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Diamonds in the Rubble: The Women of Haiti—Institutions, Gender Equity, and Human Development in Haiti

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Diamonds in the Rubble: The Women of Haiti

Institutions, Gender Equity and Human Development in Haiti

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Abstract

Although Haiti's 2010 earthquake brought to light the inconceivable poverty existing in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti's struggle for economic development long pre-dated that earthquake. One problem in Haiti is the high level of gender inequity, and we argue that human development theory is the best mode for change. We provide a brief background of Haiti's economic development over the last several decades, along with the status of women's rights and gender-differentiated socio-economic outcomes. We analyze the ways that policy neglect of gender equity in Haiti has contributed to failed economic development in the past. Finally, we identify ways that other developing countries have successfully incorporated a focus on gender equity in their development strategy, particularly in the face of natural disaster and financial crisis. Our goal is working towards a set of leading practices consistent with institutionalism that can be used in relating gender (in)equality to economic development.

JEL Codes: J16; O15; B52; B54

Keywords: economic development; human development; Haiti; gender; crisis

“With graffiti and protests, from sweltering tents to air-conditioned offices, Haitians are desperately trying to get a message to their government and the world: enough with the status quo... The simple phrase ‘Aba Préval’ [‘Down with Préval’]... has become shorthand for a long list of frustrations, and an epithet expressing a broader fear – that Haitians will be stuck in limbo indefinitely, and that the opportunity to reinvent Haiti is being lost.”

- Damien Cave (Cave 2010)

1. Introduction: ‘Economic’ Development or Human Freedom?

New York Times journalist Damien Cave could not have put it any simpler: the Haitian people need change, and want it just as badly. The devastating earthquake that ravaged Haiti this past January gathered world media attention and brought to light the inconceivable poverty existing in the Western Hemisphere. Yet the struggle for economic development in Haiti pre-dates the earthquake as well as the global financial crisis of 2008. Many factors, including political instability and poor social policies, have led to reoccurring economic breakdowns within Haiti. These economic failures have also led to widespread failures in human development. For example, more than 80% of Haiti’s population lives in poverty and diseases such as HIV/AIDS are still highly prevalent (Joshi 2009).

Economic development has often been described as a strategy of emulation, whereby developing countries examine existing institutions in order to grasp a recipe for progress (Dam 2006). Historically, development has been narrowly conceptualized in terms of economic growth—but this is problematic for a few reasons. According to Polanyi, “the control of the economic system by the market... means no less than the running of society as an adjunct to the market” (Polanyi 1944: 60). This means that economic, legal and social institutions are established to uphold the power structures currently in place, so economic growth does not ‘trickle down’ in many societies (ul Haq 2008). Because of this, the particular set of policies enacted to achieve growth can either exacerbate poverty and inequality or reduce

them. Also, there is no automatic link between higher income and the expansion of human *freedom*—which we argue (following Sen 1999) is one hallmark of successful development.

To Sen, freedom is defined by “what people can positively achieve [which] is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives” (Sen 1999: 5). Increased income is only a part of the picture, so institutional arrangements in the political, social and economic realms play a key role. As Sen describes, institutions either work to cultivate free and independent agency or perpetuate the “major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states” (Sen 1999: 3-4). While social and political “freedoms and rights are also very effective in contributing to economic progress,” Sen notes that “their relevance for development does not have to be freshly established through their indirect contribution to the growth of GNP or to the promotion of industrialization” (Sen 1999: 5). Human freedom is a constituent component of development, but this is *not* simply due to its effect on economic growth.

Like Sen, we realize that economic growth can occur without a corresponding increase in human freedom, and so we would not call the former ‘development’ in the absence of the latter. Our broader conception of *human* (as opposed to strictly ‘economic’) development relates to “the quality and distribution of economic growth, not only...the quantity of such growth” (Ul Haq 2008: 30). This exemplifies Granovetter’s notion of social embeddedness; since economic behavior is “embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations” (Granovetter 1985: 487), economic development is not separable from social and political development. This also applies to the case of Haitian reconstruction.

In the discussion that follows, we examine Haitian development over the last few decades, noting how its trajectory has been affected by the global financial crisis as well as the recent earthquake. In so doing, we focus on the important link between gender and economic development. Gender is often neglected in economic analysis because it is considered a ‘social’ variable. As we show, however, gender

inequity in educational, health and labor outcomes can undermine economic development (particularly by stifling human capital formation and affecting fertility) and certainly undermines human development by disempowering women and minimizing women's roles within society. Therefore, gender equity is crucial for reaching socioeconomic outcomes capable of positioning Haiti to achieve sustainable growth that supports human development. Several examples from other developing countries are provided to illustrate how gender can be successfully integrated into development strategies (particularly in the face of natural disaster). We conclude that gender equitable policies and practices can assist Haiti's recovery, but that this requires a more holistic approach for development policymaking—focusing on human development and not simply economic growth.

2. A Brief Background: The Challenges of Haitian Development

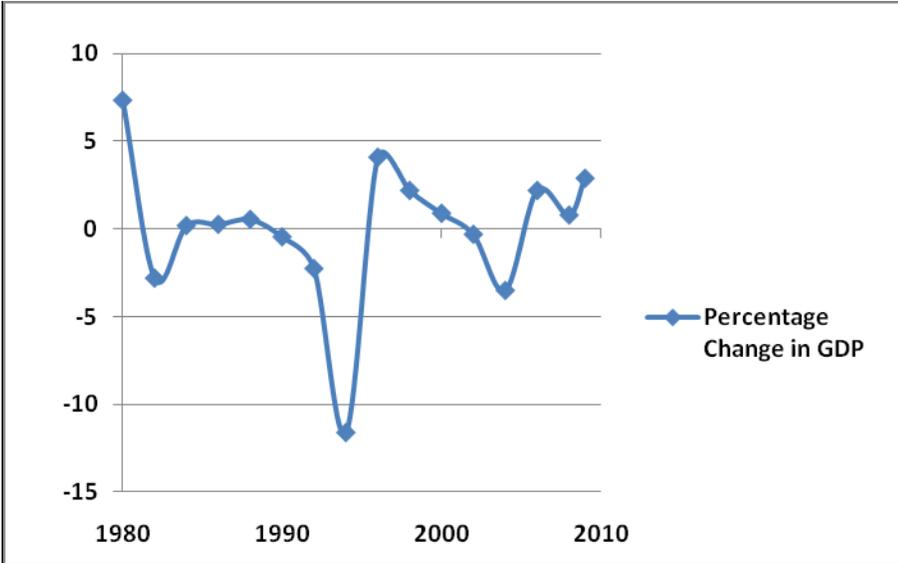
Political Instability

Over the decades, Haiti has established many development goals: increase economic growth, beat poverty, control the spread of AIDS/HIV, achieve higher educational attainment, and create better governance so as to build a stronger and more capable country. However, these goals have not been met for a wide variety of reasons—one of the main reasons being Haiti's status as one of the most unstable political states in modern history. Since Haiti's declaration of independence from France in 1804, there have been more than 20 different constitutions written, with many different regimes having ruled the country. From the repressive regimes of the Duvalier family (spanning from 1957-1986) to the coups in the 1980s and 1990s, Haiti became politically and economically alienated due to the government's neglect of its citizens and the dictatorship-like rule that saw thousands of Haitians murdered (Harper 2004). In response to these abuses of power, Western states established heavy embargoes and levied steep tariffs in order to send a message to the failing state (Harper 2004).¹ While these international sanctions did not always achieve their goals, they did have serious repercussions for the Haitian people, many of whom have heavily relied (and still do rely) on multifaceted relationships with the international community for their survival. Apart from costing Haiti significant external resources, the political instability has also prevented the Haitian government from being able to devote sufficient time, energy

and resources to the project of economic development. This political negligence has certainly cemented Haiti's status as the poorest state in the Western world (Shah 2010).

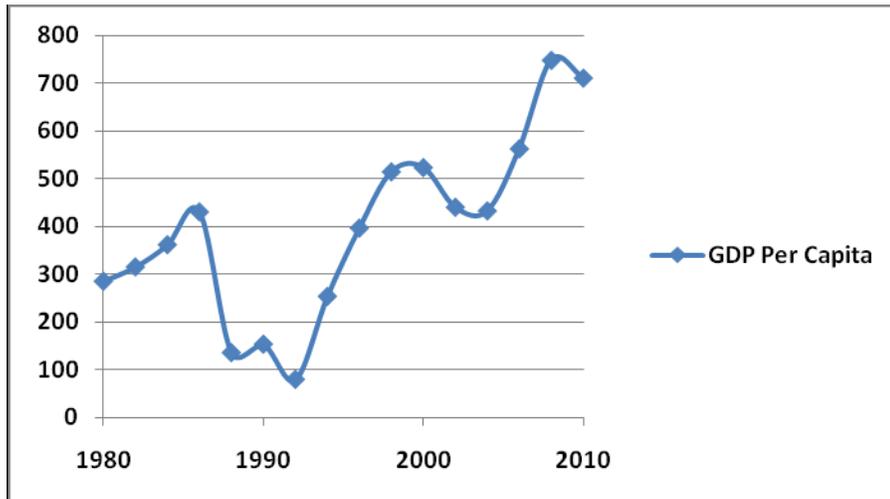
As Tool (1998) notes, Veblen's theory of social change focuses on institutional habit and routine. This concept of institutional rigidity can help to explain the recurring government failure in Haiti, which has hindered development in many ways ranging from the lack of economic diversification and high poverty rates to the spread of HIV and the stagnation of economic growth. Chart 1 depicts Haiti's GDP growth rate for the last three decades. Apart from being slow (and at times negative), the country's economic growth has been extremely volatile.² This reflects the ongoing political instability in Haiti as well as changing international policies toward the country; it also demonstrates the challenges Haiti faces in its quest to reach a high-growth path. In per capita terms, the picture looks even worse; from 1990-2007, Haiti's annual growth rate of GDP per capita was -2.7% (UNDP 2009). By 2008, per capita income in Haiti was only \$716.5 current USD (United Nations 2010c).

Chart 1. GDP Growth Rate, Haiti, 1980-2009



Source: Economy Watch (2010)

Chart 2. GDP Per Capita, Haiti, 1980-2010



Source: Economy Watch (2010)

Struggling to Industrialize

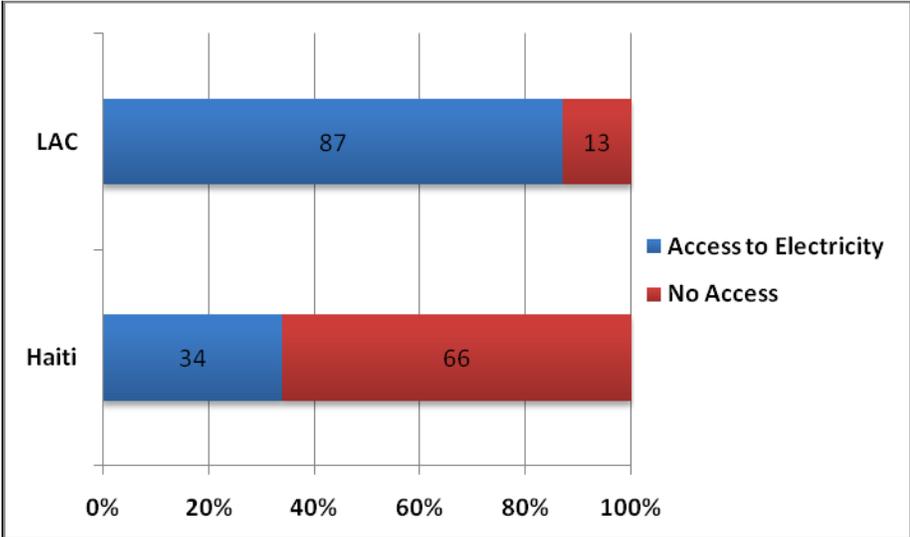
Haiti's sluggish economic growth may be tied to the sectoral composition of the economy. Although industrialization is not synonymous with development, historical studies show that most countries increase the manufacturing and services share of GDP--hence decreasing the agricultural share of GDP--as they develop (Shafaeddin 1998: 2). In Haiti, the agricultural share of GDP has indeed fallen over the last few decades, though the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) notes that 85% of rural Haitians farm and 50% of Haiti's labor force still works in agriculture (FAO 2010). However, low investment in the agricultural sector has contributed to low sectoral productivity (FAO 2010). Perhaps this can help explain why Haiti imports 60% of its food—though it used to be agriculturally self-sufficient—and why more than half of the country's population is undernourished (Dugan 2010; FAO 2010).

Furthermore, the industrial share of GDP has not risen in Haiti; it has also fallen—leaving the growing service sector to bridge the gap (McGuigan 2006). This has created two problems for Haiti. One problem is that Haitian service sector revenues are heavily dependent on tourism, the volume of which is very sensitive to both domestic and international factors—including weather, disease, and macroeconomic stability, among others (Jafari 1974). Another problem is that reduced agricultural

employment has led to mass rural-urban migration and thus heightened urban competition for scarce resources and jobs, leaving most Haitians living at subsistence levels (or less) (Virgo 2010).

One reason Haiti has not been able to successfully increase the scope of its manufacturing sector has been the lack of infrastructure. Even before the recent financial crisis and the earthquake (which understandably made matters worse), only 34% of Haitians had access to electricity, compared to 87% of the population in Latin American countries (see Chart 3); furthermore, only 24% of Haiti’s roads were paved (Drummer and Taft-Morales 2007: 12). While low wages are often thought to entice manufacturing ventures in developing countries, low wages are not sufficient; among other things, access to solid infrastructure is crucial in order to participate in the global trading system and particularly to achieve internationally competitive exports (Francois and Manchin 2006).³

Chart 3. Electricity Availability in Haiti and Latin American Countries (LAC), 2000

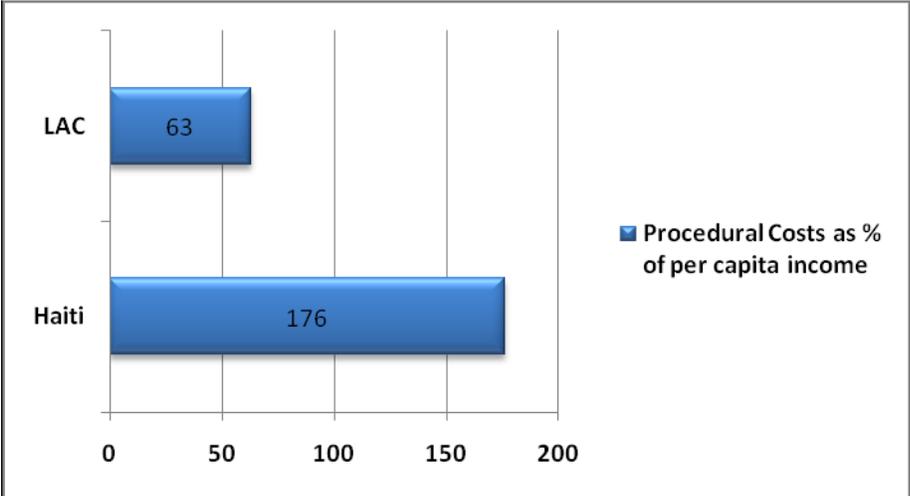


Source: Drummer & Taft-Morales (2007)

Combined with the high cost of registering for business ownership in Haiti, poor infrastructure has also exerted upward pressure on business start-up costs, which now represent 176% of the average per capita income in Haiti, as noted in Chart 4 (Drummer and Taft-Morales 2007: 14). As Chart 5 shows, it takes almost three times as long to start a business in Haiti as compared to other Latin American countries (Drummer and Taft-Morales 2007: 16), and these government-shaped barriers create such limitations that

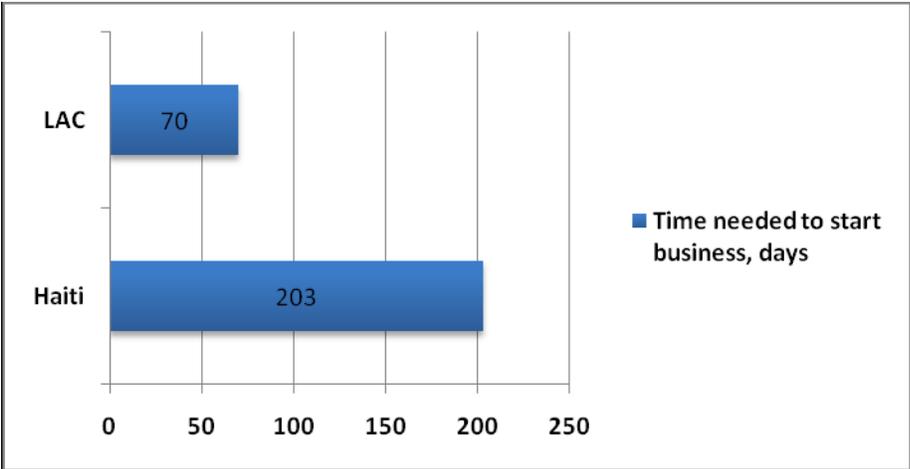
it is difficult for individuals to lift themselves out of poverty without state or international assistance. This is problematic since entrepreneurship is considered one of the hallmarks of a dynamic economy (Hoenig 2005).

Chart 4. Business Start-up Costs, Haiti and Latin American Countries (LAC), 2004



Source: Drummer and Taft-Morales (2007)

Chart 5. Procedural Time Needed to Open a Business, Haiti and Latin American Countries (LAC), 2004



Source: Drummer & Taft-Morales (2007)

Poverty and Social Inequalities

The lack of decent employment stymies Haitian development not only by affecting macroeconomic outcomes, but also by making it hard to reduce social inequalities in the country. A long history of corrupt leadership has cemented large class inequalities within Haiti, and by 2008, “Haiti had the second largest overall income gap [in the world] between the very rich and the very poor” (Maguire 2010). Poverty has also been an ever-present scourge in Haiti. Even before the recent earthquake, more than half of Haiti’s population lived in extreme poverty (on less than \$1/day), while three-quarters lived on less than \$2 a day (Helwege and Birch 2007; World Bank 2006).

While detailed poverty statistics for Haiti are not available for most years, poverty is thought to have decreased from the late-1980s to 1999-2000 (though still remaining very high) as Haiti attempted to regroup after the Duvalier family’s rule (Helwege and Birch 2007; Pedersen and Lockwood 2001). There is more debate regarding what happened to income inequality during this period; Pedersen and Lockwood (2001: 4-5) calculate a decrease in income inequality (noting a drop in the Gini coefficient from .533 in 1986-1987 to .489 in 1999-2000), but the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) present higher Gini coefficients of .592 in 2001 and .595 for 2009 (World Bank 2002; UNDP 2009a).⁴ All estimates still depict a worrisome amount of income inequality in Haiti, since Gini coefficients above 0.42 can cause a “feedback loop that leads to worsening economic outcomes over time” (Altman 2008). The distribution of inequality also shifted during this period, creating new development challenges for Haiti; urban inequality increased while rural inequality decreased (Pedersen and Lockwood 2001). This is likely a result of the shift away from agriculture and the resulting rural-urban migration mentioned earlier.

Apart from income inequalities, Haiti also faces social inequalities in terms of education and health. Largely due to governmental neglect and instability, social services have rarely been provided by the state in Haiti; in fact, nearly 80% of public services and 70% of health services in rural areas are provided by non-governmental organizations (Dupuy 2010). As of 2009, a very high proportion—42%—of Haitians did not have access to an improved water source, ranking the country 134th out of 150

countries for which the United Nations gathered this statistic (UNDP 2009b). Almost one-fifth of Haitians will not survive to the age of 40 (Ibid.). Furthermore, the highest HIV prevalence rate in Haiti is twice that of the Caribbean (and more than twice that of the world); 2.2% of the Haitian population is infected with HIV, with a slightly higher prevalence rate in urban areas compared to rural ones (UNAIDS 2008a). Haiti also faces an extreme scarcity of skilled human capital; in 2007 only 62.1% of the population was literate (UN 2007). Furthermore, educational completion rates have been quite low. Educational data are also scanty for Haiti, but the U.S. Department of State estimates that only 65% of school-aged children are enrolled in primary school, and of these, less than 35% will actually complete their primary education (U.S. Department of State 2010).⁵ These social failures epitomize how political failures have further embedded poverty and inequality into the state.

External shocks: Food Crisis, Global Recession, and the Earthquake

In early 2008, poverty and hunger in Haiti were aggravated by skyrocketing global food prices, leading to a devastating food crisis, widespread protests and ultimately the ousting of the prime minister (Seelke and Hornbeck 2008). That summer, four hurricanes destroyed 60% of the year's harvest and flooded much of the country (Carroll 2008). In this context, it is seen as no wonder that the financial crisis of 2008 and natural disaster of 2010 have left Haiti's development on the brink of irretrievability. Since the financial crisis started in the developed world, most analyses of crisis effects have focused on the developed world—but the crisis also hit the developing world hard (albeit often through different channels). For example, much of the developed world was exposed to the crisis through strong holdings of financial conglomerates; Haiti was not really affected this way, due to its underdeveloped banking sector. Instead, the financial crisis primarily affected Haiti through its effects on remittances and foreign aid.

Remittances have played an enormous role in the Haitian economy over the last forty years, jumping from \$18 million USD in 1971 to \$985 million USD in 2006 (Migration Policy Institute 2007). As of 2005, remittances represented a significant amount (20%) of Haiti's GDP and a whopping 10,347% of the foreign direct investment (FDI) into Haiti (Migration Policy Institute 2007). However, the

financial crisis's negative impact on real wealth in the United States (and to a lesser degree, other host countries) led to a sharp reduction in remittances to Haiti between the first quarter of 2008 and the first quarter of 2009 (World Bank 2009: 117). According to a Washington Post article, many remittances sent from the U.S. to Haiti were cut by 50-75% in order for U.S.-based relatives to cover their own daily costs of living in light of the global economic crisis (Sheridan 2009). In a country such as Haiti, though—where remittances can be the determining factor for decisions such as whether families can afford to send their children to school, or even purchase enough food for daily consumption—this drop in remittances has proven disastrous for many families.

It is also worth noting that Haiti had limited fiscal policy flexibility to deal with the economic downturn. Given that nearly all of Haiti's governmental budget is accumulated through outside institutions⁶, the country was essentially handcuffed without a key (Joshi 2009). This illustrates the double-edged sword of assistance from the international community. While it is no wonder that international organizations have maintained a physical and financial presence in Haiti for many years, given the history of political uncertainty in the country and its egregious effects on the economy there, Haiti's increasing reliance on foreign assistance also increases its vulnerability to a widening gap between resources and needs. It is not only the lack of available funds which restricts Haiti's policy space, but also the conditions of internationally-provided grants and loans—which generally aim to protect foreign interests even while they assist a country in need.

This is an even more pressing issue in light of the earthquake of January 2010, which killed more than 250,000 people and left Haiti in a pile of rubble (Airhart 2010). Due to unreliable infrastructure, eighty percent of government buildings (including the presidential palace) were destroyed (Airhart 2010). Given the destruction of many private homes and businesses as well, poverty levels are widely expected to increase in both urban and rural areas, and the unemployment rate is expected to rise by 8.5% in 2010—a severe blow to the Haitian economy, particularly in the tourism industry (Haiti PDNA 2010). More than ever, Haiti needs the help of financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank, but support will be tougher to come by as 'austerity' seems to be the next guideline for international entities. The Haitian

government has been frustrated with the fact that in previous disasters, such as the food crisis of 2008 (caused by tropical storms), only 10% of the \$100 million in promised aid arrived, resulting in further hardships for a group of people that struggle to survive even when the global economy acts robustly (Joshi 2009). Following the earthquake of 2010, the international community has pledged almost \$2.5 billion in aid to assist in Haiti's reconstruction (Guardian 2010). However, longstanding effects of the economic downturn call into question the role that the developed world will be able and willing to play with regard to future financial assistance for Haiti (Guardian 2010). The recent Greek credit crisis in Europe has forced the realization among developed countries that fiscal responsibility will be more important than ever. In light of this, it is crucial to realize that reshaping Haiti through a social agenda can prove beneficial from not only a gender standpoint, but also an economic one.

3. Haiti: The Gender Dimension

From the preceding section, it is clear that the challenges facing Haitian development are vast. Government corruption and inefficacy, lack of economic diversification, poor infrastructure, and unfavorable health and education outcomes are only a handful of the problems Haiti must conquer—and these issues have only been exacerbated by the financial crisis of 2008 and the ecological disaster created by the 2010 earthquake. Given the complexity of the situation, there is no easy solution and any strategy for Haitian reconstruction and development must be comprehensive as well as multifaceted. Among other things this means that economic recovery is linked to political recovery and social recovery. However, apart from non-governmental organizations and other international institutions (whose efforts have been neither continuous nor consistent in aim), little attention has been paid to the social sphere in Haiti for quite some time (Verner and Egset 2006; Collier 2010). One consequence of this has been that institutional arrangements within Haiti have perpetuated hierarchical power relations and gendered socioeconomic outcomes in the country.

How does gender inequality affect economic development?

Gender is often neglected in economic analysis because it is considered a 'social' variable. Yet there are important links between gender and economic development. Many economists exclusively

focus on the ways that economic development (narrowly defined as economic growth) can help women—for example, by raising overall standards of living. While this approach neglects to account for the fact that economic growth does not automatically ‘trickle down’ in many societies (ul Haq 2008), it also ignores the ways that gender (in)equity also influences processes of development. For example, gender inequity in educational, health and labor outcomes undermines economic development (Klasen 1999; Magnoli 2000; Klasen and Lamanna 2009). One way this occurs is by stifling the formation of human capital (the ‘know-how’ and skill set acquired through education and job training), which is one essential ingredient for economic growth (Frank 1960; Mincer 1981; Romer 1989; Bergheim 2005).

However, institutionalists realize that the disempowerment of women affects society in many ways, since women often feel greater responsibility for supporting their families (particularly in developing societies where women are responsible for everyday household maintenance). By restricting the scope for economic opportunity and mobility, gender inequity contributes to widely-discussed trends such as the feminization of poverty⁷ (Peterson 1987; Fakuda-Parr 1999; Thibos, Lavin-Loucks, and Martin 2007). As Peterson notes, institutions either exacerbate or moderate changes in family structure, the labor force and social support systems, in turn shaping the feminization of poverty (Peterson 1987: 330). By promoting or hindering women’s social and economic empowerment, institutions influence Haiti’s likelihood of reaching socioeconomic outcomes congruent with sustainable growth and human development.

‘Gender-blind’ policy-making and neoliberalism

While gendered policies can reflect active discrimination against women, they do not require it. Gendered policies are often “‘gender-blind,’ meaning that women’s interests are rendered invisible because they are not consciously taken into consideration” (Warnecke 2006: 184). Socio-cultural norms and hierarchies of power influence this process by shaping not only the scope and outcome of policy discussions, but also by influencing the likelihood that disadvantaged and minority groups can actually enjoy rights assigned to them under the law (Blanchard and Warnecke 2010). Underrepresentation of women in leadership positions—another product of socio-cultural norms—also makes it less likely for

gender-specific issues to be extensively addressed by government bodies (Warnecke 2006; Beaman, Duflo, Pande and Topalova 2006). Because social norms are institutionalized over time (informally through tradition and formally through policy), they “can seem natural and thus may not be commonly viewed as discriminatory” (Blanchard and Warnecke 2010). This contributes to the replication of gender-biased policymaking in many countries.

The pervasiveness of gendered development policy also stems from the historical belief that the process of development can only occur in multiple stages, wherein cultivating economic efficiency comes first, after which the focus can shift to creating more equitable surroundings. In fact, it is commonly believed that following a path of deregulation and liberalization will lead to “a more efficient allocation of resources, higher rates of economic growth, widespread development, and a decline in poverty and inequality” –which is thought to affect women and men equivalently, leading to improved access to jobs, income and education for women *over time* (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development 2005: xxi-xxii).⁸ While in several countries neoliberal policies have worked to achieve economic growth, an overall improvement in socioeconomic outcomes for women has not occurred, and a growing body of research contests the implied link between market liberalization and gender equality. Though some research (for example, Kabeer and Mahmud 2004) does equate liberalization with increased job opportunities for women—and in some cases, higher paying jobs at that, other research shows not only the short-term nature of many such gains, but their contribution to job segregation by gender (UNRISD 2005). As a consequence, the issue of work quality becomes a greater concern, particularly in Haiti given women’s reliance on the informal sector for occupational opportunities.

This is particularly salient given that gendered norms of the division of labor can significantly determine the beneficiaries of employment policy—one of the cornerstones of development plans. For example, “males in developing countries disproportionately benefit from employment policy focusing on the formal sector, since the traditional gendered division of labor leads more women to work in the informal sector or not at all” (Blanchard and Warnecke 2010). In addition, employment policies

generally ignore the losses incurred from tradeoffs that individuals—particularly women—face between paid and unpaid work.

Time poverty and the gender division of labor

The ‘time poverty’ created for women—particularly in societies where men do little to none of the unpaid household labor—restricts women’s ability to take advantage of employment, education and/or training opportunities even when they are technically available (De Ruyter et al. forthcoming).

Furthermore, development policies centered on deregulation and privatization have often worsened time poverty for women by reducing social services provision (including health and education) or raising their costs (Floro 1995; Warnecke 2006). These policies are not specifically targeted at men or women, but result in gendered outcomes—such as parents pulling female children out of school in order to allocate scarce monetary resources toward education for male children (Frankenberg et al. 1999). Our point here is that there are many feedback effects between development policies and gender-related outcomes, all of which affect countries’ overall trajectory of development.

In Haiti, women have long been considered second-class citizens even though they play a major economic role. In 2006, women comprised 41.4% of Haiti’s workforce (ILO 2007). Though the labor force participation rate is higher for males than for females in nearly all countries, the gap is smaller in Haiti than in most developing countries. In 2008, the labor force participation rate was 58.2% for females and 82.6% for males (World Bank 2010). Since women constitute the majority of Haiti’s informal sector (Gardella 2006)—most of which is not officially measured—these figures understate women’s involvement in the labor market. They do, however, illustrate the relative lack of formal sector work options for women.

Polanyi argues that the “division of labor does not originate from trade or exchange, but in geographic, biological, and noneconomic facts” (Polanyi 1944: 276), and this is exemplified by the division of labor for men and women in Haiti (see Table 1). Single-earner families are not common in Haiti due to the high poverty rates discussed earlier; “the poorer the household, the more dependent it is on female revenue streams” (Gardella 2006: 13). Yet while women are responsible for earning enough

money to cover daily household maintenance (male earnings are not used for this), they earn relatively little; the ratio of female-to-male earned income was only .37 in 2007 (UNDP 2009c). This intensifies the pressure on Haitian women to increase their economic activity in the informal sector, exacerbating their time poverty.

Table 1. Primary Economic Responsibilities: Gender Division of Labor in Haiti

Men	Women
Heavy agricultural work	Seeding/planting; weeding; harvesting
Care of large livestock	Local marketing/sales of agricultural produce
Cultivation and marketing of export crops	Purchase of household essentials with agricultural produce revenues
Agricultural wage labor	Cooking; cleaning; laundry
Fishing	Childcare
Certain kinds of craft production	Fetching water
Migratory labor	

Source: Gardella 2006: 16-17.

Control over reproduction and sexual activity

The high fertility rate—3.5 births per woman as of 2008, the highest rate in the region—exacerbates time poverty while simultaneously limiting female labor force participation (World Bank 2010). High fertility in Haiti is a product not only of cultural norms, but also unmet need for contraception⁹ (not to mention the illegality of abortion prior to 2005) (World Bank 2010; Gardella 2006: 13). One consequence of reducing women’s ability to make important life decisions—such as when or if to bear children—is that overpopulation can break down the principle of householding, production for one’s own use (discussed in Polanyi 1944). Empowering women to have greater control over their bodies could increase GDP per capita (as the fertility rate decreases), as well as contribute to higher levels of output (as women are better able to venture towards more formal work). It could also affect women’s ability to accumulate human capital. In Haiti, adult women have less education than adult men and have

higher illiteracy levels (Gardella 2006: 7). Since this biases women towards lower-wage informal sector work, there are clear connections between social policies and gender-differentiated economic outcomes.

Women's social position has also been disrupted by the feminization of HIV/AIDS in Haiti. By 2005-2006 (the last year for which disaggregated HIV/AIDS data are available for Haiti), women were more likely to contract HIV than men; the HIV prevalence rate for women was 2.3% compared to 2.0% for men (United Nations 2010a). This outcome is linked to women's "historically low status and their inability to negotiate safe sex and consistent condom use, and of conditions of poverty that lead to high levels of transactional and commercial sex by young women" (Gardella 2006: 10). While UNAIDS (2008b: 1) notes that "stigma, gender and weak institutional structures remain major barriers" to educational and medical service provision related to HIV/AIDS, there have been some improvements. From 2000 to 2007, the percentage of women in Haiti with comprehensive and correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS more than doubled (from 15% to 34%), and condom use during the last high-risk sexual encounter increased from 19% to 29% for women (United Nations 2010b: 42-43).

Notwithstanding these improvements, women's social position is precarious in Haiti due to the use of rape and violence as tools of population control—both by the government and by street gangs (BBC News 2008). Until 2005, "rape was actually never defined in the law" and was not a criminal offense (Gardella 2006: 13). Domestic abuse was traditionally seen as a family matter and was not penalized (Ibid.). While rape is now a crime in Haiti, weak governmental institutions have not been able to adequately address the issue. Furthermore, these abuses have worsened in the aftermath of the financial crisis and the earthquake (Amnesty International 2009; Lakhani 2010). Crises and disasters do not technically 'discriminate'. Yet while they do affect people from all socioeconomic classes and all demographic groups, these events are known to magnify existing social inequalities (Antonopoulos 2009; Enarson 2000; Jean-Charles 2010). Due to "inequalities in exposure and sensitivity to risk as well as inequalities in access to resources, capabilities and opportunities," disadvantaged groups (such as minorities, women, children, and the poor) are less able to protect themselves from adverse economic, ecological, and health impacts (Neumeyer and Plumper 2007: 1).

Gender and natural/financial disasters

For women, these vulnerabilities are linked to social roles and gender discrimination, further exacerbated during times of chaos (Neumeyer and Plumper 2007: 2). As a result, natural disasters lower life expectancy for women more than for men (Neumeyer and Plumper 2007).¹⁰ Natural disasters also exacerbate women's time poverty (by making it harder to collect water and wood) and disproportionately affect informal and agricultural labor—sectors where women are generally overrepresented (Pearl and Dankelman 2008). In financial crises (particularly in developing countries) women are often the first to be laid off from formal sector work, due to the assumption that their labor is 'peripheral' while men's labor must be preserved (Singh and Zammit 2000; Aslanbeigui and Summerfield 2000). Food crises also disproportionately affect women, "not only because they are primarily responsible for the management of food in the household but also because they are often the ones who buffer the impact of the crisis at the household level through decreased consumption" (Holmes, Jones and Marsden 2009: 3). This is largely due to gender norms that prioritize men and male sons for food allocation, leaving females the first ones to go hungry when the family is faced with a food shortage (Ibid.; see also IFPRI 2000). In Haiti, this gender bias has also led to violence; after the earthquake, women in Port-au-Prince were routinely "robbed of coupons needed to obtain food at distribution points" (Associated Press 2010).

Yet while women are particularly vulnerable to crises and disasters of all sorts, common policy responses are often targeted at men. Job creation programs, for example, are generally dominated by infrastructure building—gender-typed as 'men's work' (Haigh and Vallely 2010). Because relief programs do not always consider the gender dimensions of crisis and disaster, they often neglect gender-specific needs (such as health needs of pregnant and lactating women), or they exclude certain types of women—such as widowed women—from receiving assistance (Gautham 2007). Cash payments are often sent to the head of the household (generally the male), even though a sizable body of research shows that women are more likely than men to use cash transfers to supplement child nutrition and overall household well-being (Devereux 2008). In many countries, relief programs' neglect of women means that they are "automatically eliminate[d]...from decision-making and control" as their household,

community and nation try to recover (Gardella 2006: 8). Gendered policy responses to crisis or disaster can therefore have long-lasting ramifications for women's societal status.

In Haiti, institutions have not been able to adequately deal with these challenges; in times of crisis they have cemented the existing power structure. Haitian women have often been "sidelined in national relief and reconstruction efforts...they often find themselves at the end of the line for needed aid" (Advincula 2010). The lack of lighting, privacy (even for bathing), tents, and police presence facilitates sexual assault in survivor camps (Lendman 2010). While cash-for-work and food-for-work programs assisted 200,000 Haitians in the first half of 2010, only 35% of these were women (UNIFEM 2010). Indigenous social capital played a large role in ensuring the survival of many Haitians during this period. Social capital refers to "those stocks of social trust, norms and networks that people can draw upon to solve common problems" (Sirianni and Friedland 1997: 14). Particularly in rural areas, "robust cohesion at the community level has been crucial in preventing Haiti's institutional-political crisis from deteriorating into widespread social collapse or civil war" (Verner and Heinemann 2006: 4). Haitian women have played a key role in cultivating social capital; examples include forming rotating credit groups to meet their families' financial needs (Smucker and Thompson 1999).¹¹

Do women count? Politics, participation and data

While more organizations and programs are beginning to target women lately, a fundamental disconnect still exists at the policy level. Haiti's Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (the foundation for the country's National Plan of Action for reconstruction and development) only peripherally addresses gender (IRIN 2010). One reason for this may be the lack of female participation at high levels of decision-making. In 2008, women held only 11% of ministerial positions in Haiti (United Nations 2010a). From 2007-2010, only 4.1% of seats in Haiti's national parliament were held by women (a slight increase from 3.6% of seats from 1997-2006) (Ibid.). The lack of women in these leadership positions suggests that "active advocacy for women's interests is in short supply...[and] the possibility of gender bias in particular policies is likely to be relegated to the back burner of discussion" (Warnecke 2006: 184).

Another problem, however, is the perpetual exclusion of women's civil society groups from government processes. Women's groups were excluded from the United Nations International Donor's Conference in March 2010, which raised billions of pledged dollars for Haiti's reconstruction (IRIN 2010). Women have not been consulted about, or been able to actively participate in the rebuilding of their country. Furthermore, at the national level there is little recourse for women; the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Haiti (which has long faced a major dearth of funding) was completely destroyed by the earthquake.

While these types of problems are not new to Haiti, solving them is difficult—not only because of government instability, weak institutions and gender norms, but also because of the lack of disaggregated data. To give one example, neither of the two key indices created by the UNDP in 1995 to mainstream gender into development measures is calculated for Haiti. The gender-related development index (GDI), which measures gender inequalities in life expectancy, literacy rates, enrollment data and income data, is not available due to the lack of disaggregated educational data. Nor is it possible to measure agency in Haiti by examining “the extent to which women and men are able to actively participate in economic and political life and take part in decision-making” (UNDP 2010).¹² Without such data, it becomes difficult to empirically ‘prove’ the extent of gender-related disparities and the need for programs attempting to address these disparities; it also becomes tough to measure program success. Yet these issues are symptomatic of a broader problem—the lack of focus on inclusive development in Haiti. In our view, a focus on inclusive development is required in order to reprioritize gender as a key policy issue. This is one reason we believe that human development theory is an appropriate tool for Haiti's reconstruction process.

4. Human Development Theory in Practice

What is human development?

Human development theory, or HDT, “arose in part as a result of growing criticism to the leading development approach of the 1980s, which presumed a close link between national economic growth and the expansion of individual human choices” (UNDP 2009d). As Ul Haq¹³ (2008) notes, increased

incomes do not necessarily translate to enlargement of all human choices—economic, social, cultural, and political. In fact, ‘growth first’ economic development approaches (often used by mainstream development agencies such as the IMF and WB) have often worsened socio-political conditions, particularly among women and minorities in developing nations (Shah 2010). The human development approach addresses these concerns via a ‘people-first’ theory; among other things, this means that the true source of society’s wealth is considered its people—not its monetary resources (Ul Haq 2008: 29). National income is still considered important, but it is the *use* of that income (rather than simply the *level* of income) that determines whether countries can achieve a high level of human development. Similarly, it is the “quality and distribution of economic growth, not only the quantity of such growth” which is focused upon (Ul Haq 2008: 30).

HDT does not solely deal with ‘social’ aspects of development; it covers *all* aspects of development, including budgeting, trade, savings and investment, fiscal and monetary policy, and social services and safety nets for the poor, among others (Ul Haq 2008). However, HDT approaches all of these policy areas via four pillars of development: equality, sustainability, productivity, and empowerment (Ul Haq 2008). Apart from offering a variety of economic, political, and other opportunities, and ensuring that people have the basic capabilities needed to take advantage of these opportunities, equalizing *access* to opportunities is considered crucial for improving the quality of human lives. Sustainability aims at achieving outcomes that not only satisfy short-term needs, but also establish conditions for long-term socioeconomic wellbeing. Productivity (both in terms of labor and technology) is needed to achieve greater economic growth. Finally, empowerment enables disadvantaged individuals to participate in and influence the broader development process, as well as shape their own socioeconomic standing (rather than simply ‘accept’ that a better life is beyond their reach). There is thus a ‘bottom-up’ (rather than ‘top-down’) element to achieving human development. Whether through political reform, educational reform, or the creation of better job opportunities, empowering all demographic groups allows for not only the possibility of economic gain at both local and national levels, but also facilitates the reconstruction of societal norms.

Measuring human development

Because several pillars of HDT are qualitative in nature, it was important for human development proponents to construct some type of quantitative measurement that could paint a vivid picture of the socioeconomic conditions that countries face, and show policymakers that national income alone cannot solve social ills. In 1990, the United Nations Development Programme began to publish an annual Human Development Report containing such a statistic: the Human Development Index (HDI). Derived from data on life expectancy, education, and income, the HDI is a single statistic providing “a frame of reference for both social and economic development” in a given country (UNDP 2009e).

For each dimension of development it measures, “the HDI sets a minimum and a maximum, called goalposts, and then shows where each country stands in relation to these goalposts, expressed as a value between 0 and 1” (UNDP 2009e). The UNDP ranks countries by HDI and classifies them as having achieved very high, high, medium, or low human development.¹⁴ Table 2 presents an overview of Haiti’s HDI statistic since 1980. Until 2006, Haiti was in the low human development category. Although Haiti recently reached medium human development status, it is unclear if the country will be able to sustain that given the recent global economic crisis and earthquake. In any case, Haiti has only achieved about half of its potential for human development; the country has a long way to go in terms of improving the quality of human life within its borders.

Table 2. Human Development Index for Haiti, selected years since 1980¹

Year	1980	1985	1990	1995	1999	2002	2006	2007
HDI	.433	.442	.462	.483	.463	.463	.526	.532

Sources: Human Development Reports for 1990, 1995, 2005, 2006, 2009; United Nations Development Programme.

Can human development theory work in Haiti?

¹ Although the Human Development Report is published annually, new HDI figures are not always available due to data limitations.

So why should HDT shape the foundation for Haiti's reconstruction and development? First, human development theory facilitates a multidimensional approach to policymaking. This is particularly crucial for Haiti right now given the development failures of the past and the current challenges of reconstruction; the needed reforms are not merely economic, but also political and social. Second, the four pillars of HDT (equality, sustainability, productivity, and empowerment) are particularly well suited to address cross-cutting development issues such as gender inequality—one of the most serious hindrances to Haiti's development. Third, other developing countries have successfully formulated and implemented policies based on HDT over the last decade or so, even in the wake of economic crises and natural disasters. It is thus possible to create a list of leading practices representing the human development approach; we focus on those practices targeting gender equity as a key component of development planning.

We have selected Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka as sources for our leading practices. Like Haiti, these three developing countries have experienced not only an economic crisis, but also a major natural disaster in the last decade.¹⁵ Although Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka have higher per capita income levels than Haiti, all four countries are classified as having a medium level of human development.¹⁶ Three of the four countries (all but India) are located on islands, and the countries are all prone to natural disasters. In fact, Haiti and India were among the ten countries most affected by extreme weather events from 1990 to 2008 (Harmeling 2009). So notwithstanding the geographical and cultural differences distinguishing Haiti from the Asian countries, there are enough commonalities to make Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka good sources of leading practices for Haiti. After all, the potential for replication is one of the most important aspects of selecting such practices (ISDR¹⁷ 2007). While the leading practices address a variety of development issues, they have one thing in common; they all support gender equity via the four pillars of human development theory.

5. Leading practices for a 'Human Development' Approach to Crisis, Disaster and Development

Leading practice 1. Economically empowering female-headed households (Indonesia)

As mentioned previously, crises and disasters (whether natural or financial) lead to gendered effects—and female-headed households, which tend to be poorer on average, are particularly affected. The number of female-headed households increases in times of crisis not only because of death, disease, and desertion, but also because lack of available work in developing nations often leads to male migration; in these circumstances the women are expected to sustain the day-to-day needs of the remaining household members (WB, FAO and IFAD 2009).

Since nearly 45% of all households in Haiti are headed by women (UNIFEM 2010), we searched for a leading practice focused on assisting this vulnerable group. In response to the socioeconomic disrepair created by the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, PEKKA (Women Headed Household Empowerment Program) was established in Indonesia in 2000. The organization's focus is addressing the vulnerabilities faced by female-headed households.¹⁸

PEKKA supports a grassroots approach to the 'micro' level of development. The group's strategies for program implementation revolve around four aspects of empowerment: critical awareness, motivation, and visioning; increasing knowledge, perspective and skill; development of organization and networking; and policy advocacy and campaign for social change (PEKKA 2009: 2). These are clearly linked to the pillars of human development theory. Although PEKKA has implemented many successful programs (including educational and legal programs), we wish to focus on PEKKA's efforts to restructure money management and earning opportunities in female-headed households.

In order to increase economic empowerment for these women, PEKKA focused on increasing savings and loan participation and microfinance activity. The savings and loan associations were constructed as cooperatives, and "the obligation to save before requesting a loan makes the members learn to thoroughly manage their money so that they can make savings" (PEKKA 2009: 5). By the end of 2008, the cumulative amount of savings totaled nearly \$200,000 USD (or nearly 1.7 trillion IDR). Since PEKKA members are from the poorest societal class, this is an incredible accomplishment, and "has ruined the myth that poor people are not able to make savings" (PEKKA 2009: 15). Aiming these microfinance programs at women bridges the gap between social and economic inequalities. In poor

states around the world, women's earnings are more likely to be spent on basic household needs, as opposed to luxuries (see Simister 2005, pp. 1-2 for a review of the empirical literature). Therefore, enabling women as the receiverships of this program works to better ensure that all households are receiving the funds needed to reach their goals or daily expenditures.

PEKKA also established thirty-one microfinance institutions in 8 provinces, and from 2002-2008 the amount of monies loaned increased by roughly 16% per year (PEKKA 2009: 15-17). The loans were used to support small-scale entrepreneurship efforts such as sewing, nut and oil processing, weaving, cracker-making, fish cultivation, packaging, healthy farming and fruit cultivation, and by the end of 2008 nearly 50 collective businesses (managed by women-headed household groups) had been established (PEKKA 2009: 21-22). Many of these had already arranged partnerships with outside organizations, in order to facilitate continued business development, and had attended local or national business exhibitions (Ibid).

The success of PEKKA's savings and loan and microfinance endeavors can largely be traced to the comprehensive training the organization provided. Most of these women had never saved before, and had no access to formal banking institutions (since they had little to no collateral). Therefore, training was needed not merely for educational reasons, but also so that women could feel comfortable with the system. On the microfinance side, entrepreneurship and business development training helped reduce the amount of 'wasted loans' due to inefficient micro-business practices. Table 3 illustrates the multiple types of training offered by PEKKA.

Another reason for PEKKA's success may be that it did not rely on financial or administrative support from the Indonesian (state or local) government. Instead, the World Bank's Trust Fund and the Japan Social Development Fund provided grants to PEKKA, and PEKKA used those funds to create self-sustaining community development projects. This is particularly relevant for Haiti given the country's low government capability at the moment.¹⁹

Table 3. Administrative and Leadership Training Offered by PEKKA, 2005-2008

Types of Training	Number of people trained
Group administration/management (savings and loan)	309
Accounting	474
Savings and loan group development	492
Microfinance group development	220
Individual entrepreneurship	450
Individual micro-business management	346
Business technical skill	1,346
Business consulting	55

Source: PEKKA (2009).

In summary, PEKKA’s work to economically empower female heads of household accomplishes several goals which support human development. The establishment of cooperatives helps to reduce gender inequality of access to financial products and services. Furthermore, learning how to save empowers women to provide for short- and long-term household needs, and to be able to cope with emergencies (a very difficult thing for the poor to accomplish). Entrepreneurship training improves women’s human capital, enabling them to improve their labor productivity and to utilize loans wisely to found sustainable business endeavors. All of these outcomes support a holistic approach to development that supports economic growth through the empowerment of disadvantaged societal groups.

Leading practice 2. Grassroots organization of health care and childcare for women (India)

Even before the 2010 earthquake, Haitian health needs were overwhelming. The country faced everything from high infant mortality rates and lack of access to safe drinking water to rampant tropical diseases and the lack of an intensive care unit. Yet the needs were only part of the problem. The combination of unstable politics, corruption and inadequate infrastructure led to “unrelenting” demands on hospital and medical staff “to cope with the unexpected—such as a shortage of medications easily obtainable in the United States” (Goodkind 2002). Furthermore, Haiti’s extremely high dependence on

external assistance for health care provision is not only unsustainable, but is disempowering; it prevents Haitian communities from banding together to provide for their own needs and shape their own futures.

In the wake of the 2010 earthquake, Haiti's health needs have become even more urgent and complex. Health affects human capital and productivity, and crises of health have significant impacts on women as the primary caretakers. Since Haiti has never had a sustainable model of health care, we searched for a leading practice providing an alternate vision for provision of these services.

We found a leading practice in India, another country having a large informal labor sector. In 1972, the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was established to organize poor, self-employed women workers.²⁰ While SEWA members have many different types of jobs (they are manual laborers, service providers, street vendors, home-based workers, and small-scale producers), they all work in the informal sector, similar to many women in Haiti. SEWA's goal is for all members to secure full employment (defined as work security, income security, food security, health care, child care and housing) and achieve self reliance, even though these workers do not qualify for social welfare benefits from the government (SEWA 2009). As such, SEWA undertakes a variety of programs and is known for its "institutional comprehensiveness" (Vaux and Lund 2003: 265).

SEWA took the lead in organizing the provision of social services. Already having a network of members (and knowing about these members) made it easier for the organization to figure out the logistics of service provision. Therefore, the organization negotiated with the Indian government for helping to distribute maternity benefits, primary care services, and childcare services to members. All services are provided by community-based and community-run cooperatives. Additionally, health services (including preventive care and health education) are provided in a variety of ways—at stationary health centers, medicine shops, mobile health camps and home visits (SEWA 2010). While there is a role for government to play here, this role is largely financial and SEWA has taken over the actual provision.²¹ This may be appropriate for a country like Haiti, with low government capability (but a fair measure of outside assistance, at least for now).

SEWA's program reflects a human development approach for several reasons. First, it emphasizes sustainability; SEWA puts local women in charge of organizing and running social services, rather than depending upon outside help. Having SEWA networks in place also facilitates the provision of services to less accessible rural areas (a difficult task for many external agencies). Targeting women for health and health education programs creates positive feedback effects for families and communities as a whole (Tinker, Finn and Epp 2000), since women perform the majority of unpaid household labor (such as cooking, cleaning, and caretaking). Second, SEWA recognizes that "no programme can run in isolation if it is not intertwined with other aspects of the lives of women...all activities are developed keeping the primacy of work and work security in mind" (SEWA 2010). This helps to explain why SEWA provides childcare; healthy women with healthy children still cannot work outside the home if childcare is unavailable. Childcare services, therefore, also assist women's productivity. Finally, SEWA's bottom-up approach empowers societal groups which are often 'invisible'; the more they participate, the more bargaining power informal sector workers gain in the policy sphere.

Leading practice 3. Consulting local communities (especially women) about their development needs (Sri Lanka)

It is common practice for external organizations to create relief, reconstruction and development plans without consulting the affected communities. Participatory development strategies can ensure that culturally appropriate programs are implemented and that money is not wasted on programs which do not matter to local people. However, even in situations where the opinions of local individuals are solicited, these preferences are often male preferences and women are generally not consulted.

In the aftermath of an earthquake, outside agencies often perceive the main problem to be shelter. But often times, the main problem is not shelter as such; instead, people "needed a secure base where they could keep children and property. They could not move away from the rubble, and needed to keep an eye on their vulnerable children. The tents and plastic sheets supplied by aid agencies did not really meet this need" (Vaux and Lund 2003: 278). This is a very challenging issue for women since they are the primary

providers of child care; the need to leave the tent to participate in cash-for-work relief programs or other earning activities would be particularly difficult for female heads of households with young children.

A related issue is that outside agencies, often based in developed Western countries, solely conceptualize housing as a place to live—not realizing that in the developing world much work takes place in family homes, due to the predominance of informal labor (Vaux and Lund 2003). Generally, well-meaning organizations focus on the construction of permanent housing for affected households, but this takes quite a while. Local communities are not consulted as to their needs, such as “a basic, temporary structure, with four walls, a solid roof, and a door that could be locked. The materials could be distributed easily, and when permanent housing solutions could be found they could be recycled” (Vaux and Lund 2003: 278).

After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, however, Practical Action²² and FAHSOOD (Forum for the Advancement of Human Science of Development) closely consulted community members—particularly women—before constructing new houses for them. In the two tsunami-affected provinces of Sri Lanka, the gender-inclusive community discussions led to 125 houses with quite different features from other post-tsunami housing developments in the country (ISDR 2007). For example, the position and structure of the kitchens and toilets differed from the agencies’ expectation, largely due to local cultural preferences. The women also helped the organizations think creatively about ways the new houses could “improve community resilience to future disaster events;” this led to a different roof structure than had been originally envisioned (ISDR 2007: 45).

While the reconstruction of homes is a very specific example, this type of consultative process can be applied to many other relief, reconstruction and development programs. Women’s contribution to program design can be viewed as “an entry point for engaging and empowering women for better gender relations in the long term” (ISDR 2007: 46). The experience of Sri Lanka provides another lesson as well. In societies with low political participation by women, women must be made to feel comfortable about sharing their input—for example, by including several women in the consultation teams. This is particularly relevant for Haiti, where (as noted above) women occupy very few government positions and

are historically marginalized in many ways. The housing project's emphasis on gender-inclusivity, female empowerment, and sustainable living underscores a human development approach—setting the stage for women to become more active participants in their communities.

6. Discussion: Moving Forward in Haiti

So what does all of this mean for Haiti? The country is at a turning point; nearly a year has passed since the earthquake, and Haiti is moving out of the spotlight as the mainstream media focus on other, more recent global disasters. An incredible amount of change is still needed, and many specific challenges lie ahead. For example, the persistent lack of data in Haiti poses accountability issues, especially from a gender perspective. Prior to the last decade, disaggregated information on the status/role of women has been essentially non-existent. Improving such documentation (and publicly and consistently recognizing the rights and status of women) will not only give a better sense as to Haiti's development progress, but will also help to legitimize the political state.

The recovery strategies implemented today will set the tone for the status of Haitian development several decades from now. In our view, human development theory (HDT) provides the most credible and sustainable approach for revolutionizing Haitian development. As shown in the leading practices section, policies reflecting HDT have yielded extraordinary results in the recent past; among other things, they have engaged local feedback and participation in the process of addressing community needs as well as facilitating earning opportunities and money management training. These practices show that a focus on gender equity is a cornerstone of HDT. The leading practices also show that a focus on human development is possible for poorer developing countries like Haiti; inclusive development is not something that has to wait. In fact, while economic growth is desirable, an overarching focus on economic growth can be problematic for development because the means for attaining this growth may not be carefully weighed in terms of long-run societal implications. The means for attaining economic growth matter; growth-oriented policies can cement or dismantle longstanding biases, and can increase or decrease within-country inequalities.

As Haiti presses her recovery forward, the country can learn from leading practices based on the pillars of human development theory—equality, sustainability, productivity, and empowerment—and use these pillars to reformulate strategies for recovery. One thing is clear; gender-equitable policies and practices can be a catalyst for sustainable growth and human development. Leveling the playing field for men and women and facilitating equitable access to resources and opportunities makes it more possible to accomplish a wide variety of development goals. There are many different obstacles to overcome in order for Haiti to lose its status as the poorest state in the western world, but human development initiatives will allow Haiti to take a step towards achieving a more widespread notion of development as freedom.

Notes

1. It is important to note, however, that Western embargoes have a long history in Haiti, dating back to the early 1800s after Haiti declared its independence (Dunkel 2003). Since that time, embargoes have been used to foster Western influence and interests as well as protest governmental abuses of power and human rights violations.
2. Inflation has also been very volatile in Haiti, swinging from levels as high as 30% to levels as low as 8% over the last decade in particular (Drummer and Taft-Morales 2007: 12). In contrast, other Latin American countries' inflation rates steadily dropped from levels of 20% in 1995 to approximately 7% in 2004 (Drummer and Taft-Morales 2007: 12). Volatile inflation rates in Haiti have been particularly damaging to the poor, since spiking inflation means that the purchasing power of currency is plummeting—so people have more trouble purchasing necessities to survive.
3. Of course, the US trade embargoes in the early 1990s also played a role here; without adequate export opportunity, most manufacturing plants left the country at that time.
4. The numerical values of the Gini coefficient range from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating the most equal and 1 indicating the most unequal income distribution. A Gini coefficient of 0 would mean that households all earn an equivalent share of national income, while a Gini coefficient of 1 would mean that one household earns all of the national income (and other households earn none).

5. The lack of data for poverty, education and other socioeconomic variables illustrates not only the political instability in Haiti, but also the lack of attention given to these aspects of development in Haiti's past. The unavailability of data is also troubling given the present-day Millennium Development Goals drive of the United Nations, one goal of which is achieving universal primary education for children (UNDP 2007).
6. Due to low tax revenue (comprising only 6.9% of GDP), political instability and weak financial management, Haiti's government spending is very low, accounting for only 17% of its GDP (Heritage Foundation 2010).
7. The feminization of poverty refers to the phenomenon wherein women experience far higher rates of poverty than men (Thibos, Lavin-Loucks, and Martin 2007).
8. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development is abbreviated UNRISD.
9. In 2005, unmet need for contraception was estimated at 37.5% of married women aged 15-49 (World Bank 2010).
10. While there are no disaggregated death statistics for Haiti's recent earthquake, Gill (2010:1) notes that "it seems that more women died than men. It was the time of day, the late afternoon, women were at home cooking, making the children's tea, when the sky fell."
11. This is particularly important since many studies show that more women than men starting microfinance enterprises are more likely to pay back their loans (see Morduch 1999 for an overview).
12. Some of the data points included in the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) are known for Haiti, such as the proportion of legislators that are female, the ratio of estimated female to male earned income, and the year that women earned the right to vote and stand for election. However, the GEM also requires data for the female proportion of senior officers/managers and professional/technical workers (these are not available for Haiti).
13. Mahbub Ul Haq is a Pakistani economist that played a major role in devising the human development paradigm (UNDP 2009d).

14. An HDI of .9 or above denotes very high human development, an HDI between .8 and .899 denotes high human development, an HDI between .5 and .799 denotes medium human development, and an HDI below .5 denotes low human development.

15. To give one example of recent natural disaster (there are others), Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka suffered an earthquake-triggered tsunami in December 2004, which left more than 230,000 killed or missing and presumed dead across twelve countries (Government Accountability Office 2006). All three countries have been adversely affected by the recent global economic crisis, and Indonesia was also severely impacted by the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

16. See <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/> for complete rankings.

17. ISDR stands for the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

18. Over the last decade, female-headed households have comprised 13-17% of all Indonesian households; so far, PEKKA operates in eight of Indonesia's thirty provinces (PEKKA 2009).

19. Relying on external sources for grants is not a viable long-term strategy, so funds should be used to create self-sustaining programs.

20. While SEWA focuses on informal sector female workers, some informal sector male workers are also members and programs have been developed for them as well. Across India, more than 700,000 women are SEWA members (Chen, Mirani and Parikh 2006).

21. SEWA does partner with private health service providers and international agencies as well, both to extend the reach of the network and to acquire technical and financial support.

22. Practical Action is an international development charity.

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