by the Organization of American States (Wucker, 2010). He was returned to Haiti to complete his term in 1994. Two years later, Rene Preval was elected president and remained in office until 2001 ("List of Haitian Heads of State," 2011 and "Online NewsHour: Haiti In Turmoil - President Rene Preval," 2006). Not until Preval's departure in 2001 had any Haitian president in the country's two hundred and two year history won a democratic election, completed a full term in office

and handed power to his successor ("Online NewsHour: Haiti In Turmoil - President Rene Preval," 2006). Aristide was elected back into office from 2001-2004. The embattled president was then overthrown in a violent uprising and was forced to flee the country, leaving power in the hands of his constitutional successor, Boniface Alexandre. Alexandre led the government as interim president for the remainder of the term ("Online NewsHour: Haiti In Turmoil - Rebuilding a Government," 2004). Preval won a second democratic election in 2006 with 51% of the vote ("Online NewsHour: Haiti In Turmoil - President Rene Preval," 2006) and made history again in November 2010 as the first Haitian president to complete his entire second term in office. Few countries experience this type of constant political upheaval without spiraling into civil war. In Haiti's case, aside from past violent calls for regime change, conflict has been expressed through means other than outright war.

An absence of rule of law contributes to a highly corrupt and volatile society and Haitian gangs have used the chaos, lack of security and overcrowding in the slums and tent cities to conduct their business and commit crimes with little fear of consequence. Of the 4,500 criminals who escaped prisons and jails throughout Haiti in the hours following the 2010 earthquake, only 700 have been recaptured one year later (Reed, 2011). Gangs also work in collusion with politicians, according to Ray Baysdon, former head of the UN Mission's Intelligence Center. He argues that politicians need the help of gangs to "get elected, stay elected and carry out their mandate". Only about half of the Haitians who are of voting age are literate so gang members are able to control large segments of the votes in the slums (Reed, 2011). With no political will to change this compact between

gangs and politicians, Haitian citizens live in constant fear of persecution with little hope for justice.

To add to Haiti's encumbrance, the January 2010 earthquake was the fifth major natural disaster to hit this small island nation since 2008. Hurricanes and tropical storms Fay, Gustav, Hannah and Ike claimed nearly 1,000 lives and injured at least 500 more. They wreaked havoc on the country's already fragile infrastructure and displaced more than 150,000 people. Crops, livestock and agricultural equipment were destroyed and this created further food insecurity and reliance on external aid. A joint panel of experts from the World Bank, the UN and the European Union determined that given the severity of the damage and estimated total losses equating to approximately 15% of Haiti's GDP, this had become the largest natural disaster in a century (Perito, 2008).

There is no question that these storms would have done damage regardless of where they hit however, it is because of the poorly constructed infrastructure, the massive deforestation, the densely populated slums, the inadequate response by government authorities and entrenched poverty throughout the country that these and the 2010 quake had as devastating an effect as they did on Haiti.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

Upon review of more than two-dozen works of literature on post-conflict societies to determine if Haiti meets the criteria of a post-conflict environment versus simply post-disaster, a theme began to emerge in my readings. Many of the books, reports, websites, journals and databases addressed the issues that were impeding the effectiveness of the Recovery, Peace Building, Reconciliation, Conflict Prevention, Economic Sustainability, Vulnerability and Capacity Building stages that follow a conflict. Dozens of conflicts were analyzed including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eritrea and Haiti in the report titled “The World Bank’s experience with post-conflict reconstruction” (Kreimer, Eriksson, Muscat, Arnold, & Scott, 1998) to Romania, Rwanda and South Africa in the UN DESA’s Discussion paper titled “Governance Strategies for Post Conflict Reconstruction, Sustainable Peace and Development” (*Governance Strategies for Post Conflict Reconstruction, Sustainable Peace and Development, 2007*).

In searching for characteristics that identified countries as post-conflict, I came across the World Bank’s explanation that conflicts are different everywhere and therefore the response to each should be unique. They differ in the magnitude of destruction, conflict duration, intensity of fighting, military and political strength of opponents and interestingly, the extent to which the elite in that society are affected by the conflict. Predatory governments who extract natural resources for personal gain and fail to properly provide basic services for their people, as in the cases of Uganda and Haiti also contribute to the crises (Kreimer, Eriksson, Muscat, Arnold, & Scott, 1998).

Lakhdar Brahimi’s paper on State Building in Crisis and Post-Conflict Countries openly acknowledges that the system, which is used in to help rebuild countries post-

conflict, operates in a manner that is counterproductive and inefficient. Rather than working in collaboration, most agencies including the UN attempt to address the needs of the recipient population without consulting with other aid organizations and institutions (Brahimi, 2007) and often without obtaining adequate feedback from the recipient population. These positions are reinforced in Ghani & Lockhart's work (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008, p. 109).

Samuels contends in her analysis "Rule Of Law Reform In Post-Conflict Countries: Operational Initiatives And Lessons Learnt" that many strategies conceived to re-enact rule of law in post-conflict societies are haphazardly designed and thereby fail in their implementation. Compromised constitution making, poorly executed capacity training and fast tracked reform strategies are all too common in post-conflict projects and it is unsurprising that their results are ineffective (Samuels, 2006).

In Collier and Hoeffler's paper titled "Aid, Policy and Growth in Post-Conflict Societies", they discuss in part the varying responses from the international communities to post-conflict situations based on political motives (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002). They compare the post-disaster reconstruction aid given to Afghanistan, Bosnia and East Timor and explain that those responses from the international community were similar while other states received less generous packages based on favorability or lack thereof. This is in line with Wucker's analysis that Bosnia and Afghanistan received significantly more aid than Haiti did as they each began their respective recoveries post-conflict (Wucker, 2010).

Given the international community's recent willingness to reflect on ill-conceived, underfunded, uncoordinated and poorly executed responses in countless post-

conflict situations, one would expect those lessons to be applied to Haiti, thereby generating a more streamlined, efficient and effective recovery campaign.

VI. A REVIEW OF FAILED DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES AND HOW WOMEN CAN HELP HAITI RECOVER

Why Development Hasn't Worked

The international community has invested tens of billions of dollars in aid into Haiti and it remains the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with 80% of the population living under the poverty line and 54% existing in abject poverty (CIA Fact Book Haiti). Failed development policies, corrupt institutions and geopolitics have contributed to Haiti's cycle of poverty and inability to function without excessive external intervention. By examining some of the failed policies that have hindered Haiti's progress I will make the case for using policies that have a proven track record despite their implementation in the most dire of circumstances such as those in post-conflict Rwanda.

Failed Development Practices

Of the countless ways that development practices have failed in Haiti's post-disaster reconstruction efforts, one of the crucial reasons was because there was never enough money provided to repay the country's debt, shore up its currency and then invest in key infrastructure projects like education, healthcare, housing and road construction. After the conflicts in both Bosnia and Kosovo, those countries received five times more aid per capita than Haiti did in 1994 after Jean-Bertrand Aristide reclaimed his position as President from the military regime that had violently ousted him three years earlier. Although the US helped reinstate Aristide to office in 1994, it withheld large sums of aid from Haiti stating that it was concerned with Aristide's human rights record. Ironically, it had not withheld aid when the Duvaliers' terrorized and massacred Haitian citizens

during their 29 year rule, nor while the military regime tortured and killed Haitian citizens during their three year coup from 1991-94. A report produced by Haiti Reborn and Quixote Center Delegation determined that one of the leading factors that contributed to the international community's strategy to withhold aid was so it could send a message to Aristide about its discontent with his progressive economic agenda. The agenda was aimed at increasing the minimum wage for Haitians and potentially reforming some of the harmful neoliberal policies imposed by the US, which would ultimately have a negative impact on US multinational corporations doing business in Haiti. The international community sent a similar message to Aristide after the 2000 democratic elections but this time they withheld aid under the guise of contesting the legitimacy of the Haitian elections. (Haiti Reborn & Quixote Center Delegation, 2010 and Wucker, 2010).

Not only has the aid been largely insufficient but also much of it came in the form of loans from the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). As of 2008, Haiti still carried \$1.7 billion in international debt and was working through the final stages of the World Bank/IMF Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) to repay more than \$50 million annually to multilateral institutions as well as a lesser amount to bilateral creditors (Perito, 2008)*. This amount was significant given that Haiti's GDP (purchasing power parity) was \$11.81 billion in 2008 (CIA Factbook Haiti).

*Note: As of September 2010 Haiti's largest creditor, The Inter-American Development Bank, cancelled all of its outstanding debt and converted undisbursed loan balances into grants ("Hope for Haiti", 2010)

Lant suggests that many development systems are constructed using “isomorphic mimicry”. This refers to “ building institutions and processes in weak states that *look* like those found in functional states”. In other words, states implement similar reforms to what was modeled for them but miss the core underlying functionalities. As a result, they end up with the burdens of a capable system without the utility of one (Pritchett, 2011).

Aid effectiveness can likewise be subverted by waste that is created through the procurement system. Contracts often require that materials or equipment be shipped in from the donor country rather than purchasing it in the country where the project will be implemented. (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008, p. 108). Money that may have otherwise been available to spend on additional projects or the improvement of the project at hand is instead spent on shipping, import tariffs, bribes of local government and customs officials, and other means required to import the materials into the country.

Lack of accountability and corruption coupled with unclear deadlines and program design are just a few more reasons why aid put towards development projects has failed to fix the myriad of issues that Haiti has faced for decades (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008, p. 109).

Capacity building opportunities are also often overlooked by donor countries that bring in their own technical experts to design, manage and execute projects in the host country. This matters for both the short and long term. If the experts leave without training Haitians to design, build, repair or replace whatever was installed or created, then Haitians must rely on the experts each time there is a need for technical expertise. This example is intended to be broad and can encompass every industry where Haiti does not already have strong internal capacity.

Each of these issues, although seemingly isolated from one another, contributes to the systemic failure of development policies in Haiti and around the globe. Since development alone does not appear to be the solution, perhaps legitimate capacity building and the enhancement of local economic opportunities, which are inclusive of women, could help Haitians attain a higher degree political stability and economic sovereignty so they may ultimately alleviate their own poverty.

Why Address Gender Issues in Haiti's Recovery?

We are more than a decade into the twenty first century and yet gender equality continues to be an issue that requires attention in both developed and less developed countries around the globe. For more than thirty years the international community has been hosting conferences on the importance of including women in decision-making roles in their societies. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan acknowledged:

“Study after study has shown that there is no effective development strategy in which women do not play a central role... when women are fully involved, the benefits are immediate - families are healthier and better fed and their income, savings and investments go up. And what is true of families is also true of communities and, in the long run, of whole countries.” (Powley, 2008)

The United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were implemented around the world in 2000, were designed in part to “promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable.” This internationally recognized body acknowledges that women in most societies are over-represented in the informal economy and the jobs available to them are in vulnerable sectors with few benefits or securities (“Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women,” n.d.).

To help women make strides in this arena, they need to be perceived as economic assets and investments in their respective societies. Training them as business leaders rather than just small business owners would help achieve that outcome. In addition, economic opportunities aside from microfinance must be made available in an effort to bring women into mainstream economy. Microfinance has its advantages for start up businesses but it can be costly and restrictive in that it doesn't allow for expansion of existing businesses. In the struggle for women to gain a foothold in the formal economy,

they also have a responsibility to empower themselves and each other. They need to reach out to other women as they acquire leadership roles but avoid isolating themselves from men who could advocate for their cause ("MDG 3: Empowering Africa's Women," 2010). Gender equality and women's economic development go hand in hand. Neither can make progress without addressing the obstacles that undermine their advancement.

The Global Gender Gap Report measures how well countries are performing on closing the gender gap in the issues of health and survival, obtaining an education, political empowerment and economic participation. About 86% of the 114 countries that have been analyzed since this report was first produced in 2006, have made progress towards closing the gender gap, while the remaining 14% of countries have widened the gender gap based on the measured criteria over the last five years. Across the globe, 93% of the global gender gap on education and 96% of the gender gap on health has been closed, according to the report. The authors of this report argue that now that these critical issues have been addressed it is time for women to become key players in the formal economy and political decision making processes (Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2010). While data was not available for Haiti in this report, according to the MDG report, Haiti is making some progress in terms of the availability of education for all children and access to health care for girls however; it is not on target to meet those goals by 2015 ("MDG 3: Empowering Africa's Women," 2010).

Representation by women in political roles in Haiti is slowly increasing but this is largely due to quotas and other gender-responsive measures used to bring parity to politics ("Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women," n.d.). With women only holding 4.1 seats out of 98 in Haitian National Parliament in 2010 it is clear that

much work on the issue of gender equality in Haiti still lies ahead ("United Nations Millennium Development Goals," n.d.).

If the world wants Haiti to move towards becoming a more sustainable and globally competitive nation, women must be agents of change in their society.

Rwanda as a Model

Rwanda stands out as a model for how gender-responsive policies can be effective if done right. Rwanda boasts the highest level of women's political participation of any country in the world and also has one of the fastest growing economies in the continent (Bello, 2010). Seventeen years on Rwanda continues to recover from its brutal internal conflict and even prior to that has a history of oppressive policies towards women.

What Rwanda has to teach us is that countries can recover successfully from chaos and utter devastation if the right policies are implemented at the right time. The policy implementation must incorporate those affected into the decision making process, provide the necessary resources and support to see the projects through to the end and build capacity within Haitian society to enable the citizens to continue on a successful path long after the international community has withdrawn.

Examining Women's Roles in Economic Empowerment and Governance Policies

Economic empowerment and political participation are intrinsically linked and both issues represent critical areas where women are largely underrepresented in Haiti. Gender parity in these areas will result in increased financial independence for women and generate policies and laws that protect and are representative of all citizens. These changes will likely generate momentum for gender equity on other issues like health, education and judicial reform to name a few.

According to the UN's Human Development Indicators, the 2008 value of the Gender Inequality (Composite) Index for Haiti, which measures loss in advancement in three areas of human development—empowerment, reproductive health and labor market, as the result of gender inequality is 0.739. The Shares in Parliament, female-male ratio is substantially lower at 0.050. This indicator measures the Ratio of seats held by each gender in a lower or single house or an upper house or senate, where germane ("International Human Development Indicators," 2010). These indicators show that there is significant room for improvement in key areas that contribute to the well being of an individual, a group or a society.

Gender and Poverty

Six in ten of the world's most impoverished citizens are women ("Decent Employment: Pathway out of Poverty," 2011). Haitian women currently make up a little more than half of the country's population (D'Adesky & Kushner, 2010). Forty four percent of all heads of household are female and 60 percent of those women live in extreme poverty ("Women & Gender | Haiti," n.d.). The cycle of poverty evolves effortlessly when women, as single parents, can't afford to adequately feed, clothe, house and educate their families. Health issues for the poor, especially in developing countries, can take a turn for the worse quickly. With lack of access to healthcare, unsafe drinking water, unsanitary conditions in camps and slums and overcrowded shelters, diseases can spread swiftly and claim the lives of the vulnerable whose immune systems are too compromised to fight off a malady.

Eighty three percent of Haitian women that are economically active participate in the informal economy ("Women & Gender | Haiti," n.d.) and they make up fifty seven

percent of Haitians who rely on the agricultural sector, mainly small-scale subsistence farming for their income. With only about 1% of Haiti's forests still in tact, the agricultural sector is largely vulnerable to frequent natural disasters (D'Adesky & Kushner, 2010 and CIA Factbook, 2011).

Women in the agricultural sector face numerous constraints that result in a lack of food security and affect their ability to generate sufficient income by which to support their families. Lack of availability to financial resources impact women's ability to invest in modern equipment, diversify their crops, expand their output and purchase the land they grow on (Benfica, Ofosu-Amaah, & Tehmeh, n.d.).

Of those women in the informal economy who do not rely on the agricultural sector to earn their income, a large portion of the remaining population peddle inexpensive goods at market or on the side of the road. The goods are cheap and therefore the profit margin is low and most women barely earn enough to feed their families let alone purchase more goods to sell. In some Haitian markets there will be dozens of vendors selling identical goods whether it be fruit, grains, coal or plastic sandals. A basic understanding of supply and demand is all one needs to realize that this business strategy will never move these women out of poverty and into a financially secure situation, regardless of how long or hard they work.

The Case for Women in Governance

Women bring unique and important skills and perspectives into the governance process and the systems that they create are often more stable and transparent and therefore less corrupt than those of their male counterparts. Society typically accepts them as legitimate, which enables them to govern more effectively. Women have demonstrated the ability to bridge political divides, highlight women's concerns, facilitate a collaborative and participatory approach to policymaking, and insist on government accountability. Despite these contributions, they are largely excluded (InclusiveSecurity, 2009).

As women begin to increase their influence in Haitian politics, they can begin to shape initiatives around issues that profoundly impact their daily lives and health and well being. Issues like Gender Based Violence (GBV) including legal, health and advocacy services for battered women and education and sensitization training for law enforcement agencies need to be expanded ("Eight Point Agenda for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, Country Examples," n.d.) to account for the brutal and largely unpunished crimes against women and girls.

Property Rights and Marriage and Divorce Rights laws are currently written to favor men. Property rights are also written in favor of couples who have the economic means to get legally married. In rural Haiti, it is a societal norm to enter into common-law marriages to save on the cost of hiring a judge to perform a legal ceremony. At this time, property laws only recognize legally married couples so if women don't have their names on the land title and their common-law husband who owned their land, died in the earthquake, these women are without recourse (D'Adesky & Kushner, 2010 and "Eight

Point Agenda for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, Country Examples," n.d.). Legal reforms are slow to take hold in Haiti, especially given all of the other priorities that have arisen since the 2010 quake. With President elect Michel Martelly due to take office in May 2011, one can only hope that women's legal rights are on his administration's agenda as he gets down to the business of rebuilding Haiti as a functioning and legitimate state.

VII. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF RECOMMENDED POLICIES

1. Rwanda's Community Development Policy

Description

Rwanda's Community Development Policy (CDP) was created to address the economic needs of this impoverished nation in a post-conflict environment. The aim was to promote its development, while making strides towards decentralization. Illiteracy, cultural deference to authority and unsustainable farming practices all needed to be confronted if this policy was going to be successful. Jobs were scarce, the economy was floundering and while Rwanda had made miraculous strides in restructuring its government to include a more representative parliament, the economy was still battered and unable to recover without radical changes to the status quo (*Community Development Policy*, n.d.).

The architects of Community Development, who were comprised of various members of Rwandan civil society, institutions of higher education, and engaged members of the private sector, created the policy to address three dimensions of development: economic, social and political. Economic Development deals with the promotion of commerce and income generation and building community assets, people-power and infrastructure. Social Development refers to the issues of community access to health and education, participation in sports and cultural events and access to social welfare for vulnerable citizens. Good Governance refers to promoting community leadership in local and national elections and participation in leadership development as

well as community participation in planning and budgeting at local and national levels (*Community Development Policy*, n.d.).

To be effective, policy implementation would need to represent men and women equally, include grassroots community participation, fully utilize local potential, promote commerce, encourage continuous improvement, and enhance a culture of transparency, accountability and common benefit (*Community Development Policy*, n.d.).

In order to confront economic issues that plagued the country after the 1994 genocide, there was recognition that systemic issues had to be addressed as well. A simple standalone job creation program was not going to get to the root of Rwanda's poverty. This new policy had to include an investment from stakeholders at every level starting with the individual and stemming all the way to the national government. It had to involve citizens in analyzing their environment and identifying individual and collective needs so that they could design and implement practical, realistic, efficient and sustainable solutions to address those needs. Rwandans have capabilities and part of the objective of this policy was to identify that they could be the agents of change in their own societies. They didn't need to rely on external sources to solve their problems for them. What they needed was guidance and instruction on how to develop their own potentials and capacity (*Community Development Policy*, n.d. and "Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).

To create a framework for resource mobilization between government and development organizations, District Development Plans (DDPs) were formed. They also harmonized with key national development strategies to fund local government initiatives

that were identified as priorities by the constituents (*Community Development Policy*, n.d. and "Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).

Decentralization initiatives are at the heart of the Community Development Policy and it is within the purview of The Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) to design and effectively implement the policy. As local government initiatives became necessary to address the needs of the people, so too did a body to fund them. From this need was born The Common Development Fund (CDF). This fund helped allocate monies to distribute local resources, establish public works programs and assist the Rwandan people in alleviating their own poverty ("Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).

Challenges

The Community Development Policy faced obstacles throughout implementation, some of which they still encounter today. Rwanda's land and natural resources have felt enormous strain from the country's high population density and unsustainable agricultural practices. Food insecurity and crippling rates of poverty due to low agricultural productivity, rural underemployment and unemployment, and environmental degradation have contributed to the difficult conditions Rwanda faced when establishing this policy. The country also needed to recover from the effects of conflict, which include mistrust between communities, unemployed youth, recently released prisoners and higher levels vulnerable groups such as widows, women, orphans, and people with disabilities ("Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).

The Rwandan decentralization process and other recent political initiatives have contributed to the challenges in implementation of this policy. They include:

- Inconsistency between expectations set by the stakeholders and the delivery of the local population
- Unpredictable financial flows from central to local government led to difficulty in executing planned projects
- Lack of transparency and accountability of funds
- Weak coordination and harmonization at all levels of government
- Insufficient monitoring and evaluation structure including poor data collection and information management ("Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009)

Despite these challenges, the community development policy built on the following

opportunities:

- The communities, development partners and key members of the Government of Rwanda (GoR) have shown support for the second phase of decentralization by reinforcing civil participation in the decision-making processes and development initiatives. There has also been support by the Local Government (LG) of capacity building at the grassroots level. Evidence of this support is provided by intergovernmental monetary transfers into the Common Development Fund (CDF) and increased delivery of services through capacity development programs ("Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).
- The Government of Rwanda has developed and reinforced the coordination mechanisms for decentralization implementation. This includes the cluster mechanism at the central level, the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) at local level, and the collaboration between the JADF and Community Development Committees (CDCs) to reinforce capacities at LG level ("Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).

- Community-based development pilot initiatives are being introduced to reinforce local efforts aimed at working toward achieving Millennium Development Goals and targets for the Vision 2020-Umurenge program. The Vision 2020-Umurenge program offers the opportunity to connect the decentralization process with social safety net programs and effective poverty reduction ("Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).
- The link between decentralization and local Rwandan initiatives, such as community works, community mediation, community courts and community assistance has helped increase the participation and feeling of ownership by the locals ("Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).

The guiding principles for the Community Development Policy include:

Community participation: Sustainable capacity building is much more likely to be achieved if participation takes root at the lowest operational (Umudugudu) level and builds from there.

Common benefit: Communities should invest in projects that will yield the greatest returns to the largest number of people. Skills training, education and job creation programs would meet this criterion.

Exploitation of local potential: Communities should look to their own cultural and economic resources to satisfy their needs before seeking external assistance.

Transparency and accountability: The Community Development Policy endorses accountability through the oversight of all of its development programs by local communities at all levels.

Autonomous management at local government level: Local governments are given the autonomy to manage their own programs and involvement by partners should only be done in a supportive capacity aimed at empowering and offering guidance where needed.

Promotion of Commerce: Encouraging individual or collective commercial activity is a key tenet of the Community Development Policy.

Collaboration between sectors and partners: This enhances program efficiency, effectiveness, monitoring and success at all levels (*Community Development Policy*, n.d. and "Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).

Recent government initiatives

The first phase of decentralization realized significant results so based on positive momentum, the Government of Rwanda updated its policies and instituted various reforms to acknowledge the changing environment and address the obstacles they encountered in phase one. The reforms included:

Administrative Reform was initiated in 2005 to enhance community mobilization and data collection process. This reform established Umaduguda* as the basic administrative level and reassigned some of the services that had previously delivered at the District level to the Sector (Umurenge) level ("Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).

Evolution of the Ubudehe Process refers to the Ubudehe process moving from the Cell level to the Umudugudu level after the first phase of decentralization. Community Development has its roots in the Ubudehe process ("Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).

Vision 2020-Umurenge: In 2007 the Vision 2020-Umurenge initiative was launched by the Rwandan national government to increase the likelihood of attaining of the Vision 2020 objectives. The pilot program began with one sector per district (30 in total) whose residents were living in extreme poverty. A development program was created to reinforce the initiative and this was coupled with the promotion of specialized

*Note: Formal levels of the Community Development Policy are defined in the Glossary, Section III of this paper.

production in each of the respective Districts based on their competitive advantage process ("Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).

New sectoral policies have been implemented on the issues of Education, Employment, Microfinance, Health and Water in recent years. The revised Community Development Policy has harmonized these new initiatives and reforms and reinforced the legal and institutional framework for a more successful outcome overall. In addition, the process for data monitoring and evaluation has been enhanced to address the issues that impacted the program's legitimacy during the initial rollout of the policy. By revising the policy to tackle the challenges its implementation first encountered, it has a greater ability to confront the issues of extreme poverty, illiteracy, unsustainable agricultural practices and other problems that impede the country's development ("Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda," 2009).

2. Rwanda's 2003 Constitutional Quota

Description

Rwanda's constitutional quota was established in 2003 to address lack of equal representation by women in local, regional and national politics in Rwanda. A challenge had been issued eight years earlier at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, which called for at least 30 per cent representation by women in national governments around the globe. Rwanda was one of the first countries in history to answer that challenge. As the new constitution took shape, Article 76 detailed the mandate for 30% (24 out of 80 seats) representation by women in decision-making posts and in the Chamber of Deputies ("Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda," 2003 and "Eight Point Agenda for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, Country Examples," n.d.). This reform was largely due to lobbying efforts by women to draft the new constitution as well as develop voting guidelines to guarantee seats for women. In addition, they were instrumental in the formation of the Government Ministry of Women's Affairs. (Powley, 2008).

This influential group also pushed for women's participation in all decision-making organs. The 2001 local elections used a "triple ballot" to guarantee women's participation however, less than 30% of district council seats went to women. Of the positions won by women, most were for vice mayor for gender, which had a limited mandate and therefore limited power. After the adoption of the new constitution in May 2003, parliamentary elections, including a separate women's election to fill reserved seats, was held and this helped boost women's representation in office. It also propelled Rwanda to the top of the world rankings for women's participation in government,

assuming 39 out of 80 seats (48.8 percent) in the Chamber of Deputies and nine out of 26 seats (34.6 percent) in the Senate. In total, women took 45.3% of the seats in parliament (Powley, 2008).

Local governments weren't brought into compliance until elections came around again in 2006. In those elections, Rwandan women won 33.3% of mayor and vice mayor seats at the district level and 66.6% in Rwanda's capital, Kigali. These numbers were truly remarkable in that Rwanda nearly doubled the average of women's participation in national parliaments compared to Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world (Powley, 2008).

In 2005, The Initiative for Inclusive Security sponsored a candidate-training program in preparation for the 2006 local elections. They partnered with local groups to reach out to women in rural locations. This training program, Rwanda's commitment to fulfill its quota and an extensive redistricting plan all had positive effects on the seats won by women in the 2006 parliamentary elections. Training for potential women candidates has been shown to be most effective when other women act as role models and help build their self-confidence in a non-threatening environment. By inviting grassroots organizations to assist with the outreach and trainings, women in rural areas can be reached by groups they trust and are familiar with (Powley, 2008).

One of the keys to success for Rwandan women parliamentarians since taking office has been that they promoted a cooperative approach to campaigning and worked with men as allies rather than adversaries. They invited men in from the beginning and asked for their help to drive the process and agenda of promoting gender equality legislation. With their buy-in at every stage of the process, men not only aided in the

creation of the laws, their involvement also helped increase the legislation's effectiveness. Including men into the process does not guarantee their support every time it's needed but the likelihood is far greater than if they are excluded from the process all together. By framing the issues of women as issues about societal relationships rather than just women's issues, men are less likely to feel threatened or like they don't need to concern themselves with gender issues. The same philosophy holds true for public support. If there is a participatory election process and the public is consulted and informed about women candidates and how voting for them advance society for everyone, they will be less resistant to change and more likely to embrace a government that is representative of men and women. (Powley and Pearson, 2007).

Challenges

Regardless of how inclusive women try to be of others, there will always be challenges to their involvement in the political process that need to be addressed. Local rules, traditions and customs can present seemingly insurmountable obstacles to women in decision-making bodies of local government (Powley and Pearson, 2007). That said quotas alone are not the solution. They can help to level the playing field of gender equity in governance but they don't guarantee that women will always make decisions that benefit the majority of their fellow women. If they are at the decision-making tables, they may be limited by constitutional restrictions, influenced by powerful or intimidating members of their party or restricted by loan conditions set by international financial institutions (Mutame, 2004).

Women have been left out of the major decision-making processes in society for thousands of years. It has only been in recent decades that we have made progress in finding our collective voices by not only embracing our right to vote but also to be elected as representatives of our society in local, regional and national governments. Rwandan women have made strides far more significant on that front in the last 17 years than women from any developed country in the world and it is clear that they have something to teach us in their governance process. As a global society, we would be well served to sit up and take notice.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HAITI

To accompany the policies I outline in this paper I submit for consideration the following recommendations to the Haitian government and the grassroots and non-governmental organizations working on the issues of governance and economic opportunities in Haiti:

1. Provide capacity building and skills training for women in jobs in the formal economy as well as leadership and governance roles. For many women, this begins with adult literacy classes.
2. Offer confidence building trainings that are lead by women for women to help prepare them to be strong, capable leaders.
3. Provide women leaders as role models for women entering into the field of politics.
4. Incorporate men into the process of creating and adopting gender-responsive policies so they can support and promote the concept to ensure its success.
5. Create a public awareness campaign before trying to institute new gender-responsive policies. This campaign needs to be instituted in rural and urban communities throughout the country and carried out in a manner that explains the benefits of gender inclusive policies to all citizens.
6. The Haitian people must lead these policies, not outside actors.
7. Ensure accountability and transparency when implementing policies. Checks and balances need to be in place so corruption does not undermine progress.
8. Incorporate grass roots organizations and women's groups into the process when designing policies for women in rural and urban communities.
9. Financial resources beyond microfinance opportunities need to be made available to women so they can start small businesses and expand if desired.
10. Obtain a commitment from Haitian leaders that gender-responsive governance at all levels will be encouraged, supported and promoted.
11. Enforce gender quotas to ensure that women's representation is increased in local, regional and national government.

12. Institute gender quotas to ensure that women are elected into positions of power and influence and not simply low level or token roles that appease the quota requirements.
13. Define clear objectives for women's involvement in Haitian governance that are measurable and attainable.
14. Incorporate gender equality into all areas of Haitian public policy.

IX. CONCLUSION

There is no question that Haiti has experienced more than its share of monumental problems since gaining independence in 1804. Some of these issues were due to external intervention, some resulted from natural disasters and many were brought on by the corrupt and self-serving Haitian leaders that held political office. The international community has showered Haiti with foreign aid and approximately 10,000 non governmental organizations have set up shop on Haitian soil but for a myriad of reasons, some of which I touched upon earlier, there have been minimal positive outcomes.

Given Haiti's violent political upheavals, economic collapse, food insecurity, weak governance, widespread gender inequity, chronic poverty, human rights violations, lawlessness and fragile infrastructure I was able to demonstrate how the climate of this small Caribbean nation was analogous to the post-conflict society of Rwanda. Since women have been shown to be key agents in the success of their societies and economics and government are areas where change could make the greatest impact for women, it seemed appropriate to use gender-responsive policies that had encountered success in Rwanda and apply the lessons learned to Haiti. My hope is that through the application of these policies, future conflicts and the type of political uncertainty that permeated Haiti after the Duvalier era ended could be mitigated and the quality of life for all Haitians could be markedly improved.

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