NUPI

UN local peacebuilding and transition in Haiti

Contextualizing early peacebuilding activities to local circumstances Haiti case-study field report

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With the support of Gabrielle Hyacinthe

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Acronyms

ASEC	Assemblée de la Section Communale
CA	Civil Affairs
CAO	Civil Affairs Officer
CBO	Community-based Organization
CRO	Chief of Regional Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVR	Community Violence Reduction
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFS	Department of Field Support
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework
ISP	Institutional Support Programme
MICT	Ministry of Interior and Territorial Collectivities
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPO	National Professional Officer
NSP	Non-State Provider
PaP	Port-au-Prince
QIP	Quick Impact Project
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteer

Map of Haiti

Source: United Nations Department of Field Support, Cartographic Section.

Executive Summary

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) stands out from other UN peacekeeping missions, as these have focused on responding to situations of violent conflict. In Haiti there is no violent conflict as such: the problems are lack of political coming together, lack of respect for agreements, and lack of capacity to compromise. In contrast to the loud national-level narrative extremely critical of MINUSTAH, at local levels the UN mission has often been the only available link to the national government and international organizations present in remote areas.

This report is part of a comparative study of UN local peacebuilding in three countries – Haiti, Liberia and South Sudan. When initiating this study, the research team chose the Civil Affairs (CA) section of UN peacekeeping operations as an entry point, based on the experience that this section is usually deployed wherever the peacekeeping mission has established presences, and is tasked among other things with, *inter alia,* acting as the intermediary with local authorities and populations, as well as the rest of the UN peacekeeping mission and other UN actors.

MINUSTAH has over 100 Civil Affairs Officers (CAOs) deployed across Haiti's ten departments, working on a daily basis with national, departmental and local-level officials. Through the Civil Affairs Section, MINUSTAH has a reach throughout Haiti impossible to match by any UN agency or NGO. In the words of one CAO, it 'can feel the temperature on the ground'.[1] This proximity has led to privileged relations and trust with local authorities, enabling civil affairs to voice the needs and concerns of local officials to central authorities. Local authorities we spoke with – from all levels – were aware of the role of civil affairs, and could distinguish between different MINUSTAH sections and identify their civil affairs focal points.

There are obvious advantages in the fact that over 90% of the senior CA staff have over five years within MINUSTAH, thereby providing the mission with considerable contextual knowledge and institutional memory. On the other hand, this also results in a static staffing structure, with the danger of settling into routines rather than responding to changing needs and demands on the ground. Although Civil Affairs have successful experiences in bringing together non-state actors, as in

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1   Interview with civil affairs officer (CAO).

the 'town hall meetings' during Haitian presidential elections, the section recognized that its support had focused mainly on local authorities, and that it was necessary to extend this support to the various non-state actors so important to the social fabric of the country. State coverage is minimal, with most of Haiti's governance and rule of law institutions either totally absent or inefficient, leaving the responsibility for public service delivery largely to non-state actors, INGOs and businesses.[2] In the future, these non-state actors must be taken more seriously by MINUSTAH in the institutional building framework.

With the extensive presence that MINUSTAH has established in Haiti, there also follows a promise of leaving something tangible behind. MINUSTAH has been undertaking a large number of quick impact projects (QIPs) – refurbishing and building offices for municipality officers, courts, marketplaces and so forth. Technical assistance to implement QIPs has become a central element in the work of CAOs in Haiti, due to the time-consuming element and visibility of such projects. When we spoke with CAOs, they counted their achievements in terms of buildings, infrastructure, establishing archives or even organigrammes almost as frequently as did the local authorities.

While these results of QIPs are important features for the effective functioning of local authorities, they do not indicate how the local authorities are actually performing in their key role: of delivering basic services to local populations. The focus on material support through QIPs may be only a bias from the limited number of respondents or due to the limited time that the research team spent on the ground, but it should still give some pause for thought. In the aftermath of the crippling earthquake, MINUSTAH has focused on QIPs as a means to provide tangible support, expanding the budget for QIPs from about $3 million to the current $7.5 million per year for QIPs. In addition, the mission has other resources that can be used for support – in total around $3 million, as well as various mission assets that to some degree can be used for mutually beneficial purposes, like repairing roads that are critical for the mission.

CAOs often underscored that their presence throughout the country enables them to feel the pulse of the country. While this is true, we also think that they may underestimate the expectations that their presence may raise among local populations. The breadth of the UN presence is impressive, but the scope and depth of their activities is less so. The focus on QIPs absorbs much valuable staff time with limited returns. It is understandable that officers want to leave some tangible structures behind, but these should be coupled with more long-

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2   See e.g. World Bank (2006), Haiti Social Resilience and State Fragility in Haiti: A Country Social Analysis, 27 April 2006.

term activities that could ensure a sustainable approach that couples tangible structures with capacity development.

The UN is working diligently to improve the lives of Haitians, but these efforts have encountered significant challenges as regards coordination and cooperation with the rest of the UN system and other development actors. The UN mission has moved the CA section from the political to the development pillar, to ensure that the work of civil affairs and the commensurate outputs are in line with the longer-term peacebuilding and development objectives of Haiti. As yet, however, this administrative reshuffling has not had tangible results in terms of improved cooperation between civil affairs and other UN funds, programmes and agencies. This is a challenge not only of coordination, but also of leveraging the presence of CA and UN mission assets throughout Haiti to realize substantial and tangible peacebuilding and development dividends that can benefit local populations. MINUSTAH has met significant challenges in this area that must be overcome if it is to continue to prove relevant to Haitian stakeholders, on the national as well as the local levels.

Summary of recommendations

1.   Institutional support and supporting participation in national policy processes
- Member states, MINUSTAH and other actors should continue to press for legal reforms for establishing a viable framework for support to decentralization and local government, institutionalizing and securing the progress made so far
- Notwithstanding the absence of a legal framework, MINUSTAH and the rest of the UN system should continue their important work in capacity development for local government officials along the lines of the training offered to municipal accountants
- Future legal reform will need to tackle, *inter alia*, the difficult issue of possible duplicative structures on local levels.

2.   QIPs and programme activities
- MINUSTAH should, with reference to the policy directive on QIPs and the Secretary-General's report on civilian capacities, consider using more funds for capacity development activities for local officials, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Territorial Collectivities, civil society, UNDP and other relevant stakeholders
- QIPs are very time-consuming, so there should be a focus on pooling similar QIPs in order to lower the transaction costs

- Staff should be trained in development programming, and a closer partnership with UNDP and other development agencies should be fostered, especially since these actors are currently co-located in PaP.

3.   Local ownership and engaging with non-state actors
- While civil affairs (CA) is recognized by local authorities as the 'best in class' in terms of listening to local needs, it is important to strengthen the participatory approach further, e.g. through town hall meetings to ensuring that other voices also are heard and able to participate in national decision-making processes
- Having a core mandate of feeding local voices into national policy processes, CA should make a more sustained effort in engaging with and strengthening the capacity of a broader representation of local actors, including various civil society organizations and churches;
- Recalling the g7+ declaration, there is a need to pay more attention to national planning frameworks and needs, on the national, departmental and local levels, for instance by supporting the *table de concertation* and the rule-of-law clusters as decision-making forums for all peacebuilding and development actors.

4.   The UN and local level peacebuilding
- The CA workload should be trimmed, e.g. through limiting the use of QIPs;
- The UN should consider the model of South Sudan– of including posts with responsibility for programme activities and opening the field presences for other peacebuilding and development actors
- Strengthen planning for early peacebuilding among relevant staff in MINUSTAH, including CA through a joint planning exercise with the UN country team
- Operationalize existing integration in planning frameworks such as the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) into programme activities executed on the local level
- Consider a 24-month transition window in the handover of programme activities from MINUSTAH to the UN country team
- Pool resources for programme activities by focusing QIPs on essential tasks and transferring funds to capacity-development initiatives that can be initiated with reference to the SG guidance on civilian capacities
- Devise a strategy together with UN DPKO New York on how to achieve staff mobility on senior levels.

MINUSTAH is a state within a state[3]

This mission can come to support us, but the decisions have to be taken by Haitians. We are the ones that know the context best. In some cases, the mission replaces Haitians. When this is done, it always represents problems.[4]

Introduction

Recent years have seen growing attention in policy and academic circles to the work the United Nations is doing on the local level in peacebuilding operations.[5] It has become increasingly clear that the success of early peacebuilding activities depends on achieving locally owned and contextualized solutions through listening to local needs and understanding political dynamics. There is also an increasing consensus that the peacekeeping/peacebuilding nexus is an artificial divide: in reality, civilian peacekeepers can be considered early peacebuilders.[6] The question is whether – and how – they can perform a catalytic and enabling role to facilitate development activities of other

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[3] Informal discussion with national CAO.
[4] Interview with a mayor in the South Department.
[5] This project focuses on early peacebuilding activities within peacekeeping operations, as defined by the UN Secretary-General in his opening remarks of the Security Council discussion on peacebuilding, 13 October 2010, where he stressed that peacekeeping missions should be enabled 'to have an impact as "early peacebuilders"'. See UN (2010), 'As Security Council Weighs Measures to Strengthen Peacebuilding, Secretary-General Stresses Rapid Deployment of Trained Staff, Predictable Financing, Women's Input', *Press Release* [Online]. Available at:
http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sgsm13181.doc.htm [Accessed 28 October. In line with the above statement, this report uses the term 'peacebuilders' to refer to the civilian staff who work in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations with tasks intended to reduce the fragility of states ravaged by conflict and strengthen their resilience against a relapse into conflict. The meeting in the Security Council was held to discuss the latest progress report on peacebuilding: UN (2010), 'Progress report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict', UN Doc. *S/2010/386*, published 16 July 2010 [Online]. Available at http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep10.htm, accessed 15 July 2011. For policy documents on the role of UN DPKO on the local level, see e.g. United Nations (2008), United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines, ('The Capstone Doctrine') DPKO, United Nations, New York. Available at:
http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/Pbps/Library/Capstone_Doctrine_ENG.pdf; United Nations DPKO (2008), Policy Directive: Civil Affairs, Department of Peacekeeping Operations; and Department of Field Support. Available on: http://www.undg.org/docs/8915/Civil-Affairs-Policy.pdf. For some academic literature see e.g. Stathis N. Kalyvas, (2006), The logic of violence in civil war, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; S. Autessere, (2010) The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding. Barnard College, Columbia University, New York.
[6] See the ACCORD publication *Conflict Trends 3/2011* (September 2011) dedicated exclusively to the 'peacebuilding-peacekeeping nexus'. Available at:
http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/ct/ct_2011_3.pdf.

actors, UN and others, so as to create peace dividends from their presence.

Activities of the government and UN peacebuilders aim to instil confidence in the peace process at the local level, through strengthening local authorities and improving service delivery, facilitating reconciliation processes, and coordinating support from other UN agencies and international actors. In this work, civil affairs officers (CAOs) of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) have a particularly important role. The rationale for making the connection between civil affairs and local-level peacebuilding builds on the evolving understanding that 'peacekeepers are peacebuilders' and should implement early peacebuilding tasks. In peacekeeping missions, the Civil Affairs section is most frequently deployed throughout the host country and provides the UN with a presence on the local level. This project examines how Civil Affairs in three missions have operationalized and implemented their mandates, through field research in Haiti (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti – MINUSTAH), Liberia (United Nations Mission in Liberia – UNMIL) and South Sudan – (United Nations Mission in South Sudan – UNMISS). Further, it studies how the UN peacekeeping more broadly is organizing its work on the local level and working together with local authorities, other UN agencies and development actors.

The research took a real-time learning approach through interactive discussions with CAOs and staff from other substantive sections of peacekeeping operations. One of the overall goals of the project is to support and contextualize peacekeeping practices and processes in South Sudan, Haiti and Liberia, offering an alternative and external view. The research project has resulted in field reports for each country that aim to feed into the knowledge production for DPKO Peacekeeping Best Practices Section/Civil Affairs, UNDP, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other interested stakeholders.

Structure of the report and guiding questions

Following a brief overview of the country context and history of UN peacekeeping in Haiti, the report introduces UN civil affairs in Haiti, briefly explaining the overall roles, responsibilities and challenges. The report seeks to elucidate some core research questions developed by NUPI:

- What kind of mechanisms has been used to feed the voices of local institutional and non-institutional actors into political processes?

- Are local institutional and non-institutional actors able to influence national decision-making processes, and if so, how?
- How are the needs for service provision and political participation captured on the local level, and how do these needs feed into decision-making processes?
- Are civil affairs officers promoting local ownership and effective participation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes, and if so, how?
- How can civil affairs officers contribute to the strengthening of confidence of the local population in local authorities, and the support given by the UN and other international actors?
- How does the cross-mission representation role of civil affairs facilitate implementation and/or transition etc?

Methodology

Haiti was chosen as a case study for the project because it is unique within UN peacekeeping operations. In Haiti there has been no open conflict between warring factions. Yet the long-term political crisis in Haiti and consequent social, economic and security crises and natural disasters have left the country in a state of chronic emergency, with levels of criminality that have repeatedly threatened to plunge the country into further instability. The relative absence of state structures throughout the country, and their inability to deliver basic services and security to the population, have justified the presence of MINUSTAH, along with a great many non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Many of the persons we interviewed questioned the use of the term 'peacebuilding' in a context like that of Haiti, where there has not been open war or conflict. We recognize this and use the term loosely in such a way that it can be applied to all three case studies. The report broadly understands 'peacebuilding' as efforts 'to identify and support structures that will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict'.[7]

The research in Haiti consisted of four weeks of fieldwork, between 28 August and 24 September 2011. The first week was spent in the capital city, Port-au-Prince (PaP) at headquarters level, interviewing civil affairs senior leadership, the Parliament Support Unit (PSU), and some CAOs working in the West region where PaP is located, followed by two one-week visits to two departments – the South Department and the North Department, with a short two-day visit to the North-East Department as well. The team had therefore the opportunity to visit four departments out of a total of ten. During the field visits, the team learnt about how CA has been implementing its diverse

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7 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 'An Agenda for Peace', UN document A/47/277-S/24111 (17 June 1992).

mandate, including institutional support, management of QIPs and border management. This allowed for a fairly comprehensive understanding of civil affairs work at headquarters and field offices, in its specific adaptation to local circumstances, as well as in its general approach to implement its mandate in cooperation with other UN agencies, with national authorities on the local, departmental and national levels, and with international development actors.

The research team was hosted and supported by MINUSTAH's civil affairs section, receiving invaluable administrative and logistical support of CAOs at all field offices visited. The team consisted of Diana Felix da Costa, John Karlsrud and Gabrielle Hyacinthe, in addition to Bernady Hyacinthe, who participated in the field research in the South Department. Gabrielle Hyacinthe had served as a CAO for five years and brought to the team not only her valuable insights, but also an array of contacts and network with local authorities and civil affairs staff.

The methods and tools used for the field research were anthropological and qualitative. In addition to participant observation and participation in CA events (which included accompanying CAOs during several field visits), semi-structured interviews and informal discussions were conducted with CAOs, staff from other MINUSTAH sections, UNDP staff, national and local authorities, and civil society organizations. The project took a real-time learning approach through interactive sessions with civil affairs and planning staff of peacekeeping operations, UNDP and other members of the UN Country Teams. Focus-group discussions were also conducted with members of the general population. In total, the research team conducted 55 interviews with 59 interviewees and had eight focus-group meetings with 34 respondents.[8] Prior to leaving Haiti, the research team held a feedback session with the head of Civil Affairs and some of the staff in PaP. Preliminary findings were shared and validated.

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8   According to project reference table, last updated on 20 September 2011.

Table 1: Interviews conducted in each location, by organizational background and gender[9]

	Civil Affairs staff		Other UNMISS staff		UN Agencies		Gov. Authorities		Civil Society		Total	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Total	13	8	4	3	4	2	30	6	9	4	60	23

Two focus-group discussions were conducted with CAOs, and two with members of the local population. Interviews were conducted mostly in English, occasionally in French, with MINUSTAH staff, and in French and Haitian Creole with the local authorities, organizations and population. We have chosen to keep all interviews as anonymous as possible, indicating only the institutional affiliation, without dates or locations.

Challenges in methodology
While the study is qualitative and not comprehensive, we hope it can offer useful insights and reflections on MINUSTAH's work in Haiti. It is however, not intended to be a comprehensive account of UN efforts in local peacebuilding, nor of CA work in Haiti. More time would have been needed for a more comprehensive and deeper analysis. The research team was taken to research sites generally selected by CA staff, and were seen by most local authorities as part of MINUSTAH.

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9   This table includes only those interviews formally conducted as interviews, not the many background talks and informative exchanges with people from all organizational backgrounds. However, these more informal exchanges serve to inform the following text as much as the formal interviews, and should be as part of the process of participatory observation and fieldwork.

Background

Haiti: a history of political violence and natural disasters

Haiti has had a turbulent history marked by political violence and natural disasters. Highly polarized politics have complicated efforts to address the country's complex and deeply rooted development challenges. The country remains the poorest in the Americas. Due to a combination of geography, poverty, social problems and poor building standards, it has recently witnessed mudslides, floods, earthquakes and hurricanes, all with high human casualties.

Politically, Haiti has suffered 32 coups in its 200 years of post-colonial existence. A long history of oppression by dictators – including both Duvaliers – and external interventions of international powers such as France and the United States since the country's founding have also had a significant impact in shaping today's political and socio-economic environment and its sense of identity. In February 2004, an armed rebellion forced the resignation and exile of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and a provisional government took control, with security provided by MINUSTAH.[10] Michel Martelly, the current president, was elected in the general elections of 2011.

UN peacekeeping in Haiti

The Mission des Nations Unies au Haiti (MINUSTAH) arrived in Haiti in June 2004[11] in the midst of the political crisis, social instability and widespread violence and insecurity triggered by the Gonaïves revolt, which spread to other cities and which led to the abrupt departure of President Aristide in February 2004, allegedly after pressure from the United States.[12] MINUSTAH had an authorized strength of 6700 military troops, more than 1600 UN police officers, and a mandate

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[10] For the recent historical background see for example P. Girard (2010) *Haiti: The Tumultuous History - From Pearl of the Caribbean to Broken Nation,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan

[11] See the MINUSTAH website for the background to UN peacekeeping in the country. Available on: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minustah/background.shtml, accessed 10 January 2012.

[12] '…James Foley, the U.S. Ambassador to Haiti, made it clear to Aristide that the United States would not protect him and that he was on his own. The U.S. State Department also prevented the San Francisco-based firm under contract to provide private security for Aristide from sending additional personnel as Aristide had requested.' A. Dupuy (2010) 'From Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Gerard Latortue: The Unending Crisis of Democratization in Haiti', *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 10(1), at p. 187.

focused on supporting a peaceful and constitutional political process and establishing a secure and stable environment.[13]

Seven years later – and after the tragic earthquake that shook the country on 12 January 2010, killing 220,000 and leaving 1,5 million people homeless, pushing back many of the achievements since 2004 – MINUSTAH remains a contentious force in the country. Some see it as yet another occupying force that should leave the country. Others question the mission's current structure, with over 12,000 military and police troops, and would favour a political mission focused on substantive civilian components like supporting the strengthening of rule of law and justice, and policing units better equipped to respond to the political and security challenges facing the country.[14] As expressed by one respondent: 'Haiti is not a post-conflict country. In this light, it has to be reconsidered what type of tools are appropriate for its situation. Military and police are not necessarily the right solution for Haiti's context'.[15]

Interestingly, MINUSTAH enjoys significantly more support and recognition at the local level, particularly among elected local authorities, in contrast to the widespread reluctance seen at the national level. The general absence of state authorities throughout the country has meant that MINUSTAH is often the only link to the national government. One national professional officer (NPO) within civil affairs even argued that 'MINUSTAH is a state within the state' – a point explored later in this report. Haiti stands out from other countries where UN peacekeeping missions are deployed:

> MINUSTAH is very different from other PKO missions. In Haiti there is no violent conflict but lack of political coming together; lack of respect for agreements; lack of capacity to compromise. (…) We are here to, together with the government, create stronger political governance. Civil affairs received a request from the Minister of Interior to coach local authorities, working with them through budget issues, project management, such as in the cholera response.[16]

We explore this further in the report, starting with a focus on civil affairs (CA) and its tasks, then moving to the larger questions of how and if UN peacekeeping officers in Haiti are leveraged to provide peacebuilding and governance dividends to the population.

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13 On 30 April 2004, acting on the recommendations of the Secretary-General, the UN Security Council adopted UN SCR 1542, establishing MINUSTAH.
14 MINUSTAH 's overall force levels consist of up to 8940 troops and 4391 UN police (UNSCR 1944 (2010).
15 Interview with former senior-level MINUSTAH staff.
16 Interview with senior CAO.

Contextualizing early peacebuilding to local circumstances – findings from Haiti

1. Brief introduction to civil affairs in Haiti

UN civil affairs is one of the largest civilian components in UN peacekeeping, with 1009 staff members mandated and 870 staff deployed globally to facilitate the implementation of peacekeeping mandates at the subnational level.[17] In Haiti, UN civil affairs officers (CAOs) are central the core mandate of MINUSTAH. The civil affairs section is the largest and most far-reaching civilian component in the mission, with over 100 officers spread throughout the country's ten departments. Their presence throughout the territory enables CAOs to 'take the pulse' of the country and the challenges it faces, channelling information between national and local authorities, the population at large as well as the senior mission management.

Civil affairs has a broad UN mandate in Haiti, ranging from support to elections, promoting an all-inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation, building institutional capacity at all levels, and in addition, coordinating and representing other MINUSTAH sections – like child protection, gender, political affairs – in the departments where these sections have no presence.[18] The core objectives are to strengthen democratic state institutions at the national and local levels, and to strengthen state authority throughout Haiti.[19] Six general objectives and actions have been established:[20]

- Support the development of a corps of civil servants and the establishment of local governments able to organize public services across the country;
- Strengthen decentralised public institutions;[21]

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17 Including professional national and international officers and UN Volunteers. UN 2012. Civil Affairs Staffing January 2012. UN DPKO, New York.

18 See UNSC Resolution 1892 (2009), 1927 (2010) and 1944 (2010). Also team interviews with CAO.

19 MINUSTAH Section: Civil Affairs, *Workplan 2010-2011,* Amended 28 October 2010 (Version, 6 September 2010).

20 Information retrieved and translated from the MINUSTAH website: http://minustah.org/?page_id=11022.

21 For a description of Haiti's territorial division and the current decentralization process see A. Simpson (2011) *A study of Local Governance Development in Haiti, upon entering the 49th Legislature*, MA Thesis: University of Birmingham (UK), August 2011.

- Support the Government in the development and implementation of a comprehensive border management strategy;
- Contribute to the smooth functioning of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies/Members of Parliament;
- Increase accountability and participation of civil society in public affairs and government; and
- Promote national dialogue and help solve local conflicts.

In addition, each regional office is responsible for civil representation of MINUSTAH and for coordinating the activities of the other MINUSTAH components present in the region.

To achieve these objectives, Civil Affairs is divided into four units – the Institutional Support Unit, the Quick Impact Projects Unit, the Parliament Support Unit, and the Coordination and Reporting Unit. For these objectives and tasks, MINUSTAH has staff deployed in Haiti's ten departments, working on a daily basis with national, departmental and local-level officials. This proximity has in many instances led to strong relations with local authorities. Local authorities we spoke with – from all levels – were aware and appreciative of the role of CA, and were able to distinguish between the different MINUSTAH sections and identify their CA focal points.

Civil affairs activities at national and local levels

All four CA units work toward the same goal of strengthening state institutions. The two-person Parliament Support Unit provides direct technical support to various units of the Parliament and acts as the interface between the Parliament and MINUSTAH. The unit is particularly involved in issues of decentralization and strengthening of the public sector. All local authorities interviewed mentioned the current centralized state apparatus as one of the main constraints to good governance. The Parliament Support Unit is located only in Port-au-Prince.

The three-person Coordination and Reporting Unit based at MINUSTAH's HQ in PaP is the central reporting unit of the mission, compiling weekly reports that come in from the regions with contributions from every section. Similarly, the three-person central Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) unit based in PaP manages the QIPs at central level. Although it is intended to have two QIP focal points in each of the field offices,[22] this is rarely the case.

While all units are complementary to each other, the most significant dimension of CA in Haiti is arguably to be found in its institutional support at national and local levels. The Institutional Support Unit has

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22   Interview with senior MINUSTAH official.

a team in PaP, consisting mostly of NPOs embedded in the Ministry of Interior and Territorial Collectivity (MICT). Most of their work is done in the various departments of the country, working alongside with mayors and other local authorities.

At the local level, CAOs have a range of roles and tasks, not always core to their mandate. The head of CA serves as chief of regional office (CRO) in each field office. Core CA tasks centre on accompanying and strengthening local authorities, feeding local voices into national policy processes; serving as the eyes and ears of the SRSG and the Political Affairs Section on the ground; and planning and implementing QIPs. The CRO is also the focal point for, *inter alia,* the Gender, Best Practices and Conduct and Discipline Unit, 'chief of the fire engine department' putting out small conflicts in the municipalities at frequent (at least weekly) intervals. The following sections explore in greater detail the various CA functions undertaken at the local level.

2. Institutional support and supporting participation in national political processes

Civil Affairs in Haiti works to promote institutional support and to strengthen local governance capacity in a context where there is a 'total absence of a territorial state'.[23] Institutional support undertaken by Civil Affairs involves a range of activities, such as training officials on the local and departmental levels, often bringing in experts from PaP. Trainings to date have involved, *inter alia,* activity planning, developing a budget, organization and administration such as setting up an organigramme, maintaining records and formal archives. Institutional support also frequently involves support through QIPs, discussed in a later section.

CA has been instrumental in pushing for a Public Administration Law to ensure the sustainability of current achievements. However, such a law has not yet been passed, which poses a serious threat to CA work in strengthening the local-level governance framework. Among the achievements mentioned by our CA interlocutors was changing the position of municipal accountant, a mandatory post in the municipal structure, from being a political position to that of a public servant. This has strengthened the possibilities for improved accountability of municipal funds and spending, also making the post less exposed to political control and patronage. Our interlocutors also explained that they were working to convert the financial controller post into a public servant, and a long-term goal was to support the adoption of a law whereby all municipal staff would be civil servants.

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23   Interview with senior CAO.

The absence of a law securing technical posts in the local administrations means that the advances made through institutional support are in jeopardy. In the local elections, scheduled for March 2012,[24] there is a risk that the existing administration of the country may find itself replaced, as all the posts in the local administration may be changed by the newly elected officials. According to one CAO, 'civil affairs is gambling on the fact that any future legal framework will have to accommodate the financial, administrative and budgetary management systems that have already been put in place in the municipalities over the last five years.'[25]

Capacity development – early peacebuilding or lost in translation?

During our visit, the government and MINUSTAH were conducting a fact-finding study that would hold the mayors accountable for their activities over the past five years – the *Bilan Communale* – ahead of the local elections scheduled for March 2012. CAOs visited all the municipalities, shared a letter from the MICT tasking the municipalities to undertake the exercise, helped them conduct an inventory of activities, and finally organized a joint meeting of the mayors in the department, where they shared their achievements. It was hoped that this exercise would enable the local officials as well as the central government and the international community to establish a baseline of the development situation in Haiti. Yet it also leads to questions of what role CA should have – a *de facto* link between the central ministry and local authorities?

One of the core tasks of CAOs is, a noted, feeding local voices into national policy processes. Civil affairs can help local officials in communicating their needs to central authorities, and officers often underscored the importance of their presence throughout the country, enabling them to feel the pulse of the country and provide updated information to headquarters: 'That's our strength: we are present everywhere. We can feel the temperature on the ground.'[26] Civil affairs are effectively the 'eyes and ears of the mission', with their widespread presence throughout the territory and in close contact with local actors, albeit admittedly only a selection of them. CA reporting falls into roughly two categories: descriptive day-to-day reporting, and analytical pieces offering 'local reactions to events'.

CAOs are often confronted with cases where local authorities want their help in sorting out a problem, e.g. relating to communication with authorities at departmental or national levels. During our visit we

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24   At the time of printing this report, the local elections had yet not been held.
25   Former CAO, MINUSTAH.
26   Interview with CAO.

saw frequent examples of how civil affairs acted as a messenger between the various levels of governance. One instance concerned the letter for the *Bilan Communale* that had been sent out to all municipalities, instructing the local officials to record achievements and challenges during the past three years. In most cases, it turned out that the letter had never been received by the local authorities. To further the process and gather the information, the teams we accompanied had a copy of the letter that they presented, explaining what further actions were required in order to execute the instructions. This required painstaking work in filling out forms and trying to identify and record the activities of the local authorities. Interestingly, achievements were generally identified as involving the refurbishing of municipal offices, police station and other public buildings. The processes of local-level capacity development often became a kind of 'hand-holding' aimed at guiding local officials through the necessary steps to conform with bureaucratic procedures. As one respondent said:

> The only ISP [Institutional Support Programme] we can do, I don't call it ISP, I call it *accompagnement*.[27] We gather information on what the problems are, but we don't develop capacity. That is because we don't have a strategic plan. There is no impact in terms of building the capacity of the municipalities. The time that the CA staff has for building capacity for each of the municipalities is very little… [we are] short-staffed and over-worked.[28]

Another challenge identified in the example above and frequently noted elsewhere was that CAOs tended to sort out issues directly, rather than taking the time to help local authorities to sort them out themselves, thus substituting for the local authorities and acting as a 'state within the state', an expression used by one CA national professional officer (NPO).[29]

Some officers expressed frustration with what they perceived as a tension between the mandate to support institutional capacity development to strengthen governance capacity on the local level, essentially a long-term task, and the short-term mandates of peacekeeping operations. In general, CAOs felt that there was a tension between the rather large task of developing real capacity and the very limited time at their disposal, when divided among the many municipalities and local government officials they were responding to and had in their mandated area. Some even felt that institutional support and capacity development should be the responsibility of UNDP, not MINUSTAH:

> The problem with the mandate is that it is short-term, while ISP is long-term capacity building. There is a difference between support and capacity development.

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[27] The term used in French was '*accompagnement*', which has a more encompassing sense than when used in English.
[28] Interview with CAO.
[29] Conversation with MINUSTAH national CA officer.

> UNDP should be responsible for this, it is in their mandate. The office here is covering 13 municipalities. It is not the mandate of the mission to work on long-term ISP, it is UNDP who should work on this, they have the mandate and knowledge, and civil affairs should support.[30]

As mentioned in the introduction, peacekeepers have in recent years been recognized for the contribution they can make to stabilization and function as early peacebuilders.[31] During our visit to Haiti it was clear that while CA may be present on the ground and able to strengthen the capacities of local officials, they are overburdened with tasks, making it very difficult to have a sustained and patient approach. Also deeply problematic is the lack of a legal framework that can guarantee the progress made. In consequence, some CAOs would like to hand over the institutional support role to UNDP and other long-term actors. But UNDP is hardly present in the field, so CA stands out as the only actor that realistically can make a contribution in this task, which they are in fact mandated and tasked to execute. On the other hand, more collaboration could be envisaged, to ensure that the rest of the UN as a whole supports the work for legislative reform in this area.

Many different issues thus arise from the CA focus on institutional support in Haiti. In a later section we examine these, asking how the UN at large is working together to strengthen the capacity of the Haitian government to provide security and deliver basic services at the local level.

Recommendations
- Member states, MINUSTAH and other actors should continue to press for legal reforms establishing a viable framework for support to decentralization and local government, institutionalizing and securing the progress made to date;
- Notwithstanding the absence of a legal framework, MINUSTAH and the rest of the UN system should continue their important work on capacity development for local government officials along the lines of the training given to municipal accountants;
- Future legal reform will need to tackle, *inter alia*, the difficult questions of possible duplicative structures on local levels.

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3. QIPs and programme activities

QIPs should primarily be a tool for 'promoting acceptance for the mandated tasks' of the mission and building support for the peace process by 'demonstrating early dividends of stability to the population' – and they are funded by UN member states on that assump-

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[30] Interview with CAO.
[31] UNSC 2010, *As Security Council Weighs Measures*.

tion.[32] However, there is some scope for interpretation of the policy directive, and some member states would like to see QIPs used for early peacebuilding activities.[33] Depending on the interpretation of the guidelines, the use of QIPs thus varies quite significantly from mission to mission, as we noted during our field research in Haiti, Liberia and South Sudan.

Civil affairs officers spend a large amount of their time on implementing QIPs, which are expected to be short-duration projects that should make a visible contribution by the mission to the local communities of Haiti. QIPs should thus be confidence-building tools, to help acceptance of the mission but also to address more immediate needs of the population. For the most part, QIPs are used for small infrastructure projects, such as setting up buildings for local officials or in conjunction with the Justice Section, building or improving local courts, rehabilitation of water and sanitation, and other similar projects. QIPs are very broad, and are often used in support of the work of other sections of the mission, for instance by refurbishing court houses or giving various forms of training. Before the earthquake and cholera outbreak, MINUSTAH was the only organization present in many areas and departments, and it received hundreds of QIP requests.[34]

According to our respondents, QIPs in Haiti fund: 1) public service and public infrastructure projects (schools, water & sanitation, etc.); 2) training and capacity-building and awareness-raising; and 3) livelihoods and employment generation. The maximum amount for a single QIP in Haiti was raised from the regular $25,000 to $100,000 after the 2010 earthquake. Previously, the ceiling had been $25,000 per project, with a total annual budget of $3 million in 2004, increasing to $5 million prior to the earthquake. After the 2010 earthquake, the total budget was increased significantly, and for 2011 the budget stood at $7.5 million. In addition to the funds for QIPs, MINUSTAH has a community violence reduction (CVR) unit mandated to implement activities in the 'yellow' and 'red' zones with a budget of $9 million. The CVR unit evolved from a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme, and targets specific areas of the country where there had been gang violence. The aim has been to engage with gangs that had been instrumentalized by politicians and/or the private sector. Operating in 'yellow' and 'red' zones – zones marked by violence and still considered unsafe – the CVR unit can implement projects much

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32 UN (2007), DPKO Policy Directive: Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). Available at: http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/Vedlegg/FN/Multidimensional%20and%20Integrated/Quick%20Impact%20Guidelines.pdf, accessed 16 January 2012: p. 3.
33 Interview with DPKO Best Practices official.
34 Interview with CAO.

more easily than under normal UN procedures, thereby avoiding considerable red tape.[35]

Some of our respondents noted that the quality of QIPs had improved with the increased budget ceiling:

> QIPs are used to set up basic structures at local level. Before they were more used to improve the image of MINUSTAH. Now the QIPs are bigger, more strategic and to set up basic infrastructure that can strengthen local authorities and the services they should provide.[36]

There were differing views within the mission as to what purpose QIPs should have, with some arguing for income-generating projects that can improve the lives of the population and offer some concrete peace dividends. The MINUSTAH QIPs differ from the types of projects that more long-term development actors such as UNDP are implementing, in terms of duration, scope and the skills of the staff involved. However, although QIPs are short-duration projects they require relatively large amounts of manpower for administrative purposes:

> QIPs [are used] as confidence-building mechanisms to build good rapport. If we consider the amount of work that goes with QIPs, it's a lot of time! There are specific procedures that need to be followed in the QIPs. If you receive a QIP request, first we visit the site and verify location and proposed project which leads to decision on the QIP. When a QIP is launched, it has to be monitored, check how implementation is going, progress reports, etc.[37]

In addition, the final cost of QIPs has to include human resources that are not usually accounted for. One respondent informed us, 'There are weeks when all people do is work on QIPs'.[38]

On the one hand, it is fair to say that QIPs are making a certain impact – in terms of the projects that are developed and in terms of some capacity development. On the other hand, QIPs have become central elements in the work of CAOs, due to their time-consuming element and high visibility. There are signs that many officers have appropriated the logic of their counterparts or assimilated with them – focusing on the material support that MINUSTAH is able to contribute with through QIPs. When talking with CAOs, we noted that they almost as frequently counted their achievements in terms of buildings, infrastructure, even establishing archives or organigrammes as the local authorities do. While such things are important to local authorities, they are also only the external features of a bureaucracy and cannot

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35 Interview with senior MINUSTAH official.
36 Interview with CAO.
37 Interview with senior CAO.
38 Interview with senior CAO.

indicate how the authorities are performing in their key role of delivering basic services to their constituency, the local population. This focus on material support may be due simply to the limited number of respondents in this study, or the limited time that the research team spent on the ground, but it should still give some pause for thought.

Discussing the potential of QIPs, civil affairs officers argued that MINUSTAH had a lot of manpower but relatively little funding compared with UNDP and development actors. UNDP officials asserted that there was no real transfer or development of capacity by the interventions of MINUSTAH CAOs.[39] Others argued that the QIPs were relatively highly labour-intensive activities that did not yield satisfactory returns on the investment, with the pejorative SNIPS – 'slow no impact projects' – attached to them.[40] It was argued that CAOs lacked the programme culture needed to harness the potential in the funding available and the presence throughout the country.[41] Another criticism from within MINUSTAH was that most QIPs were signed in June, at the end of the budget cycle with the same implementing partners[42] – they were in other words blueprint solutions signed in order to be able to spend the budget, without considering the real needs on the ground.

A recurring challenge identified was the tension between the desire to see tangible dividends emerging from the MINUSTAH presence and support, and the desire to strengthen the governance capacity of local authorities. Simply put: QIPs are far more popular than support to capacity development, as they can deliver tangible results to the local authorities. Building vertical structures and developing capacity are complementary activities for strengthening the capacity of local authorities, who need both office premises *and* skills. But in our view there was too much focus on the tangible outputs and not enough on strengthening capacity and the legal framework to protect these investments.

With the guidance given by the Secretary-General and the policy directive on early peacebuilding, there should be ample room for UN peacekeeping missions to direct some QIP funding towards capacity-development initiatives, like the training for accountants. This also reverberates with the recent UN report on civilian capacities,[43] as well as the advice given by a group led by the former head of UN peacekeeping, Jean-Marie Guéhenno.[44] The Guéhenno Report underscored

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[39] Group interview with UNDP officials.
[40] Interview with MINUSTAH official.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] UNSG (2011). Civilian Capacity in the aftermath of Conflict, S/2011/527 (19 August 2011).
[44] Jean-Marie Guéhenno (ed.). (2011), Civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict Independent report of the Senior Advisory Group. A/65/747, S/2011/85 (22 February 2011).

the potential for UN peacekeeping to contribute to early peacebuilding using part of their budget for programme activities,[45] and the SG follow-up report used the CVR initiative of MINUSTAH as an example of such activities,[46] advising that '[i]n some cases, due to its presence and capacities, the mission can and should initiate an activity for a mandated function for which the voluntary funds are not available or have not yet been mobilized.'[47]

The institutional support programme seems to be one of these cases where the UN mission and CA have a comparative advantage both geographically and historically, and could use mission funds to strengthen the support to institutional capacity development on the local and departmental levels. This should, of course, be done in close consultation with the host government, other UN agencies, funds and programmes as well as other development actors and civil society. QIP funding should be considered as part of the resource envelope available for support to key objectives and mandated tasks, including programme activities.

Recommendations
- MINUSTAH should, with reference to the policy directive on QIPs and the SG report on civilian capacities, consider using more funds for capacity-development activities for local officials, in close collaboration with the MICT, civil society, UNDP and other relevant stakeholders;
- QIPs are very time-consuming, so there should be a focus on pooling similar QIPs in order to lower transaction costs;
- Staff should be trained in development programming, and a closer partnership with UNDP and other development agencies should be fostered, especially as these actors are currently co-located in PaP.

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4. Local ownership and engaging with non-state actors

Ownership over mission work
How are the priorities and the activities of the UN mission established? How much reflection goes into planning and taking time to reflect on where the section is going, and what its successes have been? Who are the local actors? How are they identified? What and whose ownership are we discussing – national, local level? government, civil society, the general population? These are important questions that may benefit from further reflection.

Broadly, there are several characteristics of the mission in Haiti unique to its context. Indeed, some staff members referred to

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[45] Ibid.
[46] UNSG, *Civilian Capacity*: pp. 17–18.
[47] Ibid, p. 18.

MINUSTAH as a mission testing ground. MINUSTAH comes across as a tailor-made mission with various sections intended to respond to the specific needs of the country, such as the Humanitarian and Development Coordination Section, the Community Violence Reduction Section, and the Rule of Law Coordination Section.

In a weak state like Haiti, where the government relies heavily on MINUSTAH and NGOs for service delivery and provision of security, the close support may even weaken the government further, making it dependent on external interveners for planning activities and their funding. However, some of our interlocutors also argued that 'local ownership is a question of guts, of locals asking for it.'[48] This should be of great concern for the mission. There is today a renewed focus on local ownership, and countries that have experience conflict and fragility have joined forces in the g7+ initiative to demand for greater attention to their needs, strengthening national and local capacities and giving support through national budgets.[49]

All CAOs that we spoke with emphasized the importance and primacy of local ownership in their work, as well as the challenges involved in having local counterparts claim real ownership:

> If you want efficiency, then substitute and do it yourself. If you want development and change, then it takes time. More and more, Haitians who have been assisted for too long want to take responsibility for their own things.

Other understandings among our interlocutors of what local ownership entails ranged from 'not taking the lead in the process', and instead 'creating the framework for nationals to do the job', 'building on existing expertise, through coaching and training… so that beneficiaries see themselves as drivers of the process'.

Most CAOs were of the opinion that their colleagues in the section generally shared their views and understandings of the term and 'know they shouldn't occupy the driver's seat', although this was not as easily said as done. One officer told us that local ownership was always on her mind during her work, but added that it was 'difficult to talk of local ownership and doesn't make much sense' as 'they [local authorities] do their own work. They're managing their communes. It's difficult enough not to be perceived as controllers, people coming to see what they're doing, spies.'[50] In her view, CA work in Haiti was similar to that of human rights officers with a large dimension of mon-

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48   Interview with senior CAO, MINUSTAH.
49   g7+ (2010) *The Dili Declaration: A New Vision for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding*. Paris, International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, OECD. The g7+ is an open group of countries and regions experiencing conflict and fragility, now consisting of 19 countries.
50   Interview with CAO.

itoring and reporting which meant it was difficult to speak of truly local ownership.

Engaging with local actors

Many developing countries, particularly those that fall into the 'fragile states' category, depend considerably on non-state actors (or non-state providers, NSPs) for basic services to parts of their populations, typically the most vulnerable. According to the World Bank, NSPs have also been found to be more responsive to markets and to offer better quality and more competitive, cost-effective services than the state, and are often less vulnerable than the public sector to political change and conflict.[51] In Haiti, there is a very diverse non-state sector with operators ranging from community-based organizations (CBOs), national and international NGOs, faith-based organizations, private companies, small-scale informal providers, and individual practitioners. This diversity makes regulation, coordination, and quality assurance challenging. It also gives rise to questions about the equity and quality of service provision, with repercussions for individual consumers and the collective welfare of the country as a whole. Unsurprisingly, donor-assisted NSPs risk creating parallel structures and thereby contributing to undermine already weak government structures. The World Bank concludes that these concerns suggest that the state has an important role in service provision at some level. Yet given state fragility and general limited lack of resources and capacity, governments may be better placed for facilitating and coordinating than for engaging in direct provision.[52]

Much of this report has focused on the relationship of CA to the government, and the local authorities in particular, because this constitutes the bulk of MINUSTAH's CA work in Haiti. Especially as regards the legitimacy of many local authorities vis-à-vis their constituencies, this gives rise to the question of who the 'locals' are and whom CA should work with. Certainly, 'local actors' involve more than local authorities who may be regarded as corrupt and morally questionable, or simply absent.

It was suggested that the mission '[had not given] adequate consideration to the role of non-state actors in institutional building',[53] when crafting and pursuing its local government assistance strategy. MINUSTAH argued that its focus on state authorities was motivated by the danger of ceding too much responsibility to non-state actors, which could end up weakening even further the same state they were trying to building. In the opinion of one former CRO, '…such an ar-

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51 World Bank (2006), *Haiti – Social Resilience and State Fragility in Haiti: A Country Social Analysis,* Caribbean Country Management Unit / ESSD Sector Management Unit.
52 Ibid.
53 Interview with CAO.

gument can be tenable at face value, [yet] it fails to aggregate the gap-filling role of non-state institutions.'[54]

Certainly, the UN, and the DPKO in particular, are known for having the government as the prime partner. The CA section recognized its support had focused mostly on local authorities, and that it was necessary to extend this to civil society organizations (CSOs) as well. CA has established some good practices, succeeding in bringing together all parts of society. In the period of the early 2011 second round of elections, the electoral forums, also known as 'town hall meetings', brought together representatives of civil society, local media, local authorities, including mayors, judges of peace, Haitian National Police officers, CASEC, ASEC, as well as candidates or representatives, representatives of political parties, and MINUSTAH representatives. During this period, CA organized 120 forums throughout all the communes in the country.[55] In one focus-group discussion with CAOs it was said:

> It was important to get the voices of all the people, and gave the opportunity of people to vent their frustrations. MINUSTAH made an assessment of their role in the first round [of elections], and concluded that they were too passive. So it took a more assertive and active role in the second round, including arranging town hall meetings together with local authorities. This was done together with mayors. Sometimes we had to tell them who they should invite, including civil society, key actors.[56]

These were generally regarded as a significant success. When questioned whether the 'town hall' model could be applicable also beyond elections, CAOs in this focus group discussion suggested they 'could be useful in the development of municipal plans and in the budget exercise.'[57] Thus, the town hall meeting might be one possible mechanism for including more stakeholders in the planning and decision process and generating greater ownership among them.

We were informed that when deciding priorities and programming some CA teams had tried to include both local institutional and non-institutional actors, and had:

> …developed and successfully experimented with the concept of what [he] called 'affirmative local governance', which is an institutional development model based on the principles of empowered participatory governance. The hallmarks of affirmative local governance are the building of synergies and symbiotic grassroots compacts between local governments and civil society organizations for improved service delivery.[58]

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54   Ibid.
55   Interview with CAO.
56   Focus-group discussion CAOs.
57   Ibid.
58   Former MINUSTAH civil affairs.

In our discussions, most local authorities praised the civil affairs approach in developing QIPs, and said that QIPs were generally based on local requests and perceived needs. According to the mayors we met, this contrasted sharply with the approach taken by most NGOs as well as some UN development agencies. The latter were largely seen as operating independently of the local authorities and the local development plan. It thus seems that CA was here seen as a more legitimate actor, at least from the perspective of the local officials – although these may not be representative of all the various population groups and interests.

In terms of external challenges, apart from the already-noted absence of clear national government policy guidelines, the 'lack of credible national interlocutors to work with' and 'lack of political will' remained the greatest challenges, according to one CAO.[59] Where political will existed, there would be often a sense of general breakdown between local authorities and the MICT, and local authorities would then relay requests through civil affairs, hoping they would be able to get the message through. However, also CA would often struggle here, and that would weaken their relationship vis-à-vis the local authorities. Civil affairs can thus be regarded as one of several potential entry points for solving problems.

Doubts were raised as to whether the local authorities were in fact interested in receiving support: 'Here it is very different – we are mandated to assist and advise. It depends on them [local authorities] whether they wanted to be assisted. If they don't, it is very difficult.'[60] For many reasons, some local authorities were reluctant to receive institutional support from CA. Interestingly, civil affairs officers argued that they could get around this obstacle by employing QIPs as a carrot:

> …fortunately, there are sufficient partners around who want to work with us. I don't need to force others to work with us. We also have a good carrot – the QIPs. In Haiti there are a lot of these. In order to get the 'difficult' group on board we use QIPs.[61]

Reporting remains a central and time-consuming task for CAOs. Descriptive as well as analytical reporting are valuable sources of information for decision-makers at HQ and in New York, and the roughly 100 CAOs throughout Haiti provide the mission with a fine web of listening posts, essential for getting a sense of general attitudes towards the UN mission, political developments and the needs of the local population. However, to implement their mandate, CAOs need to

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59   Ibid.
60   Interview with senior CAO.
61   Interview with senior CAO, MINUSTAH. Quotations marks inserted by authors.

be more than listening posts: they must also be able to empower civil society groups and other non-state actors to have their voice heard.

In general, CA engaged predominantly with local authority counterparts more than with non-state actors. Good cooperation with local authorities often hinged on the presence of a mayor who would have a plan for development for that local community.[62] It was acknowledged that often the involvement with local actors would not run deep enough – CA would relay the challenges met by local authorities, and 'not the main challenges of the communities as such'.[63] Among CSOs a similar problem of representation was widespread. Civil society would claim to be representative of the local communities and various causes, but perceived by civil affairs to be set up merely to respond to the availability of QIP and other funding. A mapping of CSOs in one region indicated that there were many organizations, but these were very small and recently established. Such organizations in rural areas were seen as less supply-driven than those in urban areas, and the churches were also seen as heading initiatives that would be more representative.[64] Some of our CA interlocutors also felt it more important to engage with political parties on the local level than with CSOs. Another challenge would be to get a real sense of what the needs of the local communities actually are, as articulated by local CSOs, as interlocutors would be have a difficulty in articulating their needs and and say that if they could have more funding they could do more things.

The presence of supply-driven CSOs responding to the availability of funding rather than the needs and interests of local communities is a common challenge facing aid and development actors in most post-conflict settings. Even though legitimate civil society actors may be few and far between, *not* engaging with civil society should not be considered an option.

The research team also noted that local actors tended not to think of themselves as protagonists in a peacebuilding effort, although they are central in such an undertaking. Politics was seen as continuing as usual, and 'the mission was seen to be protecting a power set and not facilitating a national dialogue'.[65] In part, this was due to lack of awareness on the part of the mission and other international actors as to the role they might be able to play in enabling non-state actors outside of PaP to have a voice. This should be a focus area for the UN and other actors when they start on the transition process of phasing out the mission.

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62 Interview with CAO.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.

The challenges facing CA when engaging with civil society and other local actors are many and complex. Some common threads are the pervasive lack of capacity, supply-driven orientation of activities, lack of broad engagement with non-state actors, and lack of ownership among the communities of local CSOs and their activities. Civil affairs can and should do better in channelling local voices into national policy processes. We acknowledge that this is a tall order, but as they are the ones who are present across Haiti, and with a mandate for enabling local voices to be heard in the national processes, this should be a key item on the agenda forward. This will means a broader and more systematic engagement with civil society, the churches and other local actors. Greater effort should also be put into strengthening the capacity of local actors to contribute to policy-making processes on the local and national levels.

Recommendations
- While Civil Affairs is recognized by local authorities as the 'best in class' in terms of listening to local needs, there is a need for further strengthening the participatory approach, e.g. through town hall meetings to ensure that also other voices are heard and can participate in national decision-making processes
- Given its core mandate of feeding local voices into national policy processes, CA should make more sustained efforts at engaging with and strengthening the capacity of a broader representation of local actors, including various SCOs and the churches
- Recalling the g7+ declaration, there is a need to pay more attention to national planning frameworks and needs, on the national, departmental and local levels, for instance by supporting the *table de concertation* and the rule-of-law clusters as decision-making forums for all peacebuilding and development actors.

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5. The UN and local-level peacebuilding in Haiti

Coordination, reporting and cross-mission representation

Civil Affairs Officers in the field are expected to spend a minimum of two days a week visiting municipalities, identifying management gaps and working with municipal cadres to find solutions to their everyday problems. Depending on the field offices, CA teams (of two officers working together) have responsibility for an average of ten municipalities each, and try to visit two to four municipalities per week.[66] Progress, or lack of it, is measured every three months via a comprehensive dashboard system .

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[66]   Group interview with MINUSTAH CAOs.

There are internal and external challenges in accomplishing these ob-
jectives. The frequency of visits varies widely, often depending on
practical accessibility rather than the perceived needs of the particular
municipality. Municipalities located furthest away were generally vis-
ited about once a month at best,[67] while those more proximate to the
CA office would be visited more frequently. However, our interlocu-
tors informed us that mayors and other officials would make frequent
visits to the urban centres to meet with department delegates, and in
conjunction with these visits they would also meet with CAOs to fol-
low up on QIPs and other pending issues.

Coordination, reporting and cross-mission representation are extreme-
ly time-consuming elements of the CAO work-day. It was argued that
these tasks often could draw away the attention from what was con-
sidered the core task of Civil Affairs: to strengthen institutional capac-
ity.[68]

Weekly coordination meetings in the regions are led by the senior
CAO who is also the regional coordinator of the mission. Other coor-
dination meetings are held at regular intervals for thematic sub-cluster
such as the rule-of-law cluster, and externally with local official coun-
terparts. The latter are important for ensuring open flows of communi-
cation and keeping an 'ear to the ground' – knowing the needs of local
officials and being able to respond swiftly to these.

However, it was argued that responsibility for coordination of the UN
system should be located with UNDP, as on the national level.[69] This
is not possible, nor will it be, as UNDP is present in only a few of the
ten regions.[70] However, one possible way to mediate the lack of pres-
ence by UNDP and other UN funds, programmes and agencies would
be to have a stronger link between CA and the UN Country Team. A
first attempt has been made here, by transferring responsibility for the
Civil Affairs Section to the Deputy SRSG for Development – the UN
resident coordinator. However, so far it seems as if this move has been
reflected only in a formal sense and in the Integrated Strategic
Framework (ISF), but not – most importantly – in actual practice in
the field.

'Firefighters' or building capacity – civil affairs as early peace-builders?

UN peacekeeping missions have evolved considerably over the past
twenty years, and are today providing substantial support through ci-
vilian officers in many sectors, including civil affairs, justice, security

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67 Interview with CAO.
68 Interview with senior MINUSTAH.
69 Interview with CAO.
70 Group interview with UNDP officials.

sector reform, corrections, human rights and gender. As the UN Secretary-General pointed out in 2009, the civilian capacities of peacekeeping missions are 'early peacebuilders' and are key providers of support to core government capacities, at the national as well as the local level. UN DPKO civil affairs officers (CAOs) are key nodal points in this endeavour. Although largely unknown, CAOs account for about 870 staff[71] in peace operations around the world today. Their mandates range from conflict management and support to reconciliation, to extension of state authority and cross-mission representation and coordination. This arrangement is both flexible and far-reaching, allowing for contextualization to local specificities. On the other hand, broad mandates can also prove problematic, with CA expected to be involved in each and every issue, risking a loss of focus on core tasks.

CAOs often referred to themselves as 'firefighters' – with many mandated tasks, wide geographical responsibility for a number of municipalities, and new challenges constantly arising, it could be hard to focus on strategic-level work: 'We do crisis management, we are firefighters and do it every day, nothing structural.'[72] Both local authorities and MINUSTAH headquarters are constant sources of new more or less important tasks that must be done, with short deadlines. As civil affairs represent the political affairs section in the regions, they often have to prepare political analyses and profiles of key figures and issues at short notice for mission headquarters and UN DPKO in New York. Similarly, the local authorities will have a host of issues of varying importance that need to be dealt with at short notice, be it waste management, crowd control and managing possible epidemics like the cholera outbreak in 2010.

The UN should seriously consider a rearrangement of the coordination arrangements on the departmental and local levels in Haiti. In South Sudan, during the time of UNMIS, Resident Coordinator Support Officer posts were established to manage the work related to humanitarian and development tasks, funded over the regular peacekeeping mission budget. Under UNMISS, these have now been converted into Recovery, Reintegration and Peacebuilding posts, responsible for coordinating these activities and enabling the UN presences to serve as 'portal and platform' for other UN agencies, funds and programmes, as well as NGOs and bilateral partners.[73] Haiti is in many ways a very different setting – but a similar arrangement should be considered to ensure better cooperation and the delivery of programme activities on departmental and local levels, as well as a better transition and future exit of the peacekeeping mission. Peacekeeping has traditionally re-

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71 Including professional national and international officers and UN Volunteers. UN 2012. Civil Affairs Staffing January 2012. UN DPKO, New York.
72 Interview with CAO.
73 Interview with SRSG Hilde Johnson, Juba.

volved around short-term objectives, and thus lacks a culture for long-term capacity development among civil affairs and other MINUSTAH officers. There could be a tendency among peacekeepers in general, and perhaps civil affairs officers in particular, to resort automatically to QIPs and other short-term solutions such as *accompagnement* or hand-holding, in reacting to long-term challenges. When challenged on this point, respondents tended to explain this feature of peacekeeping operations with the lack of a development culture – the ability to plan for long-term outcomes and impact through the use of programming instead of short-term projects.

While this argument might seem reasonable, on further inspection it does not hold up. There is a distinction to be made, firstly between capacity development and 'accompanying' local authorities, and secondly between knowing what the strengths and weaknesses of the local authorities are and what should be done, without having the means to do so. This points to the next argument of this report – the need for real cooperation between peacekeepers and other more long-term actors.

Challenges in UN coordination and integration

MINUSTAH is an integrated mission. A strategic work-plan has been developed for the mission and the UN agencies involved. However, this does not translate into the individual planning of each section nor UNDP, as well as concretely at the local level. On the local level, integrated work-plans are non-existent and the UN seems to work in a disjointed manner. Each side blames the other for this lack of vision, integration and coordination. One of our interlocutors argued that

> It's not MINUSTAH's fault [for the lack of coordination]. There is a lot of reluctance and resistance from agencies, who are scared of losing their space. CA tried to do integrated planning, and this should be mandatory. Supposedly this is an integrated mission, but not in planning... contrary to other missions I've been to, where there was one planning. Also we need stronger leadership, at the top of the mission to push to achieve integration. There is the UNDAF, with several pillars and entities that need to work together, but there is no joint work-plan. We need to put together the resources UNDP has, along with its approaches and methodologies and technical knowledge, with CA officers on the ground. We need to be integrated.[74]

As a notable exception, UNDP has been running a local governance support project in Haiti's North-East Department for the last ten years, and several respondents confirmed that this had been implemented in

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74 Interview with human rights officer. UNDP has two relevant resource envelopes – 1) Poverty, livelihoods and recovery with an annual budget of $30 million; and 2) governance and rule of law with $15 million per year. For more, see UNDP (2012), 'Haïti: Resources'. Available at http://www.ht.undp.org/public/ressources.php?PHPSESSID=78d077e0a107c37cdd2c82b 077e22ebb, accessed 13 January 2012.

close partnership with civil affairs – including co-financing of micro-projects such as municipal buildings, peace tribunals, training in budget development, income-generation activities, and others. Aside from this project, however, there was little evidence of long-term collaboration between CA and other UN agencies on the local level. One of our interlocutors argued that UNDP should switch from being in a post-post-conflict to a post-conflict mode,[75] indicating that UNDP may be overly risk-averse and not engaging adequately with early recovery programmes on the local level.

The field presence of CAOs offers an excellent opportunity for joint programming of initiatives to support local governance. MINUSTAH and development actors within and outside the UN system should sit down and see how they can utilize the resource that CAOs could be for bottom–up peacebuilding in Haiti. For instance, CAOs might serve as case officers, following up on a joint local governance support project covering all municipalities in Haiti.

With added responsibilities, and a heavy workload already today, it is obvious that CA responsibilities would need a thorough revision to make possible such an initiative. More than 20% of the CAO time is today spent on developing, approving and following up QIPs.[76] A large-scale initiative to support local governance should incorporate large parts of the existing QIPs and significantly decrease the time needed to follow up on individual projects. CAOs should be given authority to access and spend project funds through UNDP's Atlas system, where there are open contracts on office material, furniture and other small costs that today are run as individual QIPs in CA support to municipalities.[77]

Agencies and peacekeeping missions are not famed for working collaboratively. The UNDP has been in Haiti for much longer than MINUSTAH, and there is inevitably a sense of ownership over the work done. In addition comes the fact that UNDP has a long-term mandate, which in theory runs counter to the nature of peacekeeping missions. Yet, it might be possible to continue some of the civilian components of the peacekeeping operation also after the departure of the military components, as a special political mission. One of our interlocutors suggested a 24-month transition window where assessed funding would be accessible for peacebuilding projects,[78] and projects and programmes could be executed jointly by the civilian components

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[75]   Interview with CAO.
[76]   This is based on CA informing that there would be two QIPs focal points per department, plus four staff located in the QIPs unit at HQ.
[77]   Atlas is UNDP's software system for management and administration of all its projects, procurement, etc.
[78]   Interview with senior MINUSTAH official.

and UN development funds and programmes. In that case, there should be less reluctance (or fewer excuses) on the part of agencies to avoid working in line with peacekeeping missions.

Achieving a more integrated approach will require a change in the culture of the organizations, moving from making joint plans such as the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) to actual cooperation on national, regional and local levels. Most of our respondents in CA, UNDP and among those responsible for integration saw a real potential for more cooperation, acknowledging the comparative advantages that the mission and UNDP could bring to the table, but could not formulate how such cooperation could be put into motion. As suggested by one CAO, one way to 'promote'/encourage the much needed collaboration between MINUSTAH and UNDP could be to touch on the financial resources, under the motto of: 'if you want the money, then work together'. In the view of another senior interlocutor:

> The mission has to know when it should delegate to other specialized agencies. Trim wings of DPKO of what's under their control, and this could actually reinforce the position of the SRSG as he will not have to be constantly fighting for a place.[79]

Joint conceptual planning should go hand in hand with financial planning. One senior-level MINUSTAH staff argued for greater coherence in resource allocation: 'It should be possible to pool resources – have $9 million for CVR, $7,5 for QIPs, $3 for government support under the Security Council Resolution.'[80] He also argued that MINUSTAH should collaborate more with agencies: 'the SRSG has funds for WASH [Water, Sanitation and Hygiene], which could be pooled with the resources UNICEF has.'[81] To better utilize these funds, a meeting of the top brass of the mission was called at the end of our stay to pool the mission's resources for more strategized action. The SRSG wanted to see how QIPs, CVR funds, funds allocated through Security Council Resolution 1927 and mission support funds could be used more coherently in Haiti.[82] Through a consultation process with the CROs and the MICT, priority areas should be established, with 'a blend of hardware and capacity development projects'.[83]

CAOs recognize their own potential in coordination and their privileged position in the field as the linkage between local communities and UN agencies and INGOs, but have not felt that others (internally and externally to MINUSTAH) were quite aware of that space-making role. Informal discussions with staff from other sections within

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79 Interview with former senior MINUSTAH staff.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.

MINUSTAH and NGOs revealed a surprising lack of familiarity with the work and potential of civil affairs. This may simply indicate defensiveness on the part of other sections – but it may also mean that CA should be more assertive in making its space known, or may be indicative of the disconnect as to how the international community tends to operate in Haiti.

One aspect that struck the research team were the frequent remarks and frustrations expressed by lower-level CAOs deployed in the field offices we visited, about the overall lack of direction and planning they sometimes felt in their work. This was touched on briefly in discussing 'civil affairs as firefighters'; this short section will consider the need to take time for greater reflection. As one senior-level CA interlocutor argued:

> There is a need for more staff doing planning and monitoring in CA. At the moment there is too much firefighting and not enough prevention. A planning unit in CA should look at the mandate and how to put this into practice. CA could have planning officers that work with integration and also have other tasks.[84]

According to this officer, 'more than 90% of civil affairs senior staff have been in the mission for at least five years'. This has obvious advantages in terms of contextual knowledge and institutional memory of the socio-political environment. However, many of our interlocutors felt that the CA MINUSTAH rotational policy which allows staff to be moved as the need arises, and which leads to staff movement and rotation roughly every two years, was counterproductive if staff, particularly management staff, are reassigned to different geographical areas simply to perform the same core duties. As noted by one, 'such movements inevitably lead to humdrum drudgery and routine, that leaves little room for innovation. CA MINUSTAH seems to be suffering from operational lethargy due in part to the perenniality of its senior staff.'[85]

Another challenge already mentioned is the lack of operationalization in transferring CA from the political to the development pillar. This could be due to lack of time for implementing the shift among the senior mission management, and we would strongly encourage the management to focus on this key task in order to show that this is to be a change not only in the written structure, but in practice as well.

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84   Interview with senior CAO, PaP.
85   Former MINUSTAH CAO.

Recommendations
- The civil affairs workload should be trimmed, e.g. by limiting the use of QIPs
- The UN should consider the model used in South Sudan, of including posts with responsibility for programme activities and opening the field presences for other peacebuilding and development actors
- Strengthen planning for early peacebuilding among relevant staff in MINUSTAH, including CA through a joint planning exercise with the UN country team
- Operationalize existing integration in planning frameworks such as the ISF into programme activities executed on local levels
- Consider a 24-month transition window in the handover of programme activities from MINUSTAH to the UN country team
- Pool resources for programme activities by focusing QIPs on essential tasks and by transferring funds to capacity-development initiatives that can be initiated with reference to the SG guidance on civilian capacities
- Devise a strategy together with UN DPKO New York on how to achieve staff mobility on senior levels.

Conclusion and recommendations

The promise of peacekeeping presences

Through its Civil Affairs Officers (CAOs), MINUSTAH has an impressive presence throughout Haiti, and is able to reach every single municipality in all the ten departments in the country. In their daily work, CAOs must strike a balance between being UN mission representatives (including representing and undertaking tasks of other sections not present in the regions), strengthening the capacity of local authorities, helping local voices to be heard at headquarters level, and managing Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). According to most of our interlocutors among local officials, the work and approach of these CAOs is much appreciated. It was often contrasted with the approach of NGOs, who were seen as working independently from local authorities, often circumventing or ignoring the priorities of local officials. QIPs have become the main workstream for many CAOs, who are busy with planning, implementing and reporting on various small infrastructure projects. These are often highly appreciated by local officials, who are the main beneficiaries, getting new office premises and office equipment. However, the desire to present a positive image of MINUSTAH to the Haitian population should not lead to the temptation to implement a plethora of well-intentioned but not necessarily well-coordinated QIPs.

With the resources that CA has at its disposal, one could argue that there could be a more structural and long-term approach to the support to local authorities. In developmental terms, 100 officers across the entire country is a sizable resource that could be put to better structural use. For example, it makes little sense to establish a separate QIP for each municipal building to be refurbished or built from scratch in most of the municipalities of Haiti. This requires a great amount of staff time and paperwork with relatively little impact, and could be done more efficiently, freeing up staff time and resources to other activities. Also the guidelines for QIPs in Haiti should be re-examined to ensure that funding is being used to maximum efficiency, to provide early dividends of stability to the population and create confidence in the local authorities by means of such activities as targeted capacity-development initiatives.

The training of municipal accountants was a positive example of capacity development frequently mentioned in discussions. This seemed to be a needs-based initiative that had, in cooperation with UNDP, established lasting capacity in a structured manner in municipalities

throughout the country, without requiring too much staff time or re-
sources. Bearing in mind the recent SG report on civilian capacities
and its recommendation for missions to use part of their budgets for
programme activities, MINUSTAH should look for other such oppor-
tunities, in cooperation with local and national authorities, and imple-
ment them together with other development partners such as UNDP.
The UN in turn should take one step back and see how it can leverage
its presence in Haiti to deliver both short- and long-term assistance
that can respond to the needs of local officials and populations: 'CA
needs a vision on what to do in terms of capacity building. It is posi-
tive to have CA present throughout the territory, but these have to be
better used by local authorities.'[86] In a long-term perspective, the UN
should consider how to handle the exit of the UN mission and the
transfer of tasks from the mission to the UN country team. Greater
collaboration on programme activities on the departmental and local
levels could be an effective way of operationalizing the reshuffling of
civil affairs to the development pillar, so as to get this important work
underway.

Working with non-state actors
Civil Affairs in Haiti has an extremely difficult task, closely linked to
the ability to contextualize its work. Formal state structures exist, but
in reality there is very little capacity. The country lacks a culture of
civil service and public service. The CA focus has been almost entire-
ly on local authorities. Although some successes have been achieved
in this work with the formal authorities, CA could have taken a more
inclusive approach, working to engage with civil society, conducting
an analysis to identify who the non-state actors are, and building on
informal groups in Haiti. Non-state actors, including CBOs, must be
recognized as key partners when contextualized local peacebuilding
activities are to be devised and implemented – particularly since these
are so closely tied in with local governance and social organization. In
view of the CA mandate, greater efforts should be put into strength-
ening the capacity of local actors, including civil society, helping them
to be heard also in Port-au-Prince.

UN peacekeeping operations tend to cast the net wide and deep across
the countries where they are deployed. While this can in theory pro-
vide the operation with a better overview of the situation in the coun-
try, the local populations and authorities will also expect more from
these presences, in both the short and the longer term. Negative local-
level perceptions of the UN mission cannot be ignored. Such popular
discontent must be addressed through serious reflection on the mis-
sion's role, failures and successes since its establishment. Without
close cooperation with development actors within and outside the UN,

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86   Interview with former senior MINUSTAH staff.

the expectations of local populations cannot be met. The UN must take the challenges of the promise involved in its presences very seriously, and give thorough consideration to how it can leverage the presence of its peacekeepers in the field to engage in more long-term development and capacity-developing activities.

Background and bios

This report is the result of one month of fieldwork in Haiti in August and September 2011. It forms part of a larger project *Contextualizing peacebuilding activities to local circumstances,* which is supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project team has also conducted field research in Liberia and South Sudan, and a policy brief and a report will published for each of the field visits. A final summary report will be issued during the second quarter of 2012.

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