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ISSUES PAPER ON POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR THE COORDINATION OF THE PVO SECTOR IN HAITI

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Private and volontary organization (PVO) involvement in Haiti has traditionally been diverse, strong, and long-standing. The Country Development Strategy Statement (CDSS) of the Haiti Mission of the U.S. Agency for International Development recognizes the need for these organizations, not only because of their past accomplishments but also because of their current ability to meet certain needs that the Government of Haiti cannot. Citing USAID's "flexibility"(in comparison with other international donors) to work with PVO's, the CDSS goes on to indicate a willingness to fund proposals of local and international PVO's.

Concurrent with agency commitment to fund local and international PVO's, there is agency concern for the capabilities of these PVO's to administer funds and to implement projects. Within this context, USAID/Haiti asked Planning Assistance, Inc. (PAI), itself a PVO specializing in providing management assistance to other PVO's, to explore the possibilities of inventorying the capabilities of the PVO's working in Haiti. During the course of the mission, which lasted from 21 February to 1 March 1983, the terms of reference were broadened somewhat to include an exploration of the ways in which management assistance might be provided to improve the implementation capabilities of PVO's. A third point emerged in preliminary discussions with the PVO office of USAID/Washington, namely the potential for working with PVO associations in general and the Haitian Association of Voluntary Agencies (HAVA) in particular.

This issues paper will deal successively with each of these three points: surveys, management assistance, and PVO associations. Each section

attempts to raise some of the major issues and indicate some of the implications of undertaking certain actions within the PVO community. These observations are the result of discussions held with about twenty persons (see Annex 1); the conclusions drawn are therefore certainly not exhaustive and perhaps not even representative of the PVO community. Nevertheless, if they serve as a basis for further discussion, they will have served their purpose. In the conclusion, a series of possible next steps for USAID are proposed.

2.0 SURVEYS

In general, two different types of possible surveys were discussed, although a third possibility will be suggested below. The two different types are the exhaustive survey and the selective survey. Regardless of the approach, some of the steps of accomplishing the two are similar and both involve two problems of definition:

1) What is a PVO?
2) What is meant by implementation capability?

The problem of defining a PVO is important because the definition would determine the universe of PVO's which would have to be contacted or from which a sample would be drawn. The Comité Mixte Pour l'Implantation des Programmes de Coopération Externe en Haiti attempted to establish three categories: ONG-mères, ONG d'exécution, and ONG auxiliaire. Those interviewed were not persuaded that this classification was particularly useful, and it may well be that all efforts to define PVO's will prove fruitless. This issue could be at least partially avoided by fixing the terms of reference for the survey to "a survey of 300 (or 350, 400, etc.) PVO's" rather than "all PVO's."

The second definitional problem involves two different perspectives.

At the risk of overstating the differences, we may identify:

1) the donor's perspective, from which the ability to plan goals and objectives, schedule tasks, organize, staff, budget, and report represent the criteria for implementation capability of the PVO; and
2) the beneficiary's perspective, from which the number, kinds, frequency, and quality of services received represent the criteria for implementation capability of the PVO.

While in theory the PVO should reconcile the two perspectives, in practice (given the resource constraints of PVO's) the former perspective is often (rightly) slighted. It is no great revelation to state that administration and execution abilities are not often found in equal proportion in a PVO, particularly when what is really meant by implementation capability usually depends on one or two key people. We will return to this issue again when we discuss the potential of management assistance. For the moment, while the survey questionnaire could insure that both types of information were collected, the problem of interpreting the results will pose a problem.

With this general context, we may now turn to a discussion of the two general types of surveys.

2.1 Exhaustive Surveys

A good deal of effort has already been invested in the identification of PVO's working in Haiti. In the course of the interviews, the following groups indicated that they had lists of some kind: USAID, UNDP (over 200 listings), Government of Haiti, HAVA, AOPS (Association des Oeuvres Privés pour la Santé), and Save the Children (about 250 listings). The accuracy and extent of duplication could not be determined in such a short time, but it seems almost certain that there are more than 300 PVO's and perhaps more than 400.

Before deciding whether to undertake such a survey, there are at

least three major issues which should be considered:

1) the purpose of the survey;
2) who should carry out the survey; and
3) the alternatives (and their associated costs) for carrying out the survey.

An exhaustive survey would have at least three purposes:

1) description - to determine who is doing what, where, for how long and how much, and with what results;
2) policy-making - to examine the possibilities for coordinating (and it is understood controlling) the actions of PVO's; and
3) funding - to identify PVO's which would be worthy of funding by USAID (among others).

It should be noted that only for the last purpose is there a direct interest for the PVO, and weighed against the dangers of the second purpose, the limited possibilities for funding may not be enough to encourage them to cooperate fully with the survey.

Given that the principal beneficiaries of a survey are the donors (and specifically the major international donors) and the government, there arises the issue of who should do the survey. HAVA has proposed such an activity (and at least the Canadian International Development Agency seems somewhat interested by the idea), and we will discuss the appropriateness of this later.

Finally, there is the issue of how the survey should be executed; here the issue is the standard one of quantity and quality of information versus cost. In terms of ascending costs, it is possible to envision:

1) a verification of existing lists;
2) a mailed questionnaire which attempts to obtain certain basic information (personnel, budget, program areas, etc.); and
3) an interview which would attempt to link program resources to management performance, management performance to program performance, and program performance to improvements in the lives of the beneficiaries.

Clearly, this third alternative is the most costly and the most difficult both logistically and methodologically. The second alternative has been suggested by the groupe Technologie Intermédiaire d'Haiti (gTIH) for the health sector and should perhaps be pursued. The first alternative is probably only interesting as a preliminary step toward the second or third alternative.

In short, the problems associated with an exhaustive survey are not easily resolved. Further, to the extent that USAID (or other major donors) are really looking only for a pool of PVO's from which to draw, the exhaustive survey may well not be cost effective, even assuming that all the problems are overcome and the results are of good quality. This suggests that a selective survey might be more useful.

2.2 Selective Surveys

The choice of a more selective kind of survey does not resolve the definitional issues cited earlier, nor does it provide solutions to the major issues of the exhaustive surveys. It simply reduces the scale of the undertaking, but at the same time introduces another issue, that of the criterion or criteria which will be used to select those groups to be surveyed. Some different alternatives are suggested below in two groups: those which presuppose at least some initial screening of PVO's and those which do not.

Group I - Strategies which require screening

1) resource characteristics - survey all PVO's having a certain minimum number of personnel or minimum budget;
2) service characteristics - survey PVO's according to whether they provide financial, commodities, technical, or managerial assistance;
3) program characteristics - survey PVO's according to their program area (health, community development, water, etc.);
4) geographic characteristics - survey PVO's according to region;

5) other characteristics - probably less interesting but possible to survey PVO's according to country of origin, religious persuasion, philosophy of development, etc.;

6) some combination of any or all of the above.

Group II - Strategies which require no further screening

1) random sample - based on existing lists;

2) survey those who have already received assistance from one or more of the major donors;

3) word of mouth - using USAID and other sources, contact those PVO's with "good implementation abilities," ask them about other PVO's doing "good work," etc. until the number of PVO's begins to repeat (N.B. This is likely to be a variation of the previous strategy.);

4) associations - survey all members of HAVA, AOPS, etc.

The great advantage of a selective survey, in addition to the reduced cost, is the possibility of combining an inventory of capabilities with the possibility of providing management assistance to help improve these capabilities. This possibility adds another purpose to the list advanced earlier and reduces some of the problems of having a group like HAVA undertake the survey. Further, choosing to survey groups with common characteristics eases some of the difficulties, as will be seen later, of providing management assistance. Before turning to a discussion of management assistance, however, we will consider the possibility of one other type of survey.

2.3 Donor Survey

It may well be that much of the information sought by the previous two types of surveys might be available through a survey of donors. The UNDP, for example has a partial listing of projects being implemented by PVO's by their program area, annual budget, duration of project, etc. There is a problem as to who to include as a donor but this problem is considerably less difficult than the definition of a PVO. Many of the other issues asso-

ciated with the other two surveys also seem less complicated when approached from the point of view of a donor survey:

1) the purposes remain the same (description, coordination, funding, and possibly management assistance) and, in fact, become more logical since donors should probably be taking the lead in rationalizing the PVO sector;
2) once agreement on the kinds of information sought (i.e., the questionnaire), the question of who should undertake the survey is answered, namely each donor (though some overall coordinator of the survey would probably be needed); and
3) the method for carrying out the survey is evident and the costs not terribly high.

It should also be noted that since donors are seeking information from projects they know and fund, the quality of the information should be improved. Finally, donors would have the option of providing such information to the government or not as they saw fit, which protects the PVO's in a way in which other surveys might not.

We will return to the essential issue of donor responsibility for coordination of the PVO sector when we discuss PVO associations below.

3.0 MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TO PVO's

It was suggested earlier that a selective survey could be combined with management assistance; the goal is then to identify the strengths and weaknesses of implementation capability and to follow up with assistance to improve implementation capability. This is the approach that Planning Assistance has used since its inception in 1973. As a result of our experience in over 60 countries and with over 600 groups (governmental as well as non-governmental), we can identify the strengths and weaknesses of such assistance, and they would seem to merit at least some discussion.

The basic logic behind PAI's approach is that management assistance

leads to improved management which in turn leads to improved program performance and ultimately to improvements in the lives of the beneficiary population. Management assistance therefore has a direct effect on the organization being assisted but only an indirect effect on the beneficiary population of the organization. Management assistance can take several forms, but basically it can be done individually or with a group. PAI has found that individual assistance is generally more effective than group assistance; the reasons for this become clearer in the context of examining the limiting factors of group assistance. These limiting factors are of three kinds which can be grouped under the first major issue of how management assistance should be organized:

1) the origins of the PVO's - Where there is a mix of local and foreign PVO's, we have found that changes in the latter group are more difficult and generally come about as a result of measures taken at their own headquarters. This does not mean that no change can occur, only that there are additional constraints on change.

2) the existing levels of capability - Where there is a heterogeneous mix of abilities, what may be an appropriate level of discussion for one group may be irrelevant for another. This is so not only in terms of the knowledge imparted during the session but also in terms of the possibility for implementing change back home once the session is over. For most organizations with limited resources, the range of action is extremely limited:

   a) reduce the complexity of the program (i.e., do less better in relation with existing resources) - The problem here is the commitment to maintaining the entire program even if it has gotten unmanageable.

   b) increase the implementation capability - The problem here is that increased staff and money are not often available.

   c) reorganize the program among existing staff and with existing resources - The problem here is one of delegation of tasks and very often requires a significant change in attitude on the part of the leadership of the PVO.

3) the approach to development - Management assistance generally helps first with administration and only as a consequence with execution. This is normal, but for an organization which is used simply to doing, the relevance of management assistance to their needs may not be immediately evident.

Management assistance in a group setting must therefore be organized around local groups (and the smaller and more independent foreign groups), who sense that their program is not performing well or has somehow gotten out of their control and who feel that they need to take a step back to re-examine their actions. For some, in fact, the offer of management assistance crystallizes such feelings.

Once such a group is identified, a session (and a session should not have more than 15-20 PVO's) can be organized, and the issue becomes what can be expected of such group assistance. In terms of improved management performance (i.e., administration), group management assistance has shown to be particularly useful for:

1) institutional planning - clarifying organizational purpose; and
2) program planning - clarifying goals and objectives, choosing implementation strategies, and scheduling tasks.

Group management assistance has been somewhat less successful in the areas of budgeting, organizing and staffing, and supervising and reporting; this is primarily due to the importance of the specific characteristics of the PVO and to the need for individual assistance over a period of time. In terms of improved program performance (i.e., execution), group management assistance has shown to be useful for:

1) increasing participation (both staff and beneficiary);
2) increasing the use of data in decision-making;
3) improving the distribution of services (geographically and/or by target group); and
4) identifying the types of services needed.

Group management assistance has been somewhat less successful for:

1) increasing the frequency of services - because this is very often a problem of motivation;
2) increasing the quality of services - because this is a function of staff training and supervision; and

3) increasing the efficiency (or reducing the cost per unit of service) - because networking common support functions is very difficult.

In summary, management assistance is not a cure-all, but its effects, particularly if group assistance is followed up by individual assistance are often quite positive. As a contribution to improving PVO implementation capability, it would probably be appreciated by the PVO's, though for reasons we indicate in the concluding section, the focus should initially be on individual assistance to a few select organizations before continuing on to group assistance.

4.0 PVO ASSOCIATIONS

In the best of circumstances, a coordinated PVO sector should involve three actors: the government, the PVO's, and the donors. Without meaning to be categorical, we can state that government initiates directions through its planning, interested PVO's agree to certain programmatic and geographic sectors, and donors (as well as government) support PVO actions. Because of institutional weakness on the part of the government, only two actors have been active with the result that coordination is, and probably will remain, difficult for the foreseeable future.

USAID is currently addressing the problem of the coordination of the PVO sector through grants or promises of grants to two PVO associations: HAVA and AOPS. Of these, AOPS more closely fits the best case analysis since the Département de la Santé Publique et de la Population (DSPP) has at least established priorities, is reorganizing its regions, and has some ideas about the structure of health care and the role of PVO's in the delivery of health care. HAVA's role is more difficult because it represents all program sectors and its relationship to the relevant government office and its

recent initiative are not clear.

It would seem at this point that USAID, before proceeding much further with the associations, should develop a policy with regard to coordination of the PVO sector as a whole (i.e., government, PVO's, and donors). A policy which focuses on PVO associations alone to organize the PVO sector is probably asking too much of these associations. After all, if PVO's have been unable to coordinate, the same can be said of government and the donors, and there are far fewer of these last two actors. Indeed, without some pressure (slight though it may be) from these last two, it is not clear that PVO's have any particular incentive to coordinate, and even if they do it is not clear how they can do it without guidance from government and the donors.

It seems reasonably clear that the initiative for coordinating the PVO sector must come from the donors and that this initiative must be three-pronged:

1) donors should organize themselves (at least informally) and attempt to define what form coordination could take;
2) the recent government initiative with respect to PVO sector coordination should at least be given a chance to succeed, and donors should seek ways to help government establish a policy and a program for gradually arriving at coordination; and
3) donors should encourage PVO associations and not necessarily one or two national associations. The process of organizing PVO's will take time and will probably have a better chance of success if associations occur on a smaller scale than an all-encompassing association (that is, according to religious persuasion, or philosophical approach, or regional and/or programmatic interest). This does not mean that groups such as HAVA and AOPS should not be supported but it does mean that not a lot should be expected of them for several years at least.

These three actions can and should be occurring simultaneously, though the priority should probably be on the first and eventually the second prongs. To the extent that donors and government agree on certain directions,

the PVO community will be forced to speed up its own efforts to coordinate. Whether these efforts result in a single association may not be important; even if PVO's could be reached through ten associations, it would be better than trying to coordinate 300-400 individual PVO's.

In summary, the issue of support for PVO associations in general and for HAVA and AOPS in particular should not be divorced from the broader context which we have tried to outline. Because USAID is funding HAVA, however, a summary of the kinds of issues raised by those interviewed may be useful. On the whole, people seemed to be in agreement that some such organization was needed (though it should be added that most of those interviewed were members); there was almost no consensus on its future role (though there was some consensus for its short-term objectives). Given HAVA's need to establish its credibility while working on the short-term objective as an information clearing house, we propose in the next section a series of next steps, not only for HAVA and AOPS, but for the donors and the government as well.

5.0 CONCLUSION: POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

The three different areas of activity discussed in this report could be complementary, but they need some overall purpose and direction. All aim at collaboration and the enhancement of implementation capability, but if the actions are not to be dispersed, USAID should as a first step consider the issue of the sequencing of activities. From this perspective, USAID should elaborate, with or without outside assistance, a two or three year plan for progressing toward the coordination of the PVO sector.

If USAID feels that such a plan is premature, then it may wish to consider some or all of the actions listed below. These actions would

in any case figure in such a plan and are of a sufficiently preliminary nature that at least for a year or so would not compromise future planning.

As to surveys, if USAID really wants an exhaustive survey (whether national or regional in scope), then it should simply arrange for it to be done for its own purposes. This does not achieve some of the institution building objectives which might be achieved by working through HAVA or the government bureau concerned with PVO's, but perhaps a survey is not the best way to begin institution building in any case. If institution building is of prime concern and a survey is deemed to help in this regard, then two complementary surveys might be considered:

1) an exhaustive survey (but perhaps starting with a single programmatic area--not one of the big ones like health or education) to be carried out by the government bureau. This survey would be descriptive in nature, collecting information on the name of the organization, address, contact person, annual budget, program activities, date of installation in Haiti, etc. It represents a risk, both in terms of the ability of the government to carry it out (this could be reduced with some assistance) and in terms of the quantity and quality of the information received. On the other hand, it would represent an effort to support the (legitimate) recent initiative of the government in this regard.
2) a donor survey to be carried out by HAVA. This survey would produce some information on implementation capabilities (though perhaps slighting some of the smaller PVO's) without great logistical problems (since much of the information could be collected in Port-au-Prince). In addition, a possible by-product could be a sort of "Foundation Directory" which could be of use (free to HAVA members and at nominal cost to non-members) to PVO's by identifying sources of funding, their current priorities, procedures, and so forth.

As to the provision of management assistance, several possibilities are open. As a first priority, HAVA should be offered (and discussions with them indicate that they would readily accept) a management assistance workshop with the purpose of defining their institutional goals and a program plan (for six months to a year). Such a plan, elaborated by HAVA members together, would provide a means by which the members could judge HAVA's

utility and credibility as a provider of services to PVO's. A by-product of this workshop would be that individual members could see how management assistance works and whether their own organization could use it. If there were a demand, HAVA could then begin to offer such assistance as part of its services (free to members and at nominal cost to non-members). Further, if other associations (AOPS, for example) and the government bureau were invited, they also could determine whether such assistance might be useful for them.

A second priority might be to offer management assistance to the government bureau. The tasks which they have set for themselves (see Annex 2) seem reasonable, but they probably also lack some overall purpose and almost certainly do not have a program plan. Here, the major issue is whether USAID feels that the government initiative is worth supporting (and if it is whether USAID should be the one to support it).

Such management assistance to HAVA and/or the government is short-term, probably 3-6 man weeks per workshop. The question of long-term assistance (1-2 years) should only be addressed after the short-term assistance and probably only within the context of an overall USAID plan.

So far, the next steps have only focused on what USAID should do or could do. In fact, the problem is one for all donors and USAID may well want to consider the possibilities of collaborative planning with the other donors as a step in their planning process. This type of planning can also be done in a workshop/seminar setting in much the same way as it would be done for HAVA or the government.

In sum, there are a number of short-term possibilities, but on the whole they generally lead back at some point in the future to the need for a consideration of the larger context of PVO coordination in Haiti.

ANNEX 1: List of Persons Interviewed

PVO Associations

Père Jacques Mcguffie, AOPS

Raymond Etienne, HAVA

PVO's

Jack Hancox, Convention Baptiste

Lawrence Holzman, CARE

Serge Picard, Catholic Relief Services

Rev. James Fulfer, Seventh Day Adventist World Service

Lance Durban, The Self-Help Housing Foundation

John Burns, groupe Technologie Intermédiaire d'Haiti

Claude Boutillier, Save the Children

Steve Goodwin, Pan American Development Foundation

Government of Haiti

Dr. Ary Bordes, DSPP

International Donors

USAID-

Harlan Hobgood

Ann Fitzcharles

Michael Baldwin

Fred Conway

Katty McDonald

UNDP-

Fred Thomas

Coopération Haitiano-Néerlandaise (COHAN)-

Gerrit Desloovere

ANNEX 2: List of Tasks of the Government Body Charged with Supervising PVO's

1) Dresser un inventaire des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales (ONG) d'Aide Privée opérant en Haiti;

2) Assurer la correspondance relative à l'Aide Privée;

3) Réunir les informations sur les projets des ONG en exécution et à l'étude;

4) Tenir les Archives Centrales des Accords de Coopération Externe et de la documentation relative à l'Aide Privée;

5) Présenter un tableau des débours annuels prévus par les ONG;

6) Elaborer des Rapports et des Tableaux Statistiques dur l'Aide Privée aux fins de programmation et d'évaluation;

7) Organiser des réunions périodiques d'informations avec les ONG d'Aide Privée; et faire les démarches nécessaires en vue de la solution des problèmes administratifs posés par l'Aide Privée;

8) Présenter un rapport annuel sur les activités des ONG d'Aide Privée;

9) Servir de liaison entre la Secrétairerie d'Etat du Plan, les Secteurs et les ONG, etc.;

10) Envisager les possibilités de l'octroi d'une assistance technique aux Organisations Non-Gouvernementales (ONG);

11) Etudier les dossiers de projets soumis par les ONG;

12) Veiller à la conformité des actions des ONG aux priorités nationales.