

Cacophonies of Aid, Failed State Building and NGOs in Haiti: setting the stage for disaster, envisioning the future

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ABSTRACT *The January 2010 earthquake in Haiti was a catastrophe not only for the loss of life it caused, but also because it destroyed the very thin layer of state administrative capacity that was in place in the country. This article argues that the fragility of the Haitian state institutions was exacerbated by international strategies that promoted NGOs as substitutes for the state. These strategies have generated a vicious circle that, while solving immediate logistical problems, ended up weakening Haiti's institutions. However, the article does not call for an overarching condemnation of NGOs. Instead, it explores two cases of community-based NGOs, Partners In Health and Fonkoze, that have contributed to creating durable social capital, generated employment and provided functioning services to the communities where they operated. The article shows that organisations that are financially independent and internationally connected, embrace a needs-based approach to their activities and share a long-term commitment to the communities within which they operate can contribute to bringing about substantial improvement for people living in situations of extreme poverty. It concludes that in the aftermath of a crisis of the dimension of the January earthquake it is crucial to channel support towards organisations that show this type of commitment.*

Dedication

This article is dedicated to Andrew Grene, Special Assistant to the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in Haiti, who perished in the earthquake. I did not have the opportunity to share with you, Andrew, the results of the research you have so generously facilitated. This work could not have been conducted without your mentorship and support. It is in your memory that this article is written, and that I will continue this research with increased commitment, energy and determination.

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The catastrophic January 2010 earthquake in Haiti not only caused 250 000 deaths and destroyed over 80 per cent of Port au Prince, but also delivered a serious blow to the thin layer of state administrative structures that were in place in the country.¹ The crumbling of government buildings (all three branches of government and 15 out of 17 ministries were destroyed) obliterated lives, historical memory and part of the state archives, thus making it more difficult to manage both short-term relief efforts and the long-term recovery of the country.

Nevertheless, the weakness of the Haitian state was not created by the earthquake and was for almost two decades the object of international peacekeeping and aid interventions aimed at 'state building'. The scarce state capacity in Haiti has been blamed on deficiencies of the Haitian population or its government. Local factors, such as lack of democratic culture, political unrest or some form of 'savagery' have been adducted as the causes of the fragility of the Haitian institutions.² However, as I have argued elsewhere, after years of international peacekeeping and intense multilateral and bilateral aid, as well as an intensive presence of foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs), attributions of causality that blame all that has gone wrong on the Haitians need further scrutiny.³ The scarcity of economic resources available to the Haitian state has seldom appeared in the literature as a serious challenge to 'institution building'. Instead, state building has been by and large understood as an issue of 'fighting corruption' (which in the end casts the blame on the locals), of 'effectiveness' of international organisations (which frames the problem as well as its solution in technical terms), of 'training' of state administrators (which identifies 'knowledge' as the main obstacle to be overcome) or of 'institutional design' or 'good governance' (which ultimately disconnects the problematique of institution building from its socioeconomic context).⁴ This article argues that, in a situation like Haiti, where the state can rely upon very few sources of internal revenue, the international support for NGOs *de facto* made institution building unsustainable and compounded, instead of reducing, problems of government accountability to the electorate.

The literature has by and large considered NGOs as normative actors and focused on debating their political role and legitimacy. NGOs' supporters have portrayed them as progressive players that contribute to democratising the international system. Their critics have portrayed NGOs as inscribed into a liberal 'assemblage of occupation' and argued that they externalise political claims, erode democratic representation and local ownership of political processes.⁵ However, while the debate on NGO legitimacy or on their normative role has been intense, the consequences of favouring NGOs as providers of services in the context of post-conflict state building have received little scholarly consideration. The existing literature has focused mainly on assessing 'effectiveness,' or on exploring how it is possible to implement some state control on NGOs without harming the latter.⁶ The effects of delivering services through NGOs for the building of sustainable institutions in post-conflict and/or extremely poor societies have been only marginally discussed. In the paragraphs that follow I argue that supporting NGOs instead of the Haitian state eroded, instead of reinforcing, its capacity

to act as a credible provider of resources for the Haitians. However, this article also questions overarching condemnations of NGOs as inscribed into an imperial 'assemblage of occupation' and explores under which conditions empathy and solidarity, which have been advocated by critics of liberal peace and international intervention as the roots for progressive political action, can be practised.⁷ Through an analysis of two community-based foundations in Haiti, the article shows that NGOs that are locally accountable, internationally connected and financially independent have contributed to providing services to the population and to creating areas of economic sustainability without eroding (and in one of the cases while actively supporting) the capacity of the institutions of the state. It concludes by suggesting that the reconstruction of Haiti would benefit by directing resources to organisations that show this type of commitment.⁸

Building statehood through NGOs: the cacophony of international aid and intervention

Since the 1990s international organisations have conceived the building of peace as strictly linked with the building of the institutions of the state and the re-engineering of societies.⁹ However, at the same time Anglo-American social science has drastically de-emphasised the role of the state as an agent in development.¹⁰ International organisations' strategies of 'state building' as a tool for making peace converged with good governance doctrines into a neoliberal wisdom that international assistance should focus on the 'democratic' form and 'cost effectiveness' of institutional arrangements rather than on fostering states' capacity to provide services to populations.¹¹ Contextually NGOs have been increasingly considered as relevant stakeholders in peace building, both as instruments for exerting conditionality on local governments (as alternative recipients of international funds), and as providers of emergency relief and long-term services to populations.¹² This section explores the international strategies of supporting NGOs and argues that such policies exacerbated the Haitian state's lack of capacity to perform its functions.

Before the January earthquake there were between 8000 and 9000 NGOs in Haiti with very different agendas, budget size and sponsorship.¹³ These organisations operated in the context of a heavy presence of multilateral and bilateral programmes (through which they are often sponsored), a peace-keeping operation in charge of maintaining security and of the co-ordination of the actors on the ground (the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti—MINUSTAH), and a government with very weak administrative capacity. The work of NGOs in Haiti cannot be assessed as separate from this context.

Paul Farmer, the founder of Partners In Health and now the Deputy to the United Nations Special Envoy for Haiti, has commented that international aid coming through official channels has always been very limited in Haiti:

The aid coming through official channels was never very substantial: the US gave Haiti, per capita, one tenth of what it distributed in Kosovo. It is true that,

as former US ambassadors and the Bush administration have recently claimed, hundreds of millions of dollars flowed into Haiti—but not to the elected government. A great deal of it went to the anti-Aristide opposition.¹⁴

The Haitian state relies heavily on foreign support for running its operations. Seventy percent of the state budget comes from external financing as the capacity to generate income through taxation is minimal.¹⁵ Thirty percent of the current state budget was expected to derive from customs dues. However, the main port has been seriously damaged by the quake and the custom-houses are controlled by special interest groups.¹⁶ Before the economic crisis triggered by the hurricanes in 2008, 76 per cent of the Haitian population lived on less than \$2 a day, and 56 per cent on less than \$1. These figures had not improved in 2009. In 2006 30 per cent of GDP, and the livelihood of about 1.1 million people depended on remittances from the diaspora.¹⁷ In the face of the increasing difficulties of making a living through agriculture (a process that has been worsened by foreign food donations, as we will see below), impoverished farmers have been flocking to the already overcrowded capital at the rate of 75 000 people per year. Before the earthquake Port au Prince hosted 25 per cent of the Haitian population, and 52 per cent of the people living in slums such as Cité Soleil lacked sanitary services.¹⁸ According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) at least 90 000 jobs and 100 000 home-run businesses were lost in the quake, leaving about 1 000 000 people without a source of income. Even before the earthquake the Haitian state only provided a very thin share of basic services to its people. More than 70 per cent of available health care was provided by NGOs, but 72 per cent of the population had no access to health care at all. Eighty-five percent of education was provided by private schools, which were mostly run by NGOs.¹⁹ Many of these schools, however, are internationally supported moneymaking enterprises with very uneven educational standards.

Notwithstanding the by now 15 year-long international efforts to build the Haitian National Police (HNP), before the earthquake security was mostly provided by the UN.²⁰ As of 30 November 2009 MINUSTAH included 9065 total uniformed personnel, of which 7031 were troops and 2034 police.²¹ Interviews conducted in November 2009 with MINUSTAH personnel indicated that the Haitian police remained heavily dependent on international resources for its recruiting, training and operational budget. In 2009 the training of new recruits at the Canadian-run police school had to be suspended for lack of the state's capacity to pay the salaries of additional police officers. Because of the reluctance of external donors to support the HNP's operating budget, police forces often lacked the very basic resources to conduct their daily operations, such as bullets for their guns or fuel for their (few) vehicles.²² After the earthquake the HNP was remarkably absent from the streets of Port au Prince, which signals the fragility of that institution.

Channelling money through NGOs has been considered by international donors as a key tool of institution building through conditionality, as well as a way of fighting 'corruption' and fostering accountability. For instance, in 1999, as a result of international discontent regarding an issue of relative or

absolute majority in the parliamentary elections, international donors withdrew all funds from the Haitian state as well as from the UN Mission, and channelled them through NGOs. This strategy, however, has proven faulty both as a tool of institution building and as an instrument against corruption. As I have argued elsewhere, in the context of Haiti's extreme poverty and the state's lack of resources, such a strategy inevitably cuts the lifeline to the very process of institution building that was adopted as the rationale for the international UN intervention in the 1990s.²³ The disproportionate economic resources available to international organisations and NGOs as compared to the government, and the dependence of the latter on external funding for the provision of basic services exacerbate accountability issues. The ability to secure support and funding through foreign NGOs has become a very important way for local political entrepreneurs to secure success. Since NGOs are basically accountable to the constituencies that sponsor them, and Haitian government officials and politicians rely heavily upon them to access the resources (financial or otherwise) necessary to gain internal political consensus, the power of NGOs to steer and influence local politics is likely to be much stronger than the local electorate's.

NGOs have also been a useful tool for promoting agendas desirable to foreign states or political groups. In 2007 about 70 per cent of the funding available for Haitian NGOs was distributed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Furthermore, between 1994 and 2002 USAID, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) reportedly contributed some \$70 million to organise opposition to President Aristide.²⁴ Regardless of one's assessment of Aristide's performance as a statesman, these NGO-channelled interventions weakened the elected government, triggered instability and violent outbursts, and ultimately fostered a *coup d'état* that prompted the redeployment of UN peacekeepers in the country. Ultimately, in the context of extreme poverty and weakness of state institutions, NGOs became 'other governmental organisations' and contributed to eroding both state officials' internal accountability and the possibility of building sound institutions of the state.²⁵

The UN has now acknowledged that the massive withdrawing of funds from the government in favour of NGOs produced negative effects on institution building. A number of UN agency representatives interviewed during my November 2009 trip to Haiti emphasised that the heavy reliance on NGOs created a catch-22 situation. While, it was noted, in the context of the lack of administrative and economic resources in the hands of the government, NGOs are essential for the immediate provision of services to the population, reinforcing NGOs instead of the government created serious trade-offs with the building of state capacity. For instance, because local state salaries cannot compete with those of international NGOs, these organisations siphon skilled personnel from state jobs. In this context UN agencies or NGO personnel frequently carried out the administrative procedures necessary for the government to function because the latter lacked the clerks to perform

these tasks. The very thin layer of administrative personnel available in the Haitian state also made it difficult to secure programmatic continuity through changes of government.

The Economic and Social Council, now realising that the delivery of international aid cannot be considered separate from institution building, has moved away from the neoliberal consensus that informed international political rationales in past two decades and mandated that the UN agencies work to build government capacity.²⁶ In line with this advice UN agencies stipulated three-year strategic plans with the Haitian government. However, several UN representatives noted that these strategic plans did not mean much in practice. Regardless of what was established in the planning documents, the government would 'follow the money' and end up authorising unplanned interventions if they came with funds. In summary, the state itself became 'donor driven'. A representative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) interviewed in Port au Prince observed that, while FAO attempted to reinforce elected local government bodies by channelling money through them, bilateral donors often adopted different strategies. They sponsored NGO projects that created parallel structures, with resulting disruptive effects on the building of stable institutions.²⁷

The presence of the UN has not been able to reduce this cacophony of international aid in Haiti. According to the UN Integrated Peacekeeping Operations Manual, UN Peacekeeping Missions should co-ordinate the work of all stakeholders in peacekeeping, ie UN agencies and, indirectly, NGOs, the state and the private sector.²⁸ However interviews both with MINUSTAH and UN agencies' representatives have shown that the task of co-ordinating and integrating diverse constituencies is more difficult than it would appear on programmatic documents. This is not necessarily because of the (technical) lack of co-ordinating mechanisms, but because of (political) differences in priorities and strategic choices. While after the 2008 hurricanes the UN Country Teams were relatively effective in co-ordinating NGOs and international governmental organisations (IGOs) for emergency relief interventions, the sharing of a common long-term strategy among agencies, peacekeepers and the government has proven to be a more difficult task. For instance, while there was a shared consensus between UN agencies and MINUSTAH that it is necessary to go beyond containment and foster economic development, different leaders within the UN family had different visions of the model of development that should be embraced. While some supported the neoliberal programme that was spelled out in Paul Collier's report to the UN Secretary General, others favoured agricultural development oriented to internal consumption, and promoting tourism as an alternative to sweat shops and export-oriented agriculture.²⁹

Internationally sponsored NGOs have been criticised not only for carrying out unco-ordinated and particularistic political agendas, but also for being ineffective in channelling resources to the Haitians. Eighty-four percent of every dollar spent in Haiti by USAID goes back to the US as salaries of international experts, thus contributing only marginally to the creation of value added in Haiti.³⁰ In the worst-case scenario international NGO

activities have ended up damaging the local economy. In his study of CARE food deliveries in the fertile agricultural area of Jean Makout, Timothy Schwartz has shown that food aid may end up hampering the sustainability of local agriculture.³¹ Because a portion of CARE'S (and other organisations') budget relies on the transformation of donated food into cash, selling such food is essential for sustaining the budget of the NGOs that distribute it. Since food is donated to these NGOs under the condition that it is sold on the local market, they distribute it in areas where there is the infrastructure ('the capacity') to receive it, regardless of local production cycles or needs. In other words, food is delivered when and where it can be most easily transformed into cash for the NGOs that distribute it, not necessarily where it is most needed. Flooding fertile areas with internationally donated food during the harvest season draws the prices of local crops down and ultimately destroys the possibility for local growers to make a living out of their produce. Schwartz noted that, while local farmers kept on demanding assistance in developing refrigeration and storage technology so that that they could make their own crops more marketable, international aid NGOs kept on delivering food and therefore contributed to destroying, not to fostering, the sustainability of local farming. The massive increase in the flow of food aid after the quake has created additional strain on the local economy. President Preval has recently called for a halt to it and for redirecting assistance towards job creation.³²

The management of emergencies may also end up creating negative unintended consequences for the local capacity to provide durable services. While emergency relief NGOs are much needed for their capacity of being quickly operational when human lives are at stake, their mandates are limited in time and tied to an actual emergency situation. These organisations may end up creating a void difficult to fill at their withdrawal. For instance, in November 2009 Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), was getting ready to withdraw from the traumatology hospital in Port au Prince, on the grounds that the emergency created by intense gang fighting in the slums was over. Because the Haitian state did not have the resources to step in, the question of who could take over the costly but necessary provision of those medical services remained open at the time of my field visit.³³ Turf control and logistical issues may combine with mandate constraints and get in the way of building structures that provide services to local people beyond emergencies. When MSF built a camp hospital in Gonaïves after the destruction caused by the 2008 hurricanes, it demanded that the facility be staffed by its own personnel, thus dislodging the Cuban doctors brigades that were previously there. When the emergency ended and MSF withdrew, the problem of who would be able to guarantee the continuity of health care services emerged.³⁴

The exploration conducted above highlighted the way international strategies of state building that privileged NGOs against the Haitian state as the recipient of funds ended up eroding the state's administrative capacity and creating a cacophony of aid that has been by and large detrimental to fostering institutional capacity, stability, security, economic development and

basic services for the Haitian population. The catastrophic effects of the Haitian earthquake have been amplified by this situation. It is therefore critical for reconstruction that international resources be directed towards NGOs that are not only able to provide emergency services, but that have proven to be committed to a long-term presence in Haiti and to work with the Haitian government to create infrastructures, economic opportunities and services. The following section will explore two NGOs that exemplify success stories in this regard, Partners In Health (PIH) and Fonkoze.

Success stories in the cacophony of aid

PIH and Fonkoze operate with very different means, goals and approaches. While PIH focuses on providing free-of-charge and state-of-the-art health care services, Fonkoze offers banking, microcredit and microcredit-related literacy services to the poor. While PIH and Fonkoze have very different focuses, they share some common traits: their local origins, their connections with a diversified international network of supporters, and a vision and modus operandi that privilege addressing the needs of the poorest in Haiti. Whereas their local roots foster local accountability, the connection to international networks facilitates the transfer of economic and knowledge resources from rich to poor areas. The diversification of donors and investors guarantees independence from any single source of funding, governmental or private. Finally, both organisations share the vision that economy, politics and human rights cannot be treated as separate issues. For Paul Farmer the problematique of disease must be analysed as a biosocial rather than a biomedical problem, and addressed in the context of broader access to economic resources, food, clean water, decent shelter, and so on. For Fonkoze political democracy is strictly linked to economic democracy, the achievement of which requires that poor people have access to financial means and services. This section will explore the mission and modality of operations of these two internationally supported community-based foundations and the lessons that can be learned from their experience for the long-term reconstruction of Haiti. The exploration of the success stories in this section does not imply that their activities have corrected the dynamics of the cacophony of aid or altered its broader effects of eroding state capacity. Nor does the choice of PIH and Fonkoze suggest that these are the only NGOs that have produced positive outcomes of some sort. More modestly the goal here is to highlight some common traits that made these success stories possible, and to suggest that organisations that operate this way are likely to play a positive role in the reconstruction of Haiti.

Partners In Health or, in Creole, Zanmi Lasante was founded in the 1980s by Father Lafontant, Ophelia Dahl and Paul Farmer, a Harvard-based medical doctor and anthropologist. The goal was to provide free health care to poor Haitians in the Plateau Centrale. The group was supported by a South Carolina Episcopal Church group that had been present in Cange since the 1970s providing health care and schooling to families that had been displaced by a dam built on the Artibonite river in 1956 by the Duvaliers as

part of an international development project. The following quotation from the PIH website describes the progress that has been achieved since then:

The small community clinic that first started treating patients in the village of Cange in 1985, has grown into the Zanmi Lasante (ZL) Sociomedical Complex, featuring a 104-bed, full-service hospital with two operating rooms, adult and paediatric inpatient wards, an infectious disease centre . . . an outpatient clinic, a women's health clinic . . . ophthalmology and general medicine clinics, a laboratory, a pharmaceutical warehouse, a Red Cross blood bank, radiographic services, and a dozen schools. ZL has also expanded its operations to eight other sites across Haiti's Central Plateau and beyond. Today, ZL ranks as one of the largest nongovernmental health care providers in Haiti—and the only provider of comprehensive primary care, regardless of ability to pay, for more than half a million impoverished people living in the mountainous Central Plateau.³⁵

PIH has now become the primary provider of free health care in an area that extends from the coast to the border with the Dominican Republic, serving about 1.2 million people.

The PIH model links academic research with social activism. In addition to providing health care services, PIH activities include training local doctors and nurses, using medical and anthropological research for sharing the results of state-of-the-art medical care with those who normally would not have access to it, and engaging in advocacy. PIH sees health care 'as a fundamental right, not a privilege'. It defines its mission as providing health care, alleviating the 'root causes of disease' in Haiti, and sharing the lessons learned around the world, as follows:

At its root, our mission is both medical and moral. It is based on solidarity, rather than charity alone. When a person in Peru, or Siberia, or rural Haiti falls ill, PIH uses all of the means at our disposal to make them well—from pressuring drug manufacturers, to lobbying policy makers, to providing medical care and social services. Whatever it takes. Just as we would do if a member of our own family—or we ourselves—were ill.³⁶

This approach translates into five main principles for action. These are: 1) providing access to primary health care; 2) providing free health care and education for the poor; 3) reliance on community partnership; 4) addressing basic social and economic needs; and 5) serving the poor through the public sector.

PIH orientation to the provision of basic health care services is a very important element of its success and a direct outcome of its leaders' understanding of the causes and treatment of diseases. Indeed, its first principle, ie 'provision of basic health care services' and principle four, ie 'addressing basic social and economic need' are strictly linked. For Farmer, disease must be understood in its connection to the socioeconomic position of the patient. The diagnosis and cure take into consideration how poverty

exacerbates risk factors as well as the constraints and limitations it imposes on the options available to patients for taking care of their health. As a result, the provision of health services is driven by a holistic vision that addresses the patient's life condition. While typically donor-driven health care NGOs have undertaken diagnosis, prevention and sometimes treatment of the particular disease they were funded to address (for instance HIV), the needs-driven PIH integrates infectious disease interventions within a wide range of basic health and social services. This includes not only the delivery of state-of-the-art medicaments, but also provision of food (since malnutrition has been identified as an important factor in the spread of diseases), and in some case monetary allowances to help the families of the sick to survive.³⁷

In addition, because of the obvious connection between lack of access to clean water, malnutrition and diseases (such as diarrhoeal diseases) Partners In Health engaged in the creation of access to clean water and agricultural programmes. In 2002 it created Partners In Agriculture (Zanmi Agrikol—ZA) as its agricultural arm. ZA started a programme to tackle the issue of malnutrition by working at different levels in the area of the Plateau Centrale. As a result of its agricultural programme and food processing initiative, in 2008 ZA was able to treat over 5000 malnourished children. This was the result of an integrated and holistic approach that, in addition to providing emergency food to save lives, developed family-based production. ZA provides farmers with tools and seed to cultivate their land, and also buys seeds back from them, thus supplying families with cash necessary for a minimally sustainable livelihood. Excess seeds are saved and donated to another family for the following sowing season, which creates a positive expansion of access to locally produced food. On a broader scale ZA shelters poor farmers from the vagaries of the monetary economy and aims to make the region as self-sufficient as possible with regard to food. Before the quake Haiti imported 80 per cent of its food. In 2008 the rise in food prices that followed the international increase in oil prices and the four hurricanes that hit Haiti reduced many to starvation. After the quake food prices increased once again, and thousands moved to the countryside from the destroyed capital to try to make a basic living. This reverse urbanisation created a crisis in the countryside. In response ZA identified crops that would be ready to harvest in less than three months for planting in its 80-acre farm. ZA is also planning to expand its agricultural assistance from 2000 to 5000 families.³⁸

Differently from many other NGOs, PIH does not charge for its services. As stated in its second principle, health and education, which are the foundation stones of development, must be provided free. Indeed, in situations of extreme poverty, this approach removes a very important obstacle to access. 'Community partnership' guides both programmatic choices and the provision of health care services. As I have argued before, PIH decisions on its priorities for action are 'needs-driven' and rooted in the demands of the community within which it operates, rather than in the programmatic decisions of bilateral donors or international organisations' headquarters. Furthermore, for PIH, 'Funding alone . . . won't be enough. For this massive investment to make a real impact on the twin epidemics of poverty and

disease, a comprehensive and community-based approach is key'.³⁹ In other words, care must be rooted in the specific understanding of the particularity of the places within which it is delivered, and provided in such a way that it addresses the needs of the people it is meant to benefit rather than the demands of international governmental or non-governmental structures. For PIH health care must be provided with continuity. Differently from NGOs that are limited by statute to perform specific tasks (ie emergency relief) or whose mandate is defined by donors and constituencies that conceive it in line with their (political, economic, ideal) priorities, PIH is driven by the needs of the local poor and is committed to work in partnership with local institutions in order to build the local capacity to provide services. To a question on whether PIH has an exit strategy Ophelia Dhal, PIH director, answers:

We don't. But we do have a transition strategy. Our goal is not to see how quickly we can leave a community but to rebuild public health systems and infrastructure, provide training and support for local medical staff, and employ community health workers as agents of change to break the vicious cycle of poverty and disease. Over time, our success in achieving these goals reduces our role in providing direct service but not our commitment.⁴⁰

Community health workers are central to implementing PIH'S holistic approach to the provision of health care services. Community health workers increase access to therapy for patients who are unable to reach distant clinics, monitor compliance with treatment in rural areas and provide health care and disease prevention information and services. Furthermore, it is the strong position of PIH that community workers must be paid, and not, as many NGOs have elected, given food in return for volunteering work. By paying its workers, PIH has contributed to creating economic sustainability in the communities where it operates.

PIH'S choice of bringing medical services where they are needed instead of expecting patients to go where they are provided has also proven very effective for emergency care after the earthquake. Since then it has been running mobile clinics in four settlements in and around Port au Prince. The mobile clinics treated nearly 4200 patients during their first week of operation, and have recorded more than 100 000 medical encounters since their inception.⁴¹

PIH is driven by local needs (and thus is accountable to local populations), but it is also part of an international network that makes it possible to transfer knowledge and financial resources from rich to poor areas. As Dhal has indicated, the PIH model is based on its capacity to create partnerships at various levels. This makes PIH independent from exogenous agendas, and yet able to mobilise and transfer a considerable flow of resources. In contrast to many NGOs that have worked beyond, beside and in spite of the Haitian government, PIH has contributed to creating local capacity by working in co-operation with it. As Paul Farmer has recently re-emphasised in the context of his report to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in order to be

equitable and stable the provision of health care cannot be left to NGOs alone but needs to happen in partnership with the public sector.⁴² The vision for the way ahead in Haiti outlined by Farmer in September 2009 during his first visit as the Deputy UN Special Envoy, favoured small business and partnerships with the government.⁴³

In over 20 years of presence in the Plateau Centrale not only has PIH provided free health services, fostered the emergence of the possibility of a sustainable life by paying its workers, and promoted, through ZA, local production of food, it has also favoured the creation of social capital by promoting the formation of professional skills, basic literacy (through its 12 schools), and the formation of local networks of solidarity among the people in the Cange area. In Dhal's words:

...many of these young people have embraced a spirit of solidarity and a commitment to health and social justice. At a moving ceremony this past August, hundreds of people packed the Bon Sauveur chapel in Cange to celebrate and give a rousing send-off for seven students who are going to medical school in the Dominican Republic and Cuba. All of the students have pledged to return to the Central Plateau to serve the destitute sick after they complete their training.⁴⁴

Fonkoze

While having a very different mission and goals from PIH, Fonkoze shares some of the same traits.⁴⁵ It is rooted in the local community, yet connected to an extensive international network; it is driven by the needs of the poor instead of the prescriptions of international headquarters; it takes an holistic vision to providing financial opportunities for the most disenfranchised and it is committed to staying on the ground as long as it is needed. Founded in 1994, Fonkoze is the result of the joining of forces of a visionary priest, Father Joseph B Philippe and a former business consultant, Anne Hastings, who decided to put her skills at the service of the poorest people. Fonkoze states its mission as follows: 'Helping Haiti's poor remove themselves from poverty and create a democratic economy in Haiti'. The founders underscore the indissolubility of democratic institutions and a democratic economy, which they see as the result of the availability of financial infrastructures that provide economic opportunities to the poor. Thus 'political democracy would never take hold without a democratic economy as its foundation—an economy all Haitians could help to develop... The poor—who bravely organized themselves to gain political power—needed to create a bank they could call their own.'⁴⁶

Fonkoze's mission translates into the following operating principles:

Solidarity: The Haitian proverb, 'When all the fireflies shine the way for one another, we will succeed at developing the country', illuminates this principle.

Priority to women: The liberation of women is the liberation of the family.

Priority for the rural: With Fonkoze, there are no outsiders—every one is inside.

Credit is not enough: For our clients to become empowered, Fonkoze marries credit with training, advice, social programs, and follow-up.

Advantage: In Fonkoze, everything we offer must be to the client's advantage. We grow as our clients grow. We learn from our clients so that we can better satisfy their needs.

Participation: Let everyone participate so we can overcome suffering.

Transparency: In Fonkoze, all cards are on the table, nothing is concealed.

Sustainability: Fonkoze is a business that functions for the benefit of the poor, but it's a business all the same.

Motivation to our investors: Our investors are motivated by the social and economic progress of our clients.

Language of Fonkoze: Creole is the official language of Fonkoze. All activities are carried out using Creole.⁴⁷

Fonkoze grew remarkably during its now 15 years of existence. The Fonkoze loan fund started in 1998 and had reached 1.5 million by 2001. At the end of that year Fonkoze had more than 20 800 savings accounts, with a total deposit of \$2.5 million, 8500 borrowers and an outstanding loan portfolio of \$6 000 000. Starting with only one branch, by the end of 2006 Fonkoze had 30 branches, covering 45 000 microcredit borrowers and 120 000 clients who used their savings, currency exchange and remittance services. 'Fonkoze branches cover 80 per cent of the Haitian territory, but it has not yet reached its full potential, having reached only seven per cent of the market in the areas it serves'. Fonkoze provides a series of services that include microcredit for women based on 'solidarity groups'; individual business loans; savings products; currency exchange; money transfer (remittance) services; basic literacy; health maintenance; and business skills. The loans, most of which amount to less than \$200 are used to start and sustain individual small businesses.⁴⁸

In line with its mission of building a democratic economy, Fonkoze sees its role not only as one of helping the poor to earn a living, but as 'chang[ing] the economy of the entire country' by providing opportunities for development through the creation of social capital. In this regard some of the poorest families that receive loans are organised in solidarity groups and encouraged to participate in Fonkoze's educational programmes, which help them not only to think about how they organise their business, but also how to protect their health, the environment and how to address human rights.⁴⁹

Fonkoze sees its success as based upon solidarity among all its constituencies, ie clients, employees, donors and partners. As stated before, Fonkoze shares with Zanmi Lasante a holistic vision of its task. This is reflected in its operating principle, 'credit is not enough'. In this regard Fonkoze sees accompanying the poor on their path out of poverty as one of its key commitments. Fonkoze therefore does not limit itself to providing loans, but offers a vast array of services to accompany these loans. These are: literacy, education and life skills, micro-insurance, banking services, health

and malnutrition programmes,⁵⁰ and a program for the ultra-poor ('Chemen Lavi Miyo'—the Path to Better Life) which includes training to make clients able to participate in micro-credit loan schemes. After 18 month of activities, 95 per cent of the women participants in the programme 'graduated' to the next step and became eligible to enter 'Ti Kredi', the entry-level loan programme for the ultra-poor. Similarly to PIH Fonkoze's strategy is driven by the needs expressed by the people it sets out to assist. Fonkoze's 'general assembly' is the mechanism through which the needs of the communities where it operates are brought to its board of directors. The 'general assembly' is constituted by 200 women elected by their peers to represent them. It approves institutional policies and formulates demands for credit services that better fit the needs of its recipients.⁵¹

Fonkoze is now engaging with assisting Haiti in post-earthquake reconstruction. In 2008 it had to creatively address the challenge posed by the devastation caused by the hurricanes. When many of the families who had received loans lost their crops, which meant both their food supply and their source of income, Fonkoze was able to raise over US \$4 million from international donor agencies and to make available new loans for people who were already borrowers with an extended repayment period of one year. Eighty percent of the restructured loans were paid back. In addition, 14 000 clients were able to receive new loans.⁵² In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake Fonkoze was able to reopen 34 of its 41 branches and to facilitate the transfer of over US\$2 million to Haiti.

Conclusions

This article has argued that international policies that privileged NGOs as the favoured recipients of international support have contributed to fostering the cacophony of aid and the lack of accountability of politicians to local constituencies in Haiti and that, by siphoning human and monetary resources from the state, these NGOs have *de facto* jeopardised the building of sustainable institutions in the country. Furthermore, because of the rigidity of their mandate or administrative functioning some major international NGOs have ended up producing negative impacts on the local economy and on the durable and consistent availability of services to the population. However, while international strategies of privileging NGOs as the providers of services have certainly eroded state capacity and created unintended consequences, not all NGOs can be dismissed as the agents of new forms of imperial politics, or as detrimental to institutional sustainability and populations' well-being. Through the exploration of the cases of two community-based foundations the article has argued that organisations that are locally accountable, needs-driven and connected to a diversified network of international funding have created social capital, sustainable sources of income, literacy, access to health and credit, and durable positive effects in the life of the populations they serve. It is in partnership with these kinds of actor that solidarity for the reconstruction of Haiti should be envisioned.

Notes

Research for this article was supported by the Dean Niles Research Fellowship, Virginia Tech College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. The argument relies on interviews with representatives of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and UN agencies, as well as on field visits and interviews with staff of Partners In Health and Fonkoze. Some of the people I interviewed in November 2009 are among the 100 UN personnel who perished in the January quake. I am extremely grateful to all those who have taken time out of their busy schedule to share information and thoughts with me: the staff of MINUSTAH and the UN agencies; Alison Lutz, PIH Haiti Program Coordinator; Gillaine Warne, Zanmi Agrikol and Anne Hastings, Director of Fonkoze. I would also like to thank Max Stephenson, Director of the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance for having excited my interest in NGOs, for the innumerable conversations on this topic, and for his partnership in a broader research on Community Based Foundations and peacekeeping. The views expressed in this article (as well as its shortcomings) are exclusively my responsibility and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the staff of the UN, Partners In Health or Fonkoze.

- 1 See International Crisis Group, *Haiti: Stabilization and Reconstruction after the Quake*, Latin America and Caribbean Report no 32, 31 March 2010.
- 2 For a dated but still interesting review of these attributions of causality, see R Lawless, *Haiti's Bad Press*, Rochester, VT: Schenkman, 1992. For a position that also emphasises 'political culture' as a reason for UN failure, see UN General Assembly, A/55/618, 9 November 2000.
- 3 L Zanotti, 'Imagining democracy, building unsustainable institutions: the UN peacekeeping operation in Haiti', *Security Dialogue*, 39(5), 2008, pp 539–561.
- 4 For a critique of neoliberal conceptions that separate the institutional from the economic sphere in Haiti, see J Cockaine, 'Winning Haiti's protection competition: organized crime and peace operations past, present and future', *International Peacekeeping*, 16(1), 2009, pp 77–99.
- 5 For a debate on NGOs and civil society, see B Badie, *The Imported State: The Westernization of the Political Order*, Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000; MR Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples*, Cambridge: Polity, 2007; M Kaldor, *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War*, Cambridge: Polity, 2003; R Lipschutz & J Rowe, *Globalization, Governmentality and Global Politics: Regulation for the Rest of Us?*, London: Routledge, 2005; P Wapner, 'The normative promise of nonstate actors: a theoretical account', in P Wapner & LE Ruiz (eds), *Principled World Politics: The Challenge of Normative International Relations*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000; C Thomas, 'Global governance, development and human security: exploring the links', *Third World Quarterly*, 22(2), 2001, pp 159–175; and CJ Bickerton, P Cunliffe & A Gourevitch (eds), *Politics without Sovereignty: A Critique of Contemporary International Relations*, London: University College London Press, 2007.
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- 7 The argument that NGOs are part of broader assemblages of occupation has been made by Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War*. Both Duffield and O Richmond, 'Becoming liberal, unbecoming liberalism: liberal–local hybridity via the everyday as a response to the paradoxes of liberal peacebuilding', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 3(3) 2009, pp 324–344 have advocated solidarity as an alternative to international interventionism.
- 8 This article does not argue that this support should be provided instead of funding the state, but as an alternative to other types of NGOs. An analysis of the role of the Haitian state in reconstruction is beyond the scope of this work.
- 9 O Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- 10 JS Sørensen, 'Aid policy, civil society and ethnic polarisation', in Sørensen (ed), *Challenging the Aid Paradigm: Western Currents and Asian Alternatives*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp 78–104.

- 11 L Zanotti, 'Governmentalizing the post cold-war international regime: the United Nations debate on democratization and good governance in the 1990s', *Alternatives*, 30(4), 2005, pp 461–487.
- 12 United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), *Manual of Integrated Missions*, New York: DPKO, 2008.
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- 15 International Crisis Group, *Haiti*, p 2.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p 8
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 International Crisis Group, *Haiti: Stability at Risk*, Latin America and Caribbean Briefing Report no 19, Port au Prince/Brussels, 3 March 2009; and interviews with MINUSTAH officials.
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 The first UN peacekeeping operation with a mandate to reform the police (the United Nations Mission in Haiti—UNMIH) was deployed in 1995, after the elected president Jean Bertrand Aristide, who had been ousted by a coup, was brought back into office by the UN. UN peacekeepers withdrew from Haiti in 2000, only to redeploy in 2004 after Aristide was ousted for the second time.
- 21 At the same time MINUSTAH also included international civilian personnel: 1212 local civilian staff and 214 UN volunteers. After the quake, by its resolution no 1908 of 19 January 2010, the Security Council authorised an increase in its strength to 8940 military personnel and 3711 police. See <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minustah/facts.shtml>.
- 22 Interview with the MINUSTAH Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr Hedi Annabi, Port au Prince, 13 November 2009.
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- 25 *Ibid.*
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- 33 I am not aware of what happened now to that hospital in the light of the emergency created by the January earthquake.
- 34 Conversation with World Health Organisation representative (who spoke on conditions of anonymity), Port Au Prince, 9 November 2009.
- 35 www.PIH.org, accessed 20 March 2010.
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- 43 <http://www.haitianalysis.com/2009/9/28/build-back-better-says-dr-paul-farmer-un-deputy-special-en-voy-for-haiti-part-i>, accessed 20 March 2010.
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- 46 Fonkoze, 'The Fonkoze family', undated, pp 3–4.
- 47 <http://www.fonkoze.org/aboutfonkoze/whoweare/ourmission.html>, accessed 20 March 2009

48 *Ibid*, p 7.

49 *Ibid*. During a conversation held in Port au Prince in November 2009, Anne Hastings, director of Fonkoze, pointed out that there were some cases where one member of the group took the money to migrate to the Dominican Republic and let down her partners.

50 This programme has been launched in partnership with Zanmi Lasante, UNICEF, the Catholic Medical Mission Board and the Children's Nutrition Programme.

51 Fonkoze, *Nouvel Fonkoze*, Spring 2009.

52 *Ibid*, p 4.

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