

Challenges to mobilising resources for disaster recovery and reconstruction: perspectives of the Haitian diaspora

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Diasporas and diaspora non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are increasingly important as resource lifelines to their home countries, yet the resources that they mobilise, the types of challenges that they face, and their coping mechanisms are not well explored or understood in the context of disaster recovery. To fill this knowledge gap, this study employed an inductive qualitative methodological approach, using interviews to comprehend the role played by Haitian diaspora NGOs after the catastrophic earthquake in 2010. It found that resources take four common forms: event fundraisers; financial and material donations from supporters; remittances; and volunteer labour. Challenges include an overreliance on diaspora donors, competition among NGOs, and what is perceived as inequitable funding practices towards diaspora NGOs. The findings provide insights centred on better coordination among diaspora NGOs, as well as between diaspora NGOs and other local and international NGOs and local governments and international institutions, to ensure more efficient delivery of services to survivors.

Keywords: diaspora non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Haiti earthquake, post-disaster recovery, resources

Introduction

The list of organisational entities involved in long-term disaster recovery and reconstruction programmes and initiatives in fragile states such as Haiti is expanding owing to a rise in the number of catastrophic disasters and their trans-border impacts.² These entities, which include government agencies, humanitarian aid agencies, international institutions, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs),³ have various sources of funding and methods to sustain their initiatives and programmes. The need for them to balance their priorities, the expectations of constituencies, and the requirements of donors presents challenges, particularly to small NGOs, including a subset of diaspora⁴ NGOs—the latter term is used here to refer to NGOs that are diaspora-led. Diaspora organisations take several forms, including: advocacy groups; community-based organisations (CBOs) or grassroots organisations;⁵ faith-based organisations (FBOs);⁶ home-town associations (HTAs); professional associations; and transnational NGOs⁷ (Fagen et al., 2009; Newland, 2010; Morvaridi, 2013). Of these, HTAs are unique to diasporas, and typically work to benefit the areas in which they have community and familial roots (Orozco and Welle, 2006; Morvaridi, 2013), usually a particular city, town, or village.

As Brinkerhoff (2009, p. 76) has pointed out, contributions from diasporas include 'economic remittances, homeland economic investment, skills transfer, diaspora philanthropy, and political influence'. Moreover, diasporas have the ability to act as an extension of their home country by performing roles normally filled by NGOs, notably by providing services, aggregating interests and representing theirs as well as those of select constituents in their homeland, and advocating for policy changes and monitoring these policy initiatives in their countries of origin and countries of residence (Brinkerhoff, 2009). During times of crisis in their countries of origin, their work and roles perhaps best demonstrate what Rytter (2010) described as intensive transnationalism. While referring to the activities of the Pakistani diaspora in Denmark following the earthquake in Kashmir in 2005, Rytter (2010) also noted that transnational activity was a latent resource mobilised in critical situations.

Although diaspora NGOs are increasingly important as resource lifelines to their home countries after crises and disasters, it remains unclear how they sustain their initiatives and programmes over time. Their work and resource mobilisation strategies also remain understudied aspects of the experiences of this subset of NGOs active in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction. As such, this study sought to answer four key questions: (i) what makes diaspora NGOs and their roles important?; (ii) what are the most common types of resources mobilised by diaspora NGOs to respond to disasters?; (iii) what are some of the unique challenges and impediments faced by diaspora NGOs in disaster response and recovery?; and (iv) how do diaspora NGOs cope with these challenges? The research team sought to answer them by examining the part played by Haitian diaspora NGOs in responding to the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, and specifically by focusing on the mechanisms that they applied to mobilise resources and to address the challenges and obstacles confronted after this event and beyond. The study employed an inductive qualitative methodological approach, using interviews with Haitian diaspora NGOs to explore the resource challenges faced by them in their initiatives, programmes, and projects.

The next section provides some background to the research context: the earthquake in Haiti in 2010. This is followed by a synopsis of scholarship on resource mobilisation by diasporas and the NGOs that they form. The fourth section contains details about the research design, consisting primarily of semi-structured interviews, which were coded and assessed using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. The fifth section briefly depicts the characteristics of the 24 Haitian diaspora NGOs interviewed, principally their region of operation, the type of organisation, and whether they were established before or after the earthquake. Next, the findings, supplemented by interviewee quotes, focus on common types of resources utilised and the unique funding challenges encountered and coping mechanisms employed. They yield insights centred on better coordination among diaspora NGOs, as well as between diaspora NGOs and other local and international NGOs and local governments and international institutions, to ensure more efficient delivery of services to survivors. The concluding section summarises the main findings of the study, highlights their implications, and offers a number of recommendations for overcoming

some of the challenges faced by Haitian diaspora NGOs in their efforts to secure resources in support of their home country.

Research context: the earthquake in Haiti in 2010

The Caribbean island of Haiti is prone to earthquakes, flooding, hurricanes, landslides, and storm surge, and thus has seen its fair share of disasters since the early years of the twenty-first century, especially Hurricane Jeanne in 2004 and Tropical Storm Fay and Hurricanes Gustave, Hanna, and Ike in 2008. However, it was the magnitude 7.0 earthquake in 2010 that dealt the most catastrophic blow to the nation and its capital city, Port-au-Prince, killing more than 200,000 people, damaging or destroying approximately 300,000 homes, and leading to more than 1.5 million displaced persons living in camps immediately after the event (EERI, 2010; Bradley, 2014). Moreover, Haiti suffered damage to 60 per cent of its administrative and government buildings and the deaths of many of its top civil servants (Clermont et al., 2011), as well as sustaining heavy damage to more than one-half of its residential housing in Port-au-Prince (Green and Miles, 2011). According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, one-sixth of the capital's population was forced to seek refuge in other provinces (IFRC, 2012). As noted by Klimovich and Thomas (2014), the significant impact of the earthquake on the capital led to a massive relief effort that not only brought many NGOs into the country, but also increased the presence of existing NGOs. Several factors exemplify the systemic infrastructural and societal vulnerabilities in Port-au-Prince and Haiti as a whole: institutional and governing structures weakened by decades of upheaval and external intervention; large economic disparities between the elite and the poor; a lack of access to healthcare services and educational opportunities outside of the capital; a high level of dependence on foreign aid and remittances from the Haitian diaspora in Canada, France, the United States, and other countries; and repeated disasters accompanied by slow recovery processes (Farmer, 2011; Schuller and Morales, 2012; Zanotti, Stephenson, Jr., and McGehee, 2016). The next section provides additional details about diaspora contributions more generally, and the various means and strategies used to mobilise resources.

Resource mobilisation by diasporas: unique features

Diaspora NGOs typically are composed of diaspora members who engage in individual giving to relatives and friends in their country of origin; they are motivated by the need to contribute to their homeland. Resources, monetary and in-kind, are a fundamental driver of organisational behaviour and strategies (Moulton and Eckerd, 2012), as well as being essential to an organisation's capacity to carry out missions. Distrust of who receives monetary contributions and how they will be distributed can prompt diaspora members to provide in-kind contributions more readily.

In-kind resources are defined here as any type of assistance that is not cash, such as donated medical equipment and school materials. Such resources, mainly donations, are targeted at addressing needs pertaining to construction/housing, education, health/hygiene/sanitation, and nutrition. In addition to the contributions of individual diaspora members, in-kind donations come from a broad range of sources, including faith-based organisations, foundations, private and public entities, and other individuals.

In-kind resources constitute a sizeable portion of the resources of diaspora NGOs, mainly because such donations are easier to secure, especially when compared to financial resources that frequently come with demanding application requirements, continual reporting demands, and other difficult conditions. They appear to be most readily available when a crisis emerges.

Resource mobilisation by individuals and families: remittances

Migrant remittances, also known as diaspora philanthropy (Morvaridi, 2013, p. 306), relate to the transfer of money or goods by immigrants for persons who are generally family members. Remittances have emerged as the fastest growing and most stable source of capital and foreign exchange (Nurse, 2004, p. 6). Le De et al. (2015, p. 654) report that the inflow of remittances to poverty-stricken countries has increased significantly over the past few years, reaching more than USD 404 billion in 2013. According to Klimovich and Thomas (2014, p. 191), diaspora remittances from the US and other countries to Haiti were estimated to account for nearly one-half of Haiti's gross domestic product (GDP).

Senders are motivated by objectives starting with the wish to meet basic family needs, including education and healthcare, and in some instances, they provide funds that can be invested productively to generate further income (Fagen et al., 2009, p. 7). The extent and type of diaspora philanthropy may vary with members' age and income, as well the extent of integration into the country of residence, the level of conflict in the country of origin, and the heterogeneity of diaspora groups (Brinkerhoff, 2011, 2014).

Remittances are used to buy 'food, repay loans, pay for health and education, purchase consumer goods and construct or repair houses' (Manandhar, 2016, p. 53). A side-effect of the rise of remittances to many of these countries has been the equal rise of the consumer markets driven by these increased funds. A whole new industry catering solely to the receipt of remittances has materialised and has required (or requires) regulation to protect consumers from corrupt bankers or wire-transfer agents. In El Salvador and Nicaragua, the housing market is specifically focusing on the fortunate few who receive remittances, offering homes that sell for around USD 12,000, with monthly mortgage payments that are affordable due to the average monthly remittance received by a family (Rocha, 2011, p. 469).

As Rocha (2011) notes, the problem with remittances lies in the fact that the system depends upon its continued growth. However, changes in immigration policies

in countries where diaspora members live, together with other factors such as advancements in technology that reduce the need for labour and migrant workers, can diminish remittances. Consequently, without the US, for instance, maintaining and increasing its wages and demand for labour, remittances will not be able to continue on the current upward trend.

The importance of remittances in buffering exogenous disaster shocks has also been well documented (Wu, 2006; Savage and Harvey, 2007; Attz, 2008; Le De et al., 2015). According to Le De et al. (2015), remittances are more efficient in the wake of a disaster because they reach affected households much faster than government support or international aid. In reference to foreign assistance and funds pledged after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, Farmer (2011) warned that there is no guarantee that the monies will be disbursed or reach the most deserving communities and projects. Moreover, as Attz (2008) points out, remittances can have both an immediate and a multiplicative effect on the economy.

Resource mobilisation by diaspora organisations

Beyond making contributions to families, diaspora members engage in advocacy and the provision of services as part of their involvement with various types of diaspora NGOs. These organisations play important roles and fill important gaps in initiatives and programmes. However, a lack of accountability and coordination, as well as limited resources, can undermine their effectiveness and efficiency and equitable distribution (Gajewski et al., 2011, p. 391).

Diaspora NGOs, as with migrant advocacy organisations, have innate cultural and familial ties, as well as knowledge and language skills that cannot be replicated easily by other types of NGOs. Such organisations have the potential to bridge, link, or mediate between groups or persons with different cultural backgrounds who are with other international organisations active in post-disaster and recovery activities (Esnard and Sapat, 2016). As noted, diaspora organisations take several forms, including FBOs, professional associations, and umbrella groups (Fagen et al., 2009; Newland, 2010; Morvaridi, 2013), as well as HTAs, which are unique to diasporas. According to Morvaridi (2013, p. 306), ‘over 2,000 philanthropic HTAs have been formed in the United States and significant numbers exist in Europe supporting communities in Latin America, Southeast Asia and Africa’.

Disasters prompt strong ‘rally-around-the-flag’ sentiments that stir up diaspora populations abroad when the country of origin is affected by a disaster (Sapat and Esnard, 2012). Diaspora NGOs benefit from this surge in emotion and patriotism and the strong desire to help the ‘homeland’ recover. As reported in a Brief by the World Bank Group (2016, p. 15), diaspora assistance almost doubles in frequency and amount following a disaster and diaspora organisations provide collective remittances, goods, services, and technical information on coping with the ramifications of the event. In contrast to other organisations and donors that tend to be interested in immediate relief rather than long-term recovery (Gajewski et al., 2011, p. 391),

diaspora NGO assistance also often tends to continue well after the immediate relief and response period.

Diaspora NGOs access resources from a wide range of sources, but procuring grant funding from private and public sector donors remains especially difficult. Key reasons for this include the increasing pressure to demonstrate high levels of financial, organisational (that is, self-governance), and mission accountability (Jenkins, 2012). In addition, there is the difficult challenge of balancing 'upward stakeholder accountability' with 'downward stakeholder accountability'. Jenkins (2012, p. 510) defines the former as 'responsiveness to key individual, corporate, private foundation, and/or government donors that provide essential funding to finance ongoing operations', whereas the latter focuses primarily on accountability to the constituency (Jenkins, 2012), as well as the relevance of interventions (Kilby, 2006). These challenges and dilemmas are particularly apropos in the recovery and reconstruction period, and in low-income communities and countries affected by major disasters. There is also the problem of donor burnout and aid fatigue, when disasters fade from the spotlight, and donor interest and media attention wane, leading to reductions in disaster aid (Sapat, 2016).

Arguably, diaspora NGOs, unlike other NGOs, feel personally compelled to respond to the needs and demands of their families and communities in their countries of origin. However, similar to other NGOs, they also face major funding obstacles, as well as competition for limited resources.

To understand the resource environment within which diaspora NGOs operate, as well as the challenges confronted and the coping mechanisms utilised, the case of Haitian diaspora NGOs and their response to the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti in 2010 was selected. Representatives of 24 diaspora NGOs were interviewed. These NGOs represent a subset of a larger group of 78 organisations (diaspora NGOs, international NGOs, foundations, international institutions, and US government and media bodies) interviewed as part of a bigger project. The findings concerning the other 54 organisations will be assessed in a separate paper.

Research design

The primary data collection method employed by the study was semi-structured interviews with members of Haitian diaspora NGOs, which sought to produce in-depth understanding of the factors that hinder or facilitate resource mobilisation by diaspora NGOs following disasters. The interviews were transcribed and uploaded to Dedoose (version 6.1.18), a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) that is accessible online.⁸ The online accessibility and portability of Dedoose were important considerations in selecting the application for this project, given that the authors are geographically dispersed. Dedoose allows for multiple account users, each of whom can have up to full access to the entire project at any time online, thereby facilitating full participation of all project team members without

restriction—other popular CAQDAS applications were found to offer less flexibility in these respects. Dedoose was used to code and analyse relevant excerpts pertaining to several themes, as documented below.

Interviews and transcripts

The Haitian diaspora are oftentimes members of multiple NGOs. Projects and programmes are wide-ranging and multiple and include advocacy, economic development, education, empowerment, human rights, immigration, infrastructure projects (such as building schools), poverty reduction, and public health (Fagen et al., 2009; Newland, 2010). As reported by Esnard and Sapat (2016, p. 2), ‘their networks are fairly active, and the longevity and variety of their advocacy work, particularly in immigration, have resulted over decades in broader social networks and alliances, work groups, task forces, interfaith coalitions, support groups to address complex social and policy issues’ in their countries and communities of residence.

A total of 24 interviews were conducted between January 2013 and June 2015 with representatives of Haitian diaspora NGOs across four study areas in the US: Atlanta, Georgia; Boston, Massachusetts; New York City; and south Florida—key hubs for the Caribbean diaspora, including Haitians (see Table 1). The interview questions emphasised a number of key themes, including the actions of the organisations, resources, partnerships, and challenges.

Audio-recorded interviews commenced after the interviewees provided their consent; each one lasted approximately 45 minutes and was fully transcribed by the research team. All interviews were carried out in English. The choice of language did not appear to be a barrier to effective communication by the interviewees. While all but one of the interviewees were of Haitian descent, the majority of them spoke English at the level of native proficiency, since either they had been born in the US or were long-time residents. Those who were more recent immigrants to the US spoke French and/or Creole as a first language and English as a second language, yet their English-language skills were sufficiently advanced to facilitate fluent communication with the interviewers.

Coding and analysis using Dedoose

To ensure confidentiality and privacy, each interview transcript was randomly assigned a unique number for the purpose of identification (‘ID’). IDs are four-digit codes that begin with a number that identifies the area/region (that is, 1, 2, 3, and 4), followed by numbers randomly assigned to the interviewees. They are used to distinguish interviewees but still allow for the preservation of anonymity and confidentiality when reporting research findings (see below).

As part of the coding process in Dedoose, a set of 12 descriptors was developed to record such information as the transcript ID, the region where organisations were located in the US, the approximate time period in which the organisation was established, and organisational type (see Table 1). The research team participated in a

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the Haitian diaspora NGOs interviewed

Characteristic	Number	Percentage of all diaspora NGOs
Region		
Atlanta	2	8
Boston	9	37.5
New York	4	17
South Florida	9	37.5
Organisation type		
Advocacy group	3	13
Community-based organisation	5	20.5
Faith-based organisation	5	20.5
Hometown association	6	25
Professional association	1	4
Transnational NGO (TNGO)	4	17
Period established		
Pre 2010	22	92
Post 2010	2	8
Number of organisations	24	100

Source: data compiled by the authors.

number of meetings over a period of several months to develop a coding scheme using inductive techniques (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). Prior to engaging in final coding and analysis, the team members undertook training to attain an acceptable level of inter-coder reliability. This took place at Dedoose's 'training center', a feature of the software that allows users to set up coding tests to check the consistency of code applications across independent coders. A number of these tests were performed, with each set of results producing helpful insights into coders' understanding of codes and offering guidance on how best to refine codes for clarity in subsequent exercises. In addition, to ensure consistency, guidelines were devised for team members to follow during their thematic coding and evaluation of transcripts.

The analysis here is on the application of the code 'resources' across the 24 Haitian diaspora NGO transcripts in the database. Dedoose's filtering capabilities were used to extract all of the relevant excerpts, a process that yielded 170 distinct excerpts for the 24 transcripts. The first step in analysing the 'resources' excerpts database was a verification exercise that involved a careful review of each excerpt to determine the specific aspect(s) of the 'resources' that the excerpt referenced. This was essentially a second round of 'hand-coding' to confirm the initial 'computer-assisted coding' performed in Dedoose. The notes from this stage of review were developed

to follow a loosely structured format, with similar phrasing used to describe occurrences of the same phenomenon across the excerpts. The next step was to compile these notes. The analysis then concentrated on extracting the core elements of the excerpts to classify them by theme.

Characteristics of the Haitian diaspora NGOs interviewed

Table 1 shows the geographical distribution of the set of 24 diaspora NGOs. The largest number of interviewees were based in Boston and south Florida. Haitian diaspora NGOs that are Haitian-led and/or serve Haiti are diverse in their missions, some of which differ from other types of NGOs. Among the Haitian diaspora NGOs examined in this study, most were categorised as belonging to the following type of organisation (based on their main activities undertaken at the time of the interviews): advocacy groups; community-based or grassroots organisations; faith-based organisations; hometown associations; professional associations; and transnational NGOs. CBOs, FBOs, and HTAs make up two-thirds of the sample. Almost all of the organisations in the sample were established before the earthquake in January 2010. Although not shown in Table 1, the majority have missions that focus on several areas; education and healthcare issues feature prominently in the work of Haitian diaspora NGOs.

Findings

Common types of resources mobilised by Haitian diaspora organisations

Haitian diaspora NGOs and their members have to draw on limited resources while attempting to fulfil their missions. The post-disaster recovery and reconstruction resources of diaspora NGOs commonly take various forms, including contracts and grants, financial donations from supporters, materials or volunteer labour, remittances, and special-event fundraisers.

Remittances

As noted, remittances buffer exogenous disaster shocks and reach affected households much faster. This was the case in Haiti after the earthquake in 2010; the country's economy is largely supplemented by diaspora members' remittances and they remain a crucial lifeline (Versluis, 2010). Annual economic remittances from the US to Haiti are estimated at more than USD 2 billion, approximately 30 per cent of Haiti's GDP (Fagen et al., 2009).

The diaspora is aware of the significance of remittances. A previous study by two of the authors reported that the Haitian diaspora knew of families surviving only on diaspora contributions (Esnard and Sapat, 2011). As one member noted, 'so, by large, we are the biggest donor in Haiti. Haiti would collapse, if not for the \$50 or \$100 that I send and that she sends' (Esnard and Sapat, 2011, p. 339).

A major challenge lies ahead as millennials—the first generation of Haitian-Americans born in the US—as a group are less likely than older generations to participate in such remittance sending activities or other diaspora NGO events established by their parents and others who immigrated to the US. One interviewee shed some light on concerns about the involvement of the younger generation of Haitian-Americans:

It is a big issue. It is a big problem. They do not have the ties that we have in Haiti especially parents, and friends we grow up with in Haiti depending on us. We have to send money back. When our generation is gone, it is going to be very difficult for these people to be able to get their needs met by the first generation (interviewee 2018).

Donations

Donations are vital to the survival of Haitian diaspora NGOs. Many interviewees spoke of being inundated with in-kind donations when the earthquake struck in 2010. However, logistical difficulties associated with in-kind donations are well documented in disaster research; they can create a problem of material convergence (Fessler, 2013; Holguín-Veras et al., 2014). For diaspora NGOs, and small NGOs more generally, in-kind donations also present complications, particularly among those that do not have the resources to be able to coordinate their shipments and deliveries to those in need.

Several interviewees shared anecdotes about goods being held up by Haitian customs officials owing to a lack of resources. Not having proper NGO status in Haiti, for instance, hinders the easy clearing of imports into Haiti. Unlike other NGOs that also ran into this problem, Haitian diaspora NGOs typically circumvent obstacles by using NGO volunteers and family and friends to carry donated goods in their luggage as opposed to shipping items via more formal channels.

Fundraising events

In an attempt to diversify their funding sources, many organisations turn to fundraising events to attract contributions to their projects, such as concerts, dinners and galas. Many diaspora NGOs rely primarily on the charity of the Haitian diaspora and their local communities to support their ventures. As one interviewee reported:

Most of the professional Haitian organizations in the south Florida area are struggling for funding. Our funding sources are usually donations or the revenues collected from the events that are organized respectively by members of the organizations (interviewee 3002).

In most instances, these events do not yield the large amounts of dollars for which the organisations hope, as they incur substantial costs in organising them. One interviewee highlighted, too, other considerations connected to hosting such fundraising activities:

It's easier to do campaigns around initiatives. If we know [name of organisation removed] needs textbooks, it's easier to raise money that way. If they need new latrines, it's easier to raise money that way. But just hosting a general gala or event, it's like, 'Oh yeah, your money is going to [name of organisation removed]' (interviewee 4003).

Fundraising among congregations at places of worship is also common by Haitian diaspora and faith-based organisations.

Volunteers

Haitian diaspora NGO members, particularly doctors and nursing professionals, served as volunteers on medical missions with non-diaspora-led NGOs and private companies in the months immediately after the earthquake in 2010. For instance, Haitian nurses living in south Florida and who are part of the Haitian American Nurses Association volunteered with private health companies and with teams organised by Project Medishare, an NGO started by doctors at the University of Miami following the earthquake.

One advantage of diaspora NGOs regarding the way in which they operate to fulfil their missions is their links with the local population. Their familiarity with locales, their networks, and their social capital within communities help them to source volunteer resources within Haiti more easily than NGOs that are new to the country or entering it for the first time. Local volunteers often help Haitian diaspora organisations with key initiatives, such as providing medical treatment or running schools. One interviewee stated that:

Our program is a yearly event and it is a volunteer-based program. . . . We have volunteer [Haitian] doctors and nurses and other volunteers that travel with us to lend their services of health screening. . . . We have volunteers coming from Texas. We have volunteers from the Carolinas. We have volunteers from different areas. We also have volunteers in Haiti. We have doctors and other volunteers in Haiti that do the work with us (interviewee 3007).

Unique funding challenges and coping mechanisms

Diaspora NGOs report different experiences of different resources, with each source having its own set of advantages and disadvantages. One should note that we are not ignoring or problematising the important work of international and locally-based NGOs during crises and disasters, and nor is it our intention to privilege diaspora NGOs. Indeed, diaspora NGOs have numerous characteristics that are the same or very similar to those of other NGOs. However, they differ in important ways, including funding challenges (as discussed here).

Overreliance on the diaspora donor base

The primary donor base of diaspora NGOs tends to be individuals of Haitian descent. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage for diaspora NGOs. Notably, diaspora

NGOs have connections within their communities that they can tap at all times (such as volunteers from the diaspora and in Haiti). Yet, the resources of diaspora members frequently are rapidly exhausted after a disaster owing to increasing remittance contributions to family and friends, volunteer activities, and costs incurred from trips to their home country or for funding family members' travel to the US. Two diaspora NGO representatives shared observations on the difficulties organisations face when having to work with limited resources:

I wish we could do more. But all of this without any help. It's just us, staff, certain friends we would call that give us checks for \$5, \$10, \$20 and with this money we did whatever we can (interviewee 2012).

It is basically through friends and families. This is how we get it done (interviewee 3007).

Another challenge, highlighted in particular by HTAs and other associations whose work tends to centre on a specific community in Haiti, is the difficulty of securing support for less well-known areas of the country. Some donors tend to have regional predilections. One interviewee indicated that even though his organisation does not target regionally, projects are limited by some of its donors' location preferences. Many donors are familiar with Port-au-Prince because of its high visibility in the media. Most of the funds tend to be channelled to the capital city and to organisations operating in that part of the country, to the neglect of communities in more remote locations. The same interviewee added:

The big companies, you know, they focus on big organizations. So when we say we focus on [hometown name removed], they don't see that, they want Haiti. Because this is how their name is going to go out. You should put Haiti (interviewee 2012).

The attention to Port-au-Prince is not altogether unwarranted as the city is home to more than one-fifth of the national population (UN, 2016). With so many services being centralised and concentrated in the capital, though, the rest of the population is largely marginalised and neglected. Some diaspora NGOs see their role in meeting the needs of those in those other parts of the country as essential for addressing the uneven development occurring in Haiti. This role is especially important to diaspora organisations because they see themselves as part of the larger Haitian diaspora that has a responsibility to contribute to the country's long-term recovery. One interviewee pointed out that:

As you travel the country, you can see a lot of things coming out of the ground and on the outskirts, it is all diaspora. A lot of the construction that is being done outside of Port-au-Prince, it is being funded by the diaspora (interviewee 3007).

The challenges faced by local NGOs or Haitians based in Haiti cannot be discounted in this regard. They confront similar, or perhaps even more, setbacks when

seeking funding for their education and healthcare initiatives in rural Haiti. For example, Zanotti, Stephenson, Jr., and McGehee (2016) reported that after the earthquake, the volatility of donor preferences and priorities was a major barrier to sustaining the initiatives of the Rural Haitian University founded by a local Haitian.

Perceptions of diaspora NGOs: inequitable funding practices

Diaspora NGOs have knowledge of local customs and norms, speak local languages, possess connections and contacts, and have the ability to access communities and target aid at the communities and households in greatest need (IOM, 2015). However, interviewees expressed concern that Haitian-led or local Haitian organisations are often overlooked in favour of Western organisations, even though the latter are frequently perceived to be unfamiliar with the Haitian context. The Haitian diaspora NGOs interviewed felt that they have more legitimacy and credibility to work with the Haitian population, but instead are commonly viewed by prospective donors as being less credible. The overlooked organisations also feel a sense of indignation about the inequity of funding, specifically as they perceive that they run more efficient and effective operations than a number of other non-diaspora organisations, which are seen as having higher overhead costs. The following quotation reveals the opinion and distrust of one interviewee of bigger international NGOs and his views on the obstacles to funding for diaspora NGOs:

But big organizations they've got big money. But 70 per cent of that money is spent on overhead, administration costs. And whatever is left is split between them, and nothing is done. As a matter of fact, there was a study that said that the amount of money these organizations received, Haiti should have been 10 times ahead of where it is right now. And this little organization that's working, that really is doing something, we've got nothing (interviewee 2012).

The small-scale operation of most diaspora NGOs, which they argue contributes to their efficiency, also has the effect of limiting their capacity to administer the types of grants and other funds that many donors offer. One interviewee expressed frustration with the funding process:

It is very hard because, to be honest with you, I understand it's a process but they [donors] don't make it easy, especially for small non-profits that don't have the resources. That's why this is more than a full-time and a half [job] for me. . . . As a small non-profit, you have so much to prove to the bigger non-profit. You apply for credit, they say you don't have credit, we will not give you credit (interviewee 1005).

Participants also echoed what Farmer (2011, p. 212) has labelled the 'wait and see approach characteristic of the foreign aid enterprise'. Donors and foreign aid agencies cite the lack of capacity of institutions as the reason for rejecting project proposals.

Competition among diaspora NGOs for resources

Another funding challenge that featured prominently in the diaspora NGO interviews is competition for resources. Sapat and Esnard (2012) note that, while the earthquake in 2010 galvanised cooperation among diaspora organisations right after the event, the initial unity dissipated, partly owing to a lack of group political clout and the emphasis on individual success. The heterogeneity of the diaspora also results in more competition for resources. There is competition even when organisations attempt to join forces in fulfilling their missions. According to one interviewee:

There's always a competition for the resources because as much as we want to apply for things together, but we also must apply for things individually. Two ways: (1) we are competing for some of the same money; (2) the resources always go with the person with the most capacity, with the most capacity and the proven track record. It's going to be the stronger organizations that are going to get the money. Without collaboration that can create some tension. At the same time, it also opens doors to create partnerships and collaboration if one can strengthen the organization for future funding (interviewee 4015).

While competition for resources is a common challenge for small NGOs, interviewees conveyed a sense of difference with regard to competition among Haitian diaspora NGOs because of the lack of trust of diaspora members. This is particularly the case among the older generation, stemming from deeper-seated distrust in general either because of experiences in the country of origin or the need to look after their own (communities and hometowns) to avoid being left out. As one interviewee put it:

So the earthquake was a lot of not really organizing and then on a personal level, I would go to [city omitted]. I'm part of a lot of different groups . . . on personal level, where I grew up. And I remember this one heated meeting I went to and it was the same thing where everyone wanted to do their own thing, you know? Because you had Haitians who didn't trust each other, you know? So everybody [says]: 'I'm going to do this', 'this is my people, I'm going to do this for my town', 'I'm going to do this', 'I'm going to do this', 'I'm going to do this in my town because I know if I do it they will get it'. So it was a little tough . . . you know? . . . you had the . . . [NGO name omitted] . . . you had the . . . [NGO name omitted], all these who are educated Haitian Americans like myself. But we were so disorganized it wasn't even funny, you know? Because everyone, [NGO names omitted], they had their agenda, the [NGO name omitted] had their agenda, the [NGO name omitted] . . . had their agenda. And again, it was all people my age and older, people with titles and names and what have you who just couldn't just let go and let us just work as one, you know? The younger generation, the 19-, 20-, 21-year-olds, 25, they didn't care (interviewee 3009).

The lack of coordination and collaboration can also lead to a duplication of efforts that may be counterproductive. There was also a sense that in comparison to other

diaspora groups, the lack of coordination and collaboration between Haitian diaspora NGOs and between diaspora NGOs and the Government of Haiti hurt their efforts to seek funding and that a more unified and coordinated effort would be more fruitful. One interviewee said that:

I think there needs to be one organization nationally. The comparison that I often use, within the Irish community, the American-Ireland fund is a mammoth, well-funded, well-coordinated, international organization that the Irish government has a lot [of] control over, but has all of the heavy hitters within the Irish-American community. There's one in New York, Boston, DC [District of Columbia], Los Angeles, Chicago the whole nine, and then they have them all over Europe and elsewhere. But all that money goes to one place, which is then under the control of the Irish government, and is then dispensed to organizations that need money to do good work. Ireland and Haiti are very different. But that's what needs to happen within the Haitian diaspora. There needs to be, eventually, one organization in conjunction with the Haitian government that takes the wealth and essentially does not use it to replace the remittances entirely, but augments it in a useful way that is not diverted away from Haitian-run organizations, but actually put to them by Haitian-Americans, and by people of Haitian descent. Otherwise it has something of a disjointed and almost colonized feel to it of international groups coming in and doing that work for people and sometimes bypassing Haitian-run groups that are already there (interviewee 2002).

Conclusion

Overall, this study has unearthed a number of interesting insights into the forces, negative and positive, that shape the resource environment within which diaspora NGOs, specifically Haitian diaspora NGOs, operate. These insights are important for understanding of the role that diaspora NGOs play in the disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts of their country of origin and the challenges they face that threaten the sustainability of their endeavours.

Not surprisingly, resource challenges dominated diaspora NGOs' discussions about their resource environment. Among the most salient funding challenges is the perception of donors that works against Haitian-led, diaspora and small organisations and in favour of Western and larger NGOs. These inequitable funding policies have a feedback effect, perpetuating a cycle of resource constraints; diaspora NGOs are often seen as being less capable by international aid agencies, which tend not to fund them. Owing to a lack of funding available from international institutions and agencies, diaspora NGOs continue to rely on smaller and/or less reliable sources of funding (such as families and friends). In turn, this further limits their potential for growth and leads to their continued exclusion by the humanitarian aid community. Interviewee responses also revealed, however, that competition and the

lack of trust prevents several smaller Haitian diaspora NGOs from working with each other to pool their meagre resources and to take advantage of economies of scale. In addition, some of the diaspora NGOs are wary of seeking funding from larger donors as they feel that they might dictate priorities to them. Overall, there is a need for better coordination among diaspora NGOs and between the international humanitarian aid community and diaspora NGOs.

To harness the potential of diaspora NGOs, the international donor community could enhance the capacity of diaspora NGOs via technical assistance, exchanging information, providing direct capacity-building training, and including them in discussions to identify needs and to set priorities (Brinkerhoff, 2009). Hopefully the findings of this study can help to inform how resources can be pooled more effectively for countries such as Haiti, which are highly dependent on their diaspora members in pre- and post-disaster periods.

The resource constraints should serve as a motivator for small diaspora NGOs to overcome trust issues, so as to collaborate or partner with each other (and with other organisations) and to share or pool resources to accomplish their goals. Some optimism in this regard can be gleaned from the younger generation; levels of mistrust appear to be less among diaspora NGOs led by second-generation members. Similar to the findings of Brinkerhoff (2014) with respect to the Coptic diaspora, this study found that second-generation diaspora leaders do not undertake 'diaspora philanthropy' on an individual basis. Rather, the data show that a handful of diaspora NGOs led by very capable millennials are exploring different strategies for funding and working with diverse agencies, organisations, and the private sector, both in Haiti and the US. Still, the role of first-generation Haitian-Americans is worthy of further exploration to understand better the disaster recovery context and resource diversification and mobilisation.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by National Science Foundation (NSF) grants (numbers CMMI-1034667 and CMMI-1162438). However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF. The authors also express thanks to all of the interviewees for their invaluable insights and their contributions to the work.

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- ² As noted by Attzs (2008, p. 9), when there is an increase in migration after disasters such as Hurricane Gilbert in 1988 and Hurricane Mitch in 1998, as well as the earthquake in El Salvador in 2001, many of 'these migrants never return to their home country'. This exodus leaves home countries with a gap in their capacity to repair or replace damaged or destroyed buildings and infrastructure, which further accelerates the rate of migration (Attzs, 2008, p. 10).
- ³ NGOs are generally defined as self-governing independent voluntary association(s) of people acting together for some common purpose or to fulfil shared values, or organised around a common mission (Kilby, 2006, p. 952; Willetts, 2011, p. 8; Jenkins, 2012, p. 468). The genesis, size, and structure of NGOs, and their geographical focus (domestic and transnational), vary considerably. According to Mitchell (2015, p. 1888), furthermore, their portfolios are increasingly diversified to include advocacy, capacity-building, service provision, and several other activities.
- ⁴ Diaspora is used here to mean 'individuals and members or networks, associations and communities, who have left their country of origin, but maintain links with their homelands' (IOM, 2011, p. 28).
- ⁵ The term CBOs is used here to capture a subset of NGOs that serve members of the Haitian diaspora in local communities in the United States, such as with regard to access to healthcare or assistance with immigration dilemmas. Their work can have impacts beyond the community in which they are based.
- ⁶ FBOs are defined by Morvaridi (2013, p. 309) as voluntary civil society organisations that have a commitment to altruistic and moral values with a faith basis.
- ⁷ Transnational NGOs are involved in trans-border development, humanitarian, international diplomacy, and other activities (Willetts, 2011).
- ⁸ For more information see <https://www.dedoose.com/> (last accessed on 8 October 2018).

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