

Breakout Session Report

Breakout Session Title: Transition and Recovery I

Discussion Leader and Recorder: Nazife Emel Ganapati, Stephanie Lansing

Session participants: John Bevington, Roger Bilham, Louise Comfort, Ann Margaret Esnard, Robert Fleischman, James Kendra, Anna Lang, Kevin Meehan, Mimi Sheller, Amenold Pierre

Session Overview: Disaster recovery remains the least understood phase in the literature among the four phases of a disaster. The Haiti earthquake presents a unique opportunity to study recovery due to the following reasons. First, Haiti's recovery is taking place in the complex interplay between multilateral and bilateral aid organizations, the Haitian government, those displaced by the earthquake and those who moved to Port-au-Prince from other areas in Haiti after the earthquake (for expectations of aid). Second, the Haitian government has limited capacity to coordinate recovery and transition to recovery efforts. Third, given Haiti's current context, recovery initiatives need to go beyond rebuilding what was destroyed in the earthquake in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area and address issues of development, sustainability, and equity in Haiti as a whole.

It is our suggestion that an NSF research solicitation focused on the Haiti earthquake address the following areas on recovery and transition to recovery.

Sustainable Recovery

- Studies that help define "sustainability" from the perspectives of Haitians
- Studies that identify sustainable, locally and culturally appropriate designs for rebuilding (e.g., for housing, physical and social infrastructure)
- Studies that examine the impact of rebuilding on environmental resources (e.g., reforestation)

Defining and Measuring Recovery and Resilience

- Studies that define the meaning of “recovery” in the context of Haiti
- Studies that develop measures for the speed and quality of recovery (e.g., with respect to housing, economic development, education, mental health)
- Longitudinal studies that establish a baseline for recovery and track recovery over time
- Studies that define what “resilience” means from the perspectives of Haitians
- Studies that develop measures of resilience in the face of disasters

Governance

- Studies that examine the effectiveness of organizations that are involved in recovery (both pre-earthquake and emergent ones)
- Studies that monitor and evaluate coordination among organizations that are involved in recovery
- Studies on decentralization/de-concentration (e.g., what hinders or enables it)

Rural Haiti

- Studies that examine the impact of the earthquake in rural Haiti
- Studies that examine the role of rural areas in Haiti’s reconstruction process
- Studies that track population movements between rural and urban areas

Recovery Process

- Studies that focus on the inequalities in recovery processes (e.g., in IDP camps), with specific attention to the recovery of vulnerable groups (e.g., women, children, elderly, renters, disabled)
- Studies on the legal context of land tenure and its impact on processes of forced evictions

- Studies that monitor recovery, growth processes, and resource use in communities that host displaced populations

Comparative, Historical, Cultural and Community Based Research

- Studies that compare the recovery process from the Haiti earthquake with recovery processes in other countries to develop sustainable recovery models that could be applicable to Haiti
- Studies that compare the recovery process of Port-au-Prince with recovery processes of other communities/regions that were affected by the earthquake
- Historical research that examine the role of the international community in contributing to Haiti's vulnerability in the face of disasters
- Historical research that study and draw lessons from past disasters in Haiti (e.g., the 18th century earthquake, hurricanes) for recovery from the January 12, 2010 earthquake
- Studies that focus on the Haitian culture and what it means for recovery (e.g., Haitian concept of time vs. international aid agencies' time constraints for implementing recovery projects)
- Research that identify and build on capacities that exist in Haiti at different levels (e.g., research that establish equal partnership with Haitian organizations)