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COMPARATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENTS AND PARTENSHIP POTENTIAL FOR SEKOU POU NANM-YO AND ASIRANS COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER

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COMPARATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENTS AND PARTENSHIP POTENTIAL FOR

SEKOU POU NANM-YO AND ASIRANS COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER

LAUREN M. MAWE

MAY 2016

A PRACTITIONER'S REPORT

Submitted to the faculty of Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts,

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in the department of International Development, Community, and Environment

And accepted on the recommendation of

Ellen Foley, Ph.D, Chief Instructor

ABSTRACT

COMPARATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENTS AND PARTENSHIP POTENTIAL FOR

SEKOU POU NANM-YO AND ASIRANS COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER

LAUREN M. MAWE

This paper assesses the organizational capacity of two small Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Port-Au-Prince Haiti. Each NGO has a staff of under 15 members. At the time of the assessment, they were both in early stages of their development, with one in its first year of operations, and the other in its fifth year. Both embody grassroots, community organizations because of their connections to the communities in which they work, their willingness to travel to those communities, and their predominantly Haitian staff. The fieldwork included interviews, focus groups, and three months of participant observation and work with these organizations. In each organization their financial planning, infrastructure, organizational culture, and concept of professionalism were important keys to their potential for growth. Both organizations have strong, unique organizational culture, and strong commitment from staff members who truly believe in the impact of the services that they offer. However, both organizations have weak financial planning and challenges managing internal affairs. This paper assesses their organizations, and gives recommendations regarding their individual growth and potential for partnership.

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ACADEMIC HISTORY

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Baccalaureate Degree: Biblical and Theological Studies

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College Bound Dorchester   2011

    Boston, Massachusetts

Permanent Agriculture Resources   2012

    Hilualoa, Hawaii

United States Peace Corps   2012-2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

For three months in 2015 I interned with two small non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. My task for the three months was to lend my capabilities to two key internship questions. 1) what does each of these organizations need to do in order to be successful and stable, and 2) would they be better served by undergoing the process of growth together? I wanted to research key themes that make an organization successful and stable. Additionally, what steps are important to grow successfully when an organization is just starting out, perhaps in its first year of operations and with a skeletal staff?

To answer the questions, I engaged with the field of organizational capacity building; specifically assessment for building organizational capacity. Practitioners have been asking questions about assessing and building organizational capacity for the last two decades. While there is little academic research on the subject, practitioners have developed quite a number of manuals presenting frameworks recommending what makes an organization strong. I focused particularly on manuals and handbooks that dealt with small international NGOs and their partners.

Each manual provides its own themes or areas of focus for assessing the capacity of an organization. These themes included, but were not limited to: organizational motivation, organizational performance, personnel or human resources, strategic leadership, infrastructure and technology, financial resources, diversified income, networking with stakeholders, and external environment. Classic models from business also come to mind such as a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), to assess an organization's capacity.

In my work with these two organizations I explored the question of 'what makes an organization successful' through the lens of organizational assessment. By looking at current organizational strengths and weaknesses, using a chosen framework, we may ask in a specific way, 'What needs to be done in order to maintain and to grow?' From there, we may make recommendations for growth. While diverse sources were consulted, the assessments most closely follow the model of Lusthaus et al., which focuses on four key areas. They are 1) organizational performance, 2) organizational motivation (history, mission, culture, and incentives), 3) external environment, and 4) organizational capacity (human resources, financial management, and infrastructure). This comprehensive categorization model provides a framework with which to approach my questions.

The two NGOs I worked with shall be referred to as Sekou Pou Nanm-yo (hereafter, SPN)[1] and Asirans Community Counseling Center (hereafter, Asirans). Both organizations are just starting out, with 5 years and 1 year of operations respectively, at the time that I visited. I was invited to work with each NGO on their organizational development, and if mutually desired, facilitate their partnership with each other. I referred to a number of organizational assessments for small international NGOs as I initially observed SPN and Asirans. Through the literature and observations with the organizations, I identified four key themes essential to growing organizational capacity. Key areas for consideration for both organizations were 1) financial planning 2) infrastructure 3) organizational culture, and 4) professionalism. The two organizations have important similarities. Both work in the field of mental health. Both consist of a team of Haitian mental health workers.

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[1] All names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals. Sekou Pou Nanm-yo (seh-KOO poo NAHM- yo) is Haitian Creole for "relief for the spirit". Asrians (Ah-seer-AHNS) means "assurance".

Foreigners were directly involved in founding both organizations. At the time of my arrival, the future of neither organization was in any way assured. The organizations are complimentary in that SPN has very good relationships with the communities in which it works, and Asirans has more classical psychological training. However, the two organizations have different organizational structures and cultures. Over the course of three months, I listened very carefully to organization members' comments, and also listened for what was conspicuously absent. This allowed me to identify relationships, similarities and differences, as well as the prospects of each organization.

While conducting these organizational assessments, I came to appreciate more the uniqueness of each organization; it's strengths, challenges, and potential. However, there does not seem to be one road map to strengthening organizational capacity. An increase in the body of academic publications on the subject could bring significant insights to the field. This paper presents the organizational assessment of these two young NGOs as a case study for exploring organizational capacity and development, while making tangible recommendations for each organization. I will also analyze their potential for partnership, and make conclusions about what I observed.

HAITIAN CONTEXT

In the interest of providing context for the work in Haiti, I will provide a broad overview of the country's history, highlighting certain points that are particularly important to the modern NGO context. These remarks allude to 1) the colonial and racial history of the contemporary Haiti, 2) American intervention 3) trade and development assistance, and finally 4) mental health. The reader may be unused to seeing such time spent on a historical overview in a practitioner paper. However, if one does not understand

some semblance of the complex history with which on is engaging, one is more likely to commit the misguided interventions of the past, so often perpetuated by a shortsighted crisis narrative.

The island of Ayiti, which houses the current country of Haiti, was ruled by five Taino kingdoms until Christopher Columbus discovered it in 1492 (Wilson 110). Within 200 years the indigenous people were virtually wiped out by disease and violence. The French officially gained control of the western side of the island (the portion which is Haiti today) in 1697 ("Dominican Republic – the first colony"). They greatly increased sugar exports and slave imports. In the 1700s, the French were importing around 30,000 slaves a year, with half a million slaves in the colony at any one time (Katz). The colony was called the jewel of their kingdom, and was considered more lucrative than all of Frances other colonies combined (Farmer). However, the working conditions were so harsh that many slaves were dying each year – some even taking their own lives. Because of the high death tolls, France continued to import many slaves from Africa each year. At any given time, there was a percentage of the enslaved population that had been born free.

It is important to note that in the colonial history of Haiti, there were a significant number of free people of color born of French fathers and slave mothers. These people were referred to as mulattos (Farmer). Today in Haiti there is still a specific cultural concept of Mulattos – people who come from Haiti but consider themselves richer and more European than most people. When we think about people's motivation to be associated with foreign NGOs, and also the way some people try to shame each other for being involved with foreign NGOs, this concept must be remembered.

The slaves successfully revolted in 1804, defeating the largest armada Napoleon ever dispatched. Despite their victory, powerful nations that still engaged in slavery were afraid to recognize Haiti as a sovereign nation. The young Haiti agreed to pay a massive debt, equivalent to 4 billion dollars by today's standards (Farmer), to France for their lost 'property' (slaves) in order for Haiti to legitimate itself as a country on the world stage. Over the next 200 years Haiti successfully paid off this debt - while countries like the United States were building railroads and expanding infrastructure. Today, when we scrutinize Haiti's lack of infrastructure and ask if countries like the United States or France should get involved, we must look to this massive 'debt' successfully paid by the island nation to a European power.

Since its independence, Haiti has withstood a 19-year occupation by the US Marines from 1915-1934, corrupt dictators in Francoise and Jean Claude Duvalier, and unfavorable trade agreements with the US that virtually wiped out Haiti's rice production in the 1980s and 90's. We must particularly note that following the dictatorship of the Duvalier father and son, the liberation theology priest Jean Bertand Aristide was elected president. Aristide won by an overwhelming majority, despite $12 million in US funds contributed to the candidacy of former World Bank official Marc Bazin (Farmer). After Aristide became president in 1991, the U.S. Congress forbid The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to give any direct funding to the Haitian government, instead funding U.S. NGOs (Schuller). After eight months in office, Aristide was overthrown and flown to the Congo, surrounded by US Marines. The coup regime that followed was, to many, worse than the totalitarian dictatorship of the Duvaliers. The UN peacekeeping troops MINUSTAH began their ongoing deployment in Haiti, which continues to this day.

Aid continued to flow primarily to U.S. NGOs, and not the Haitian government, winning

Haiti the title "A Republic of NGOs" and how foreign political and economic intervention

has weakened Haiti's political stability (Katz). When we think about how Western

[2]intervention can be most effective, we must think about how the 'republic of NGOs'

affected earthquake response. Aid organizations struggled to coordinate in "clusters" of

relief specialization (Farmer), but were often found to be arguing with each other over

whose territory a certain camp was. Very little of the aid money reached the disaster

victims, but rather was spent on assessments and overhead (Katz). When we consider

western aid intervention, it should be done with much humility, and with a question in our

minds: how can Haiti become more self sufficient through political stability, instead of less,

as we implement our intervention.

Despite these many challenges, Haiti stands today as the only successful national slave

independence revolution, and the second republic in the western hemisphere. The Haitian

people are very proud of their hard-won independence. Like the statue of Neg Mawon

outside of the Royal Palace - the Marooned Man, escaped from slavery, calling other

liberated people's to join him - Haiti stands today as a pillar of freedom and life in the face

of death and adversity (for a photo of Neg Mawon, see appendix).

Today, when we think about mental health in Haiti, we must think of the devastating

earthquake on January 12, 2010. The earthquake was a significant one in a long list of

disasters that have struck the country of Haiti. Major back-to-back storms in 2004, and

Super-storm Sandy the year after the earthquake are some of the other major disasters

from recent memory. The significant stresses of poverty (80% of the population live in

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[2] It is true that Haiti is situated in the Western hemisphere also; in this paper the term "Western" is used to refer to dominant cultural practices common to the United States, Canada and Western Europe.

poverty, 50% in extreme poverty (WHO 2010) make a different kind of ongoing disaster.

Especially in urban centers, where a majority of the population lives, violence is prevalent.

James suggests that nearly all Haitians have experienced a traumatic event (James 2012).

What is remarkable about Haiti, and which many scholars and visitors to the country have

been compelled to recognize, is the deep pride, strength, and kindness of the people of Haiti.

Throughout history and into the present, Haitians have profound resilience and coping

ability, and with even simple interventions geared towards low resource settings, it is

possible to provide measurable psychological relief and healing.

It is true that mental illness carries a strong stigma in Haiti. An American described

the one mental health hospital in the country was 'more like a prison than a hospital'

(Christensen). For the majority of the population, faith is their strongest coping mechanism

– be it faith in Christianity or faith in Voodoo. Mental health interventions must be

respectful of religion, and very careful about how they approach the stigma of mental

health. If this respect and conscientiousness is achieved, a practitioner will find many

people that are open to hearing about how to strengthen their mental health. Asirans and

SPN have observed how even a little bit of mental health education can significantly

improve the wellbeing of an individual.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND FRAMEWORK

Practitioners have been asking questions about assessing and building

organizational capacity in increasing numbers since the 1990s. While there is little

academic research on the subject, practitioners have developed quite a number of manuals

presenting frameworks recommending what makes an organization strong. I focused

particularly on manuals and handbooks that dealt with small international NGOs and their partners.

At least seven manuals are specifically referenced in this literature review, and in the organizational assessments and charts that follow. However, the framework which my assessments follow most closely was presented by Lusthaus et al in "Organizational Assessment: A Framework for Improving Performance". They provide a comprehensive model from the International Development Research Center (IDRC) and Universalia Management Group for how many different elements of organizational capacity work together to make a strong organization. They recognize four key areas: 1) organizational motivation 2) organizational capacity 3) External Environment and linking them all together 4) Organizational performance. within each of these areas there are a number of elements that contribute to strength in that area. We will see this framework displayed in the assessments of bother Asirans and SPN.

Figure 1 Lusthaus, Charles "organizational Assessment: A Framework for Improvng Performance" 2002.

However, I will focus this literature review on a few key themes that are especially pertinent to small international NGOs looking to make the jump from 'start-up' to established organization. These key themes were identified not only through the literature review, but also through careful observation of important factors within SPN and Asirans. This theory review will focus on several themes within organizational capacity assessment and development. They are 1) financial planning 2) infrastructure 3) organizational culture, and 4) professionalism. These subjects will be applied to SPN and Asirans in many ways, as we shall see throughout the paper.

1.Financial Planning

Organizations must engage in planning in order to be financially viable. Lusthaus et al. provide a foundational definition of financial viability.

> "To survive, organization's inflow of financial resources must be greater than the outflow. Our experience has shown that the conditions needed to make an organization financially viable include multiple sources of funding, positive cash flow, and financial surplus" (50).

Indicators of financial sustainability include: ratio of largest funder to overall revenues, ratio of current assets to current liabilities, growth in terms of number of funders, amount of resources mobilized, assets, capital, and revenues, and levels of diversification of funding sources.

We see more recommendations about how to implement planning for the above viability in manuals such as "Financial Management for building NGO/CBO Capacity" by Fredrick Fisher. Fisher focuses more on the organizational processes and structures for financial management. This includes records and reporting, operating and cash budget

processes, various aspects of financial administration such as revenue collection, purchasing and stores management, and oversight procedures such as auditing.

Horton et al. view financial resources as being grouped with infrastructure and technology – physical resources of the organization. They see financial resources as a cause and effect of successful organizational programs and activities. Increased financial resources are an effect of diversifying services and products or other organizational strength. Their focus is more on organizational relevance than effectiveness. If the organization is needed, the resources will become available.

James looks at financial planning within the context of partnership. James emphasizes the power that is tied up with money. They recognized that organizations were more autonomous when they had more capital from funders, especially unrestricted capital. If funders want to support and build up an organization's capacity, financial support is important. They also emphasized financial management systems as being important to growing organizational capacity. Burke echoes this, recognizing the significance of financial control when organizations are considering partnership. Partnerships have the potential to greatly improve the capacity of involved organizations. However, financial control is one of the factors, along with information access and decision-making, which would be partners need to discuss in order to have a successful partnership.

2. Infrastructure

Lusthaus et al focus on the small international NGO context when they define infrastructure. "Infrastructure comprises the basic conditions (facilities and technology) for work to go on in your organization, such as reasonable space in a building equipped with adequate lighting, clean water, and a dependable supply of electricity" (72). Similarly, Horton also

defines infrastructure as a physical resource, or 'hard' capacity along with technology, finances and staffing. They define infrastructure as "such things as the amount, type, and quality of buildings, vehicles, and supplies needed for the operation of the organization (26). Lusthaus et al recognize that lack of infrastructure will affect the work of the organization. They also consider infrastructure to include employee transportation, communication systems, and an ongoing maintenance budget. They see the facilities as possibly being a symbol of the organization.

Horton emphasizes that this may require strategic planning, especially for implementing different projects with appropriate infrastructure for successful execution. Burke takes that idea further and recommends that a potential partner assess the infrastructure of a would-be partner (78). Has the organization maintained its infrastructure and repaired assets, or are they in poor state, requiring investment? An organization must consider this aspect when considering partnership.

3.Organizational Culture

According to Lusthaus et al, organizational culture is, "the sum of the values, beliefs, customs, traditions, and meanings related to mission fulfillment" (59). Indicators about organizational culture include documents that outline the organization's values, people in the organization identify with its values, good morale in the organization, high level of commitment to performance, positive attitudes towards change, promotions, incentives and training reinforce the organization's values. To assess the organizational culture, Lusthaus et al offer a 'culture audit' consisting of 17 questions for staff and stakeholders to answer individually and then in focus groups. Questions include, " What kind of people are

involved in this organization? Who gets ahead?" and "What is it like to be part of this organization?" (89).

Horton sees organizational culture as part of the internal environment (21). Organizational culture is a factor that, "influences the extent to which the organization uses its capacities to achieve its goals and perform at a high level" (23). Organizational culture can be strong enough to compensate for weaknesses in capacity or challenges from the external environment. Horton also cautions that researchers must be sensitive to organizational culture in order to assure the quality of their evaluation of organizational capacity (89). A researcher must consider how frank, open, or self-critical and organization is or isn't, to design and implement effective evaluation.

Harrison and Burke give definitions of organizational culture that are somewhat more abstract. Harrison defines organizational culture as physical, symbolic, and conceptual representations of an organization. These include the logo, slogans, advertising campaigns, physical appearance of the buildings, as well as stories about founders and past success and rituals such as outings and celebrations (35). Burke defines organizational culture simply as "way of being together" (9). For Harrison, at least a basic understanding of these factors is necessary to successfully evaluate an organization, particularly because organizational culture can significantly affect performance.

Burke talks about organizational culture in the context of organizational partnership. Here, potential partners must consider each organization's unique culture, but also the culture that is created in the partnership between the two organizations. Very often, partnership cultures can be depleting or frustrating. In working together according to Burke, the concerned parties should strive to show appreciation and respect for partners'

differences. This not only provides necessary support, but creates a situation where differences can be valued as enhancing the relationship, instead of points of contention. This is especially important since it is generally unlikely that either partner will modify its vision or organizational culture.

4. Professionalism

None of the organizational capacity manuals referenced here identify professionalism as a key aspect of organizational capacity. However, both SPN and Asirans identified professionalism as an area of strength and also an area of concern or growth. The New Oxford American Dictionary defines professionalism as "the competence or skill expected of a professional". Basically, professionalism speaks to the quality of the staff member. The question becomes, who is assessing or perceiving the quality of the staff, and why is that important? I have gone back into the literature, and present here what the manuals have to say about the subject.

Lusthaus et al do not discuss professionalism explicitly. Instead 'professional development' is mentioned in a recommended survey instrument for measuring staff satisfaction. Among 50 statements, Lusthaus et al ask the respondent to rate how strongly they agree with, "XYZ strongly supports staff training and professional development" "Sufficient opportunity is given for professional advancement" and "XYZ helps me identify areas of training for my professional development" (114-115). In other words, Lusthaus et al recognize that staff tend to be more satisfied with their work in an organization if they feel that they are developing and improving as professionals. An individual's estimation of their quality within their field (their professionalism in conduct and performance) matters to the success of the organization.

Horton makes several allusions to providing professional development (139),

assessments of professional needs (51), or the importance of developing professional

resources (25). Clearly these things help to improve organizational capacity, but why and

how?

Our other manuals do not make meaningful reference to professionalism. Based on

my observations with SPN and Asirans, professional credentials and behavior of staff lend

legitimacy to an organization. This is especially important to a young organization where

workers might feel like other types of legitimacy (such as pay, an office or prominence in

the community) are lacking or non-existent. Like good organizational culture, a sense of

professionalism can compensate for weaknesses or challenges for the organization.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology utilized for organizational assessments carried out in the field for Asirans

Community Counseling Center and Sekou Pou Nanm-yo. Due to the fact that I was working as

a practitioner, invited to help these two organizations to answer questions for themselves, I

did not have university institutional review board (IRB) approval, instead I conducted this

organizational assessment process in partnership with the two organizations at their request.

We co-generated a plan to help them with their organizational assessment.

Participant Observation:

Over the course of the three-month visit I took field notes about what I observed within the

organizations. Over the 12 weeks, I spent 270 hours, an average of 22 hours a week,

working with SPN and Asirans. I would go into the Asirans office, or work on the computer

from home 4-6 days a week. Often, it was necessary to hold meetings on Saturdays to

accommodate as many people as possible. With the challenges of transportation and Internet, this was considered a full workweek.

In the first weeks that I was there I was able to shadow each organization. With SPN I was able to observe the team in the field with their workshop participants, a routine trip to the bank, and various meetings among team members. Throughout my time with them I would check-in by phone, schedule meetings, and plan and execute workshops. This work was sometimes done t home, but primarily done at the Asirans office. Both organizations were content to have me work in the Asirans office, considering that SPN did not have an office, and I was living with an SPN mental health worker. There seemed to be a balance. However, Spending work time primarily with Asirans may have biased me towards their organization. I regret that I did not set up a communication plan of regular check-ins with SPN leadership, to continuously ensure that our expectations were shared.

I was able to shadow Asirans staff members as they met with clients in various settings, and conducted weekly team meetings. After the period of shadowing ended, I planned workshops and did research on key areas of interest such as US NGO registration. I worked primarily in the Asirans office, and sometimes from home. With both organizations I was facilitating meetings, leading workshops, and gathering information that could be useful to each organization, I continued to carefully observe staff interactions around me. Through various meetings, conversations, and projects, I was able to observe power dynamics in action, and listen to people's comments about their experience. Notes were typed periodically, about once a week, recording what I observed.

Interviews: During the first weeks of the three-month visit, I conducted 6 interviews with key staff members of SPN and Asirans. Interviews were approximately 30 minutes each. I

interviewed SPN's two top leaders, or managers, and their 'general coordinator' who was the first staff member to receive delegated tasks, as well as a senior staff member. At Asirans I interviewed the two top leaders or co-founders, and the secretary, who is also a founding member. I wanted to interview each organization's leaders to get an in-depth view of their perspectives on their organizations. I also wanted to make sure that I balanced that with an interview with at least one other staff member, who did not have the same responsibility and pride of leadership, but still was heavily invested in, and familiar with the organization. I devised the interview questions the recommendations for interviewing in 'Organizational Assessment' by Lusthaus et. al, and 'Qualitative Research Methods' by Hennink (Ch. 6). With permission, I recorded the interviews and transcribed them after the fact. I also held informal interviews throughout the 12 weeks that I was there, which I included in my field notes. Interview content was categorized to create a set of themes, which were combined with focus group themes. I used these categorized themes to devise this assessment and recommendation for partnership.

Focus Groups:

During the first weeks of the three-month visit, I conducted two focus groups with staff members of SPN and Asirans. I conducted a focus group with 6 SPN staff members, and later with five Asirans staff members. Each focus group lasted for about an hour and a half. Focus groups provided a good opportunity for team members to hear each other's perspectives, and to try to answer questions together (Hennink Ch. 7). In both focus groups, organization leaders invited staff members to voluntarily participate. I based focus group questions on the 'Self-Evaluation' model from Organizational Assessment' by Lusthaus et. al. I took notes immediately after each focus group, and categorized the content into themes

that were shared with those from the interviews. I used these categorized themes to devise

this assessment and recommendation for partnership.

Document review:

I studied documents published by SPN and Asirans as part of the analysis presented in this

paper. These documents were taken into consideration as I created themes for this

assessment and recommendation for partnership. They also served as helpful references to

the structure of each organization.

Ethnographic influence:

In conducting these organizational assessments I was very aware of the history detrimental

western interventions in Haiti, and of my position as a white graduate student, interacting

with these two organizations for a limited amount of time. In this light I was inspired by the

ethnography 'Killing with Kindness' by Mark Schuller (Rutgers University Press 2012) and

'Qualitative Research Methods' by Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (Sage 2011). While this

practitioner report is not an ethnography, it has been influenced by the conviction to create

a holistic picture of a situation and give respect to the cultural meaning attached to

research issues.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF ASIRANS COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER

BACKGROUND

Asirans Community Counseling Center is a small mental health organization, just

over a year old, staffed by 14 volunteers, based in Pétionville, Haiti. Emily Williams and

Eira Rivers, American and Welsh respectively, conceived of the organization when they

were both teaching psychology and mental health in Port-Au-Prince. They saw the lack of opportunity for their students to apply what they were learning and a need for mental health services. So in 2014, they established Asirans as a community counseling center where they continue to manage the operations and work with clients daily. Emily and Eira crowd-funded through friends and family, and they were able to rent out an office space and cover start-up costs. A number of their most engaged students accepted the invitation to become the first Asirans mental health workers. Today, Asirans works to increase people's capacity to manage their own mental health through community based, culturally sensitive psycho-education and counseling.

The official vision of Asirans is "finding hope, strength, and peace of mind", and the mission is, "Dedicated to strengthening the mental health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Haiti through counseling, advocacy and education." The whole team displays personal motivation to help improve the lives of others through strengthening their mental health. The staff is eager for the opportunity to practice what they have learned in university or in the Asirans certificate classes. For a detailed overview of my assessment of Asirans over 6 key indexes as seen in the CARE Framework, please refer to the appendix (Asirans ICAF).

Figure 2 Asirans Organizational Structure (Note that some roles are filled by the same people. For example, the director of clinical services is the CEO).

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In assessing Asirans as an organization, four themes proved to be key: 1) financial planning 2) infrastructure 3) organizational culture, and 4) professionalism. Asirans has a very egalitarian culture, which proves to be a major strength of the organization. The entire staff also displays strong voluntary motivation, which is part of the culture. Financial management and planning is the greatest weakness as there is no one to write grants or concentrate on seeking out funds. Staff members recognized professionalism as a strength and weakness, and wished that this would improve. More internal infrastructure, including intentionality about human resources, and also strategic planning would strengthen the organization.

Today Asirans has three major programs: 1) clinical counseling services, 2) outreach services to children with special needs and their families, and 3) mental health classes for students, educators, parents or other interested parties. All services are offered in Haitian Creole and English. Clinical counseling sessions, for groups or individuals, are lead by Emily or one of the Asirans staff members that she has trained into the job. They specialize in working with trauma, but engage with a wide variety of clients. Sessions are held in OFATMA trauma hospital, partnering schools, the Asirans office, or at people's homes.

Outreach services partner with children with special needs and their families to provide holistic support. Special needs include Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Cerebral Palsy, learning disabilities and more general developmental disorders. The program is based on the World Health Organization (WHO) Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) model. The Outreach program is primarily funded through Asirans's Children's Sponsorship Program where individual donors partner with a specific child and their family. Eira leads the outreach program with her team of Asirans mental health workers.

Mental Health Classes are broken down into Staff Trainings and Seminars and a Certificate Program. Staff Trainings and Seminars are offered to local schools, orphanages, nutrition centers, and other community based organizations, to strengthen staff understanding of a variety of mental health topics based on the interests and needs of the organization. The Certificate Program is offered in 3-month intervals at the basic and advanced level to university students or any individuals that want to strengthen their knowledge of mental health. Emily and Eira devise the curriculums for classes together, and typically split the teaching responsibility.

The three programs play to the strengths of the co-founders Eira and Emily. They have had no trouble finding enough clients to keep all of their programs busy. However, the cofounders have been gradually turning more and more to staff members for project initiatives and partner contacts. This is part of the vision to make the organization less and less dependent on foreigners. Some Asirans team members join with significant mental health knowledge, but most appreciate more on-the-job training. Typically in a new case, either of the co-founders will work with an Asirans team member who initially primarily translates from English to Creole. As they become more comfortable, the Asirans team member leads more and more of the session until eventually they are running the session. The team seems happy with this on the job training.

Relationships

The team consists of the co-founders – Emily Williams, an American trauma psychologist and Eira Rivers, a Welsh development psychologist. During the summer of my internship Eira was on maternity leave, so Emily was taking on almost all of the

administrative work. The rest of the team is made up of young Haitian professionals, from their mid-20s to early 30s. Over the three months of the internship two to four women were part of the team (besides Eira and Emily) and the rest, about 10, were men. Over the course of the three months, about three team members left and about three were added on due to the volunteer nature of the work. The mental health workers have varying levels of training and experience. Most have attended some college (a minority in Haiti), and all have at least the basic mental health knowledge offered in the certificate program.

The Office

Asirans rents a second floor office above co-founder Emily's apartment, a restaurant on a busy street corner close to a major tap-tap (public transportation) stop and an outdoor market. The office is in Pétionville – a neighborhood within the capital of Port-Au-Prince that is also home to Haiti's main USAID office among other major NGO headquarters, upscale hotels and some nice parks. While Pétionville is known as the wealthy quarter of Port-Au-Prince, Asirans's office is in a neighborhood of Pétionville that is further down the socio-economic scale. This leads to the feeling that Asirans is for and in touch with the average Port-Au-Prince resident. Asirans is not a posh establishment for rich people, high on a hill.

To access the office you squeeze down a small alley next to the local restaurant, go through a metal-gated doorway, and up a flight of stairs. There is no sign on the street or immediately at the doorway to announce the presence of a mental health center. There are mixed opinions among the staff as to whether this is a missed advertising opportunity, or respects discreteness for clients.

The Asirans office is filled with references to Haitian culture and American-style business professionalism. Overall it is welcoming and comfortable to clients. The office consists of a rectangular lobby with a floor to ceiling barred window, a couch and a large reception desk. The large window lets in an important breeze in the hot months of summer. The room is decorated with two local paintings, a few pictures of Asirans staff, and a few hearty plants, giving the hall a sense of life and color. A supply closet opens off of one side. A professional looking water cooler sits in one corner, visible even as you scale the stairs up to the office. The first of the two office rooms is a small counseling room. It features a plush upholstered couch and matching armchair that face each other, with a low oval coffee table that would separate the client from counselor. Another local painting is hung on the wall and a lightweight white curtain shades a high barred window. The third room is the conference room. With plastic black folding chairs and a brown folding table, it can comfortably hold about 7 people. The conference room held as many as 11 people – representative staff from Asirans and SPN together. The space is important for mental health classes and team meetings, but it is inadequate when groups grow in size. Here too, there is a local painting and a high window with a shade. A small bathroom opens off of the conference room. It features a mirror, toilet and a sink, but no running water. Most of the time someone (usually the co-founder, Emily) remembers to bring up a bucket of water. The bathroom is convenient but not completely professional. All staff are welcome to use the power outlets throughout the office to charge their phone or laptop during or after a meeting. This serves as a small incentive to participate, since homes and neighborhoods are often without electricity.

Asirans has a team meeting in the office every Monday for all available staff members to talk about the past and upcoming week, as well as any other plans or projects that are in the works. When I arrived in May, these meetings were usually held in the conference room around the folding table. By August a number of staff members had been added to the team, and the weather had only gotten hotter. Weekly meetings were moved into the lobby. People sat in a circle of folding chairs, misshapen by the imposing reception desk. While this arrangement is less professional than all would like, people are generally happy to meet comfortably, and don't seem to flustered by the precarious location. Co-founder Emily leads the meetings and is usually last to sit down, which means she is usually at the head of the table (close to the door). She is incidentally seated in a powerful place at the table.

The weekly meetings meaningfully demonstrate how Asirans strives for egalitarianism. All team members (including the co-founders) share their experiences with clients over the past week and ask the group for their feedback and for advice for the next session. This provides an opportunity not only to continue to learn together about mental heath, but to share important cultural information. The co-founders pointedly ask for advice about how things work in Haiti and what will be culturally effective with their clients. At the same time, they share perspectives on diagnosing and counseling from an American or Welsh perspective. Asirans staff have mentioned that they value this lack of hierarchy. One mental health worker stated, "Everyone can give their opinion. It's like a family." On many occasions I saw Emily turn a question or a task back on the rest of the staff saying, "You are the experts." She would suggest that there could be something that they were seeing that she could not.

STRENGTHS

To analyze the organizational strengths and weaknesses of SPN and Asirans, I have most heavily referenced the handbook 'Enhancing Organizational Performance' by Lusthaus et al. 2002. (See Venn diagram in 'Literature Review, and in the appendix). It serves as one framework with which to analyze these two organizations. Please also see the CARE Institutional Capacity Framework in the appendix. The work of Asirans is considered relevant and in demand by team members and the community. Asirans typically has more requests for services than they have time or resources to address. People who receive services have consistently been satisfied and grateful, sharing their experience with friends and neighbors. In a team meeting, a staff member said that Asirans should consider it a strength that they serve 'normal people' not just the rich. Another added that Asirans would also go to people's homes; clients are not required to travel to the office.

In July 2015 the team came together, to recognize their first year of operations with an all-day staff conference. The mission and each of the programs were discussed and reaffirmed by all present, and they discussed ideas for expanding. People debated and then affirmed the wording of the mission. Later the different programs were discussed and together, the team brainstormed ways to expand or improve each of the programs. The meeting increased team ownership of the mission.

As mentioned above, the culture within Asirans is also a strength. The team feels that everyone has a right to share their opinion and that everyone has something to teach each other. This egalitarian culture was reaffirmed in the July all-day conference. This affirming culture contributes to Asirans's strong performance despite a lack of financial incentives. Team members are very satisfied and motivated in their work.

WEAKNESSES

At present Asirans is not financially sustainable or secure. While volunteer work gives a good indicator of staff dedication, it means that staff retention is never assured. Asirans has often had to say good-bye to a competent mental health worker because they found a paying job (perhaps in the mental health field, perhaps not). Financial achievements do not indicate that Asirans will be able to continue to rent the office space, or even guarantee that the co-founders can continue to donate time to manage the organization. At present, there is no financial plan and very limited grant writing time or experience, meaning that money trickles in sporadically from individual foreign donors or an occasional small project. However, the organization does have a good underlying structure for financial sustainability. They have sources of unrestricted income from client/participant fees, and long-term unrestricted income from private donations. These funding streams give them more freedom to allocate funds to their most pressing needs, and they are unlikely to disappear all at once. Still, current funding is not sufficient to pay staff and survive long-term. An on-going grant acquisition process needs to be implemented, as well as more marketing and support to donors and potential paying clients.

Organizational processes are not fully constructed, which will become important if Asirans is to grow. A financial strategic plan, human resources policy, and a 5-year strategic plan are all important organizational documents not yet created. This is not surprising because they are a young organization, and many of the team members do not have any experience with organizational development. To grow into a stable organization, it will be necessary to implement organizational processes.

To truly establish itself, Asirans needs to become registered as an NGO in Haiti and in the United States. Individual donations from foreigners, which make up most of Asirans's funding, are not tax exempt. Registration will be important in order to receive ongoing funding. Registering has proved to be a somewhat challenging process for Asirans as there is no one on the team who has the time, or the experience with NGO registration. Registering as an NGO in Haiti requires hiring a lawyer, which will take funding. Frankly at this point, it seems that the language barrier and an unfamiliar legal system have been enough to convince the co-founders that they don't have time to work on registration right now.

Team members want to see improved staff professionalism, especially punctuality. Tardiness is certainly a common problem, in Haiti as in much of the world. Bad traffic and any number of unknown factors can make punctuality seem like an unattainable dream. Co-founder Emily tries to incentivize punctuality for the weekly meeting by providing a snack for people who arrive on time. While those who are on time seem to appreciate this, there are always others who are late. Perhaps being paid would make being on time more of a priority, and may make people feel more like professionals, without scrutinizing their colleagues. Perhaps a more regular schedule, instead of client meetings scattered through the week, would make it easier to predict traffic. Tardiness remains a problem yet unsolved, and staff members wish this would improve.

GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS

The Asirans team would like to see all three programs grow to reach more people, and be more well known. Increased visibility, and increased ability to reach people, within and outside of Port-Au-Prince is the commonly held dream.

The team is considering moving to a larger office space, and also expanding services further outside of Port-au-Prince. A larger office space would mean there was space to host larger classes and seminars, and even host for other organizations - and earn a little income from renting it out. It would also allow for a play therapy area for special needs children and their siblings. The team recognizes that mental health needs are by no means limited to Port-Au-Prince; in fact some of the greatest needs may be outside of the capital city. Asirans has maintained weekly therapy sessions in two different towns outside of Port-Au-Prince, and would like to expand to more. Still, services are usually limited to the Port-Au-Prince due to time and money constraints. Taking public buses in and out of the capital takes hours and is very tiring. More funding for transportation, and even a vehicle would make this much more possible.

Simultaneously, the Asirans team plans to network better with other mental health workers and with other organizations that could potentially be partners. In pursuit of that goal, near the end of my three month visit, Asirans staff began work to partner with one of the major hospitals in the area. The team also bean planning a networking fair, so that mental health organizations can meet each other and so that the public can learn more about the availability of mental health services. A few months later, the team attended a mental health conference, where they were able to promote their organization, and even give a few trial-counseling sessions. They all wore Asirans polo t-shirts, which provided a fitting visual of their united vision and professionalism.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF SEKOU POU NANM-YO

BACKGROUND

Sekou Pou Nanm-yo (SPN), which means 'Relief for the Spirit' in Haitian Creole,

works to provide mental health research, intervention and disaster preparedness training

to the people of Haiti; Port-Au-Prince specifically. SPN works to increase people's PTSD and

stress management, as well as their disaster preparedness, through courses and group

counseling offered to the community by the all-Haitian staff.

Its mission is as follows:

> "The mission of SPN is to enhance the well-being of the Haitian
> community through psychosocial support and training interventions
> developed and implemented by local professionals and
> paraprofessionals in collaboration with international consultants. SPN
> provides culturally adapted mental health intervention and disaster
> preparedness training to vulnerable adult and child community
> members, particularly those displaced by disasters, and conducts
> research to assess mental health needs in the community and to
> evaluate the effectiveness of its interventions. SPN is also committed
> to capacity-building through training and employment of Haitian
> young people and education of residents of camps for internally
> displaced peoples (IDPs) and the broader community."
>
> SPN was created in April 2010 in response the earthquake that rocked Port-

Au-Prince. At that time, Henry Oliver Nwél (hereafter Oliver) who would become SPN's

manager was carrying out a needs assessment survey, conducted by a team from

University of Michigan in collaboration with the Haitian university The Aristide Foundation.

One involved graduate student, Ava Liam, took particular note of Oliver's work ethic and

charisma when engaging with large groups of people. He was talking to groups of up to 200

people about self-management strategies for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Ava

was about to start her PhD research, and was looking for a team to work with. Oliver recalls

Ava saying to him, "Oliver, if you can do all this by yourself, imagine how many people we

could reach with a team". Oliver readily agreed, and Ava recruited a team of about 12

young mental health workers from the Aristide Foundation. In the five years since the earthquake, SPN has become a registered NGO in Haiti. After about two years Ava handed over the reigns completely to Oliver and the team. Since then, SPN has had a few American research partners, including Chelsea Colton-Jackson, a colleague of Ava's. Chelsea has helped SPN shift from disaster relief to disaster preparedness as an area of specialty. Ava and Chelsea remain consultants for SPN as they work in other countries around the world. Chelsea and Ava devised the internship that lead to this comparative organizational assessment. Oliver shares responsibilities for SPN with Jovianne Jean Baptiste Pierre, the administrative manager, who has been part of the team since its formation. The team has engaged in at least three multi-year research and relief projects, which have provided the funding for their operations. For a detailed overview of my assessment of SPN over 6 key indexes as seen in the CARE Framework, please refer to the appendix (SPN ICAF).
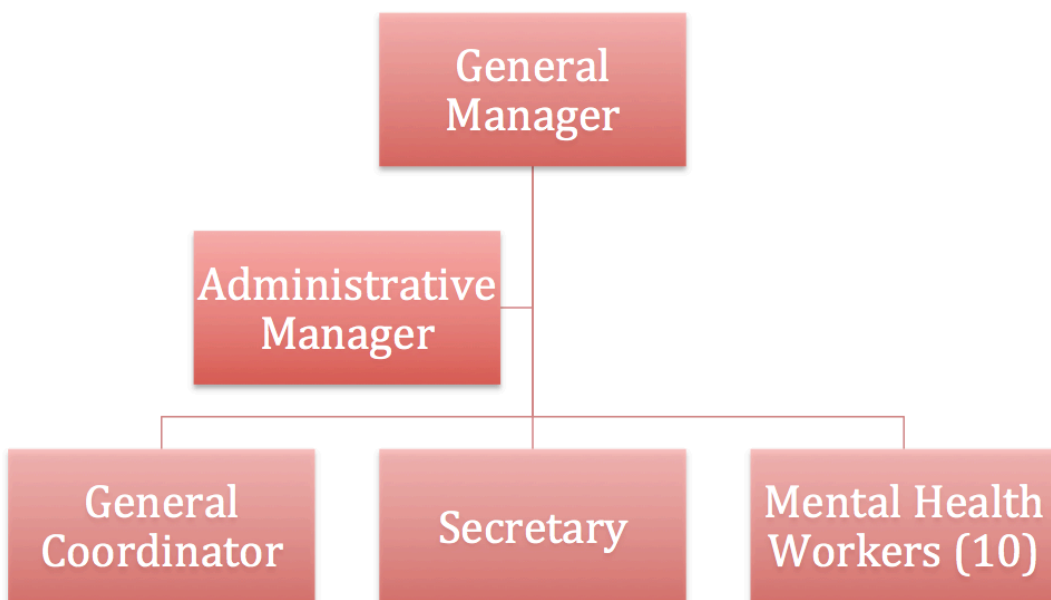

Figure 3 SPN Organizational Structure (Note that some roles are filled by the same people. The general coordinator and secretary are both mental health workers).

As with Asirans, organizational culture, financial management and planning, and internal management are key for SPN. While the team is very proud of the work they have done, and very loyal to SPN, there has at times been a lack of respect between the managers and the team members, as we shall see below. As with Asirans, SPN's greatest weakness is a lack of capacity to seeking out new funders and funding streams. Improved human resource policy, and reflective internal strategic planning would greatly strengthen the organizations.

Location

SPN does not have it's own office building. The lack of designated space strains the feeling continuity, or ongoing work of the organization. When the team meets together, it is at the home of one of the team members, or at the Asirans office the partnership with Asirans will be discussed further below.

When SPN uses the office, it is usually for a meeting of 5-12 SPN team members. Oliver and Jovianne, the general manager and the administrative manager, have occasionally come to Asirans for Skype meetings with foreign collaborators. The office is close to home for Oliver, the general manager, and one other mental health worker, making it convenient to travel to for the SPN's leader, but inconvenient for most of the team. It is about an hour commute away from home for at least 5 of the staff that live in Tabarre, close to The Aristide Foundation (the Haitian University from which most of the team members were recruited). When there is an SPN team meeting at the Asirans office, some team members come as much as 40 minutes early (or else arrive a half hour late) because of traffic. The challenges to punctuality hinder professionalism and demoralize the staff and managers. However, the time is also used chatting and visiting together, fostering informal

friendship. The conference room is not always well suited to team meeting, especially if there are a lot of people or if it is too hot. In these cases the team pulls chairs out into the hallway, where a large window provides a breeze. The inadequate facilities hinder perceived professionalism among team members. However, meeting as a team in any private facility increases their organizational effectiveness. Like Asirans staff, SPN staff takes advantage of the office space to charge their laptops and cellphones, reaping an individual benefit from the facility.

When considering the trust necessary for partnership, some events come to mind. SPN staff displays a lack of ownership, and occasionally a lack of respect for the Asirans office. I once asked an SPN staff member if he would carry water to replace the water-cooler, so that we would have it for an SPN meeting. He replied indignantly that they weren't thirsty and didn't need the water. It's very possible that he was offended by the request to do some heavy lifting (the water jug is too heavy for me). Culturally, people are usually very willing to lend a hand. It seems more likely that he felt like he was being co-opted to do Asirans's job in maintaining the office.

The director of Asirans disclosed to me that, after an SPN meeting, she discovered that one of the legs on the lobby couch was broken. Neither SPN nor Asirans ever discussed or acknowledged this. Another time, after an SPN meeting, the Asirans office cellphone was gone. This was discussed between the directors of SPN and Asirans, but never brought up to the SPN staff. The office space has continued to be open to them, despite the apparent lack of respect for the property.

The SPN team has also met in the past at the home of one staff member, Charlotte, for meetings and celebrations. During my three-month internship, her family allowed me to

rent the largest of four bedrooms - a very hospitable gesture. Charlotte has been a team member since the formation of SPN. Her family is wealthy and has political connections. Their dining room would comfortably be big enough for the whole SPN team, with it's cool tile floor, and long folding table and chairs. There is no running water in the house, but there is a tap outside, and large plastic barrels that are usually full, making it not quite posh, but certainly efficient. Electricity is somewhat unusual and they do not run a generator for the house (though the cousins next door do at night). This makes the home less than ideal for administrative work on computers, but very comfortable for a team meeting. Her house is directly across the street from the Aristide Foundation, from which the team was recruited. Having meetings and end-of-research celebrations at her house gives Charlotte a certain level of prestige, even as one of the younger and more outspoken members of the team. Charlotte has sometimes shown a lack of respect for management. Hosting meetings may give her power unfitting her position in the organization. She has also shown some of the lack of respect that is a part of SPN's human resource management problem. She refused to be part of the WhatsApp group used to send out messages to the team, and has been absent from team meetings, and was assertively critical if she disagreed with something that a manager or consultant said. The general manager, Oliver, has taken steps to mediate the culture of the team. Oliver fired Charlotte's best friend in the organization, for lack of respect and professional conduct. No team meetings were held at Charlotte's house during my three months there.

Over the three months that I was there, meetings that were not held at Asirans were held at the home of the administrative manager, Jovianne. Jovianne lives in Tabarre, the same neighborhood as Charlotte and at least 3 other staff members. Her home is currently

the most comfortable, and the most convenient meeting place for the majority of the team. Jovianne's full-time job is teaching computer classes at a business school in the center of town, between her home and the Asirans office. Her house is in a quieter area than either of the other two meeting locations, a little way off of the main road. She has a large kitchen with a big wooden table that would comfortably seat most of the team. Meetings during my internship (the hottest part of the year) were held outside in a small porch or garage, where there was a breeze. Everyone sat in comfortable plastic armchairs. Her house was the only one among the three meeting places that has running water. The neighborhood of Tabarre typically has electricity for a few hours a day, but Jovianne's family has a gas-powered generator that they sometimes turn on. The relatively convenient location, multiple meeting areas, of an adequate size, running water, and electricity make it the most ideal location. However, meeting in someone's home still creates an unequal power dynamic, feels less professional to the team, and also can be distracting as other family members come and go.

Hierarchy

SPN strives to be a hierarchically structured organization, with clear roles. Titles include general manager, administrative manager, secretary, and general coordinator (a sort of catch-all field second to the manager). The managers make all final decisions. Coordinating a meeting, gathering supplies and other similar responsibilities are shared by the managers and sometimes the secretary and general coordinator. The administrative manager is responsible for organizational finances, grant paperwork, and launching and maintaining the organizational website. All members of SPN are expected to gather whenever a meeting or project is called. Exceptions can be made for schedule conflicts, but they must be

discussed with Oliver, the general manager, in order to be excusable. Staff members work as enumerators- surveying their designated groups and leading group sessions. They are expected to behave in a professional manner (something that has improved over time) and to do what they are told.

Hierarchy is meant to preserve order and professionalism. The general manager, Oliver, was one of the two people that conceived of SPN, and he is very proud to be the leader of the organization and expects people to respect him, even as he works to be open to sharing decision making with the administrative manager, Jovianne. It is clear that the opinions of team members are secondary, and they are expected to be obedient, which has been met with some resentment. The managers have occasionally felt a lack of respect or motivation from team members, namely tardiness, joking around or failing to focus in the field, and occasionally not showing up for meetings. Human Resources, and the relationship between SPN members is in need of some more attention, to perhaps become more healthy and effective.

Dedication

Despite internal challenges, the staff is very proud to consider themselves part of SPN. All members feel that they as a team have survived a trial-by-fire in the work over the last five years. The administrative manager, Jovianne, tells the story of being at a research site, when work continued after dark. Suddenly it started to rain hard. In the downpour, her laptop was destroyed. Despite these taxing moments and sacrifices, she sees the positive impact that SPN has on the people with whom it works, and she is glad to be a part of the team. All team members have gone through periods of work or meetings with SPN that were not paid. The team that exists now remained, even as other people left when

there was no money. The general coordinator said that he has been offered jobs that paid more, but he made 'a decision of the heart' that it was right to stay with the team that he has in SPN. People have described SPN as a family. Team members share text messages and socialize together outside of work, and find it easy to joke and speak candidly with each other whenever they are together.

When I landed in Haiti, the general coordinator and another staff member picked me up at the airport. In the parking lot, a van full of the rest of the SPN staff was waiting. We all went out to eat. Around the table, the team introduced themselves and asked about my work and about me. The sensation of family engendered by carpooling in a van, and introducing themselves to me around the table is representative of the camaraderie of SPN.

STRENGTHS

To analyze the organizational strengths and weaknesses of SPN and Asirans, I have most heavily referenced the handbook 'Enhancing Organizational Performance' published by the International Development Research Centre. It serves as one framework with which to analyze these two organizations. (See the Venn diagram in 'Literature Review' and the appendix).

SPN has strong Organizational Motivation – history, mission, culture, and incentives or rewards (in this case, we can say job satisfaction). SPN has good organizational performance – effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and has so far been maintained at least basic financial viability. The 'external environment,' while important to note, is neither a particular strength nor weakness for SPN. It should be revisited as SPN grows. The weaknesses of SPN generally fall in the sector of organizational capacity.

Organizational Motivation

The entire team knows the history of the organization, and almost all of them were a part of SPN from the start. They are proud to have been involved in helping people after the 2010 earthquake, and continuing to do so since then. The mission of SPN, "to enhance the well-being of the Haitian community through psychosocial support and training interventions…" seems to be personally held by all staff members.

SPN has a very distinctive culture, which is proud and cohesive, with strong sense of team spirit. After the successful completion of a project, they will request to have a beach trip together. The culture of SPN has sometimes lacked respect for people outside of their organization, and has had problems of professionalism within. During projects the team has been assessed as having high levels of satisfaction with their work, and low levels of 'compassion fatigue'. This, as well as the fact that people have stayed through the ebbs and flows of projects points to high levels of incentive or reward. Team members have been paid for their project work. The prestige and responsibility of different jobs seems to give people pride. These additional incentives are also key contributors.

WEAKNESSES

Financial Management

Financial management, or the lack of sustainable funding is the clearest threat to SPN's long-term sustainability. While there is some very responsible financial management in terms of project funds, there is no financial planning for the future. The team has good knowledge of research implementation, and of mental health in a disaster context, but they do not have a good understanding of NGO management, especially financial planning and

prospecting. SPN has partnered with several American researchers to do projects together. American research partners turned consultants Chelsea and Ava, feel that SPN must become less dependent on foreign partners who bring grant money with them. International consultants feel that SPN should start to apply for and manage their own grants.

When I asked both managers and staff how they have -and how they plan to- find funding partners, they replied that they meet people 'in the field' i.e. through social networking, and personal interactions. While this has lead to projects over the first five years of their existence, it has not lead to a constant flow of projects. It is unclear how culturally common it is to expect to meet funding partners 'in the field' but it is not the mentality of American or European funders. I suspect that this mis-matched expectation contributed to SPN's very slow construction of a website, which was not online by the time that the general manager, Oliver went to a conference in Denver.

Organizational Processes

As it currently operates, the hierarchical structure of SPN is not creating a culture of deep mutual respect. While they have been organizationally efficient during projects, these interpersonal problems are a weakness of the organization. When I asked the team about SPN's weaknesses, a heated discussion broke out about SPN's internal communication. During our time together, we talked quite a bit about communication problems. I tried to listen to people's perspectives (some felt that WhatsApp was the most efficient way to communicate with the whole team, others seemed to have no hope that WhatAapp could be professional and refused to join). We talked about respectful and professional communication. No one appeared to change his or her mind.

Oliver talked about a need for clearer roles and responsibilities, to be shared by team members. I drafted an employee handbook, for which people seemed sincerely grateful. However, there were small disagreements about it, especially about the professional communication session. The team could never come together, agree on the communication policy, and ratify the document. It was never implemented. Staff members do not seem to feel confident that they will come to decisions all together.

The team recognized "lack of planning" as a weakness. This logistical challenge would articulate itself as a lack of respect for team members. They explained that sometimes they show up to work and found themselves waiting around for hours. In return, managers noted "lack of motivation in younger team members" as a weakness of the organization. Discontent about the communication situation was also a problem in this context. The managers identified weaknesses as "group management" – it's very difficult to mediate different temperaments, it's not always easy to find common ground. The general manager, Oliver, did not want to be corrected in front of the team, and he sometimes needed to yell to express his authority. However, Oliver (the general manager) talked about his team - and himself personally - being open to criticism. He emphasized that they wanted to improve. Specifically, he hopes that he can learn more about group management.

GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS

SPN would like to grow as an organization, firstly, by expanding the number of projects that they work on. They would like to be able to work full-time for SPN, with a constant flow of projects. The team would be able to take on more staff and become better known throughout Haiti.

They would like to have their own office where they could plan projects together and host partners or even support groups. An office would lend them a sense of legitimacy. Being able to host partners or groups would make them more appealing to foreigners and also improve financial independence.

SPN certainly wants to keep working on disaster preparedness and PTSD, but the general manager, Oliver wonders if in the future they might expand to other social justice issues, such as advocating for and supporting those that have been raped or sexually abused. It seems that Oliver, and the whole team, see themselves first as skilled implementing partners and researchers, with their focus being somewhat flexible. This expansion could be founded on Oliver's express desire for SPN to be seen as 'saviors', as opposed to being founded on the known strengths and expertise of the organization. The whole team does not seem to have much knowledge about how a small organization grows into a large stable one, or about how best to seek funding internationally. SPN should reflect seriously about how they want to market and promote their organization, in order to grow.

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SOULJE LESPRI MOUN AND ASIRANS COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER

INTRODUCTION

SPN and Asirans are currently organizational partners. When SPN's American advisors, Chelsea and Ava, framed the internship for me, a primary objective was to facilitate the partnership between SPN and Asirans because of their perceived complimentary strengths and weaknesses. SPN has five year of experience, very good community connections, and registration in Haiti as an NGO. Asirans has more technical

mental health knowledge, an office and connections to wealthier countries. SPN's general manager helped the Asirans's co-founders find their office space (as well as the apartment under the office). SPN's American advisors felt that the two organizations could be stronger together, and might even want to consider merging.

I tried to facilitate this collaboration, while being very attentive to the true priorities of each organization. I did not want to use my outsider role to impose something that neither organization really wanted. While both organizations verbalized that they were interested in partnering, actions suggested that the opposite was actually true.

STAFF PERSPECTIVES

Staff members of SPN as well as Asirans said that they know very little or nothing about the other organization, and that I should ask the managers about the collaboration, not them. A mental health worker from Asirans said, "I don't know too much about SPN, I don't. Because I always heard that Asirans and SPN are a partnership. I don't really have information about that. I don't really have information about SPN. I can't say anything." One SPN staff member said that the collaboration exists, "in name only." Asirans and SPN's leaders seem to be the only ones that talk about the collaboration as something that is definitely positive and definitely happening.

KEY EVENTS

I organized meetings for the leaders, and then the entire staff of both organizations. The objective was for the two organizations to present themselves to each other in more detail and then talk about what they wanted to collaborate on. Neither meeting seemed to be full of trust and openness between the organizations, despite polite overtones.

In both meetings, SPN's general manager brushed past the organizational details. He once told me that they need not scrutinize the bad in each other, but simply build off each other's strengths. He was probably being polite, but I worried that this lack of honest sharing would impede true collaboration. Asirans co-founder Emily put forward the idea of renewing and expanding the mobile mental health clinics. People seemed to tacitly agree, but no action steps were assigned. Asirans staff asked if Asirans's cultural lack of hierarchy would be maintained. It was stated that in SPN there is hierarchy. After this meeting Asirans staff told co-founder Emily that they do not want to 'become SPN'. At the end of the meeting, everyone agreed to have a monthly 'all-staff' meeting to discuss work that they could collaborate on. When a month had passed, SPN's general manager happened to be sick and no one scheduled, or re-scheduled any subsequent all-staff meetings. While words seemed to point towards a growing partnership, no one initiated actions to actualize that.

Over the past year or so, Asirans co-founder Emily has collaborated with SPN on planning 'mobile mental health clinics' as part of SPN's PTSD work. However, she felt mistrusted or unaccepted by the SPN team. As Emily relayed it, she asked the SPN team if she should base the plan on SPN's previous work, and they gave a fairly indifferent 'yes'. When she presented to SPN her plan for the project, they accused her of plagiarizing their work. Emily felt that, to some degree, this hostility to outside collaborators is part of SPN's team culture. For a time, SPN team members believed that Asirans had financial resources that they were not sharing with SPN, when in fact there were none. Team member harbored some distrust and jealously based on perceptions.

LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES

When asked, one Asirans co-founder said that the relationship with SPN is unclear to everyone. She identified the relationship with SPN as a weakness, and said there were a lot of 'varied expectations' about what the collaboration would be. The other co-founder said that she is not involved in the relationship with SPN. Both co-founders liked the idea of a referral network between Asirans and SPN. Both spoke highly of SPN's community-based work. They consider SPN's community connections to be impressive and valuable. One co-founder mentioned the mobile mental health clinic – visiting communities that had previously been a part of research, and providing additional mental health knowledge. Asirans and SPN had collaborated on that, and she would like to see that continue, given the funding to do so. She expressed an interest in collaborating on specific projects that play to the strengths of both organizations

Both seemed interested in clarifying the relationship. Originally I thought this meant fleshing out the relationship, now I think that might mean something more like delineating it. SPN's administrative manager said that partnership with Asirans was "lacking". She did not know much about Asirans, and it was not clear to her what a partnership would look like. SPN's general manager, Oliver has talked about how envisions Asirans and SPN 'growing up together'; side-by-side, 'one does not grow without the other'.

SHOULD THEY COLLABORATE?

While relations between the two organizations have been difficult, the leaders of both organizations have had a lot of patience for cultural difference and misunderstanding. Asirans's co-founders recognize that SPN is well connected in the communities in which it works. They are humble about what they might not understand, or how they might be

misunderstood. They are unwilling to lose a relationship with a Haitian partner, especially in a field as small as mental health is in Haiti. SPN feels that international partners are very important, especially considering SPN's very limited understanding of international grants and funding requests. The managers of SPN respect Asirans's co-founders for having technical knowledge and advanced degrees in Mental Health. SPN's managers also have a lot of patience for cultural misunderstandings or mismatched expectations, and want to learn from them. SPN is unwilling to ruin relations with international partners because of the influence and connections that they perceive those partners to have. SPN leaders probably feel some pressure from their two American advisors, Chelsea and Ava, who recommended the partnership.

Asirans as an organization is interested running a community counseling center, even if they have to do it on a purely volunteer basis with no funding. SPN wants to be a research and project implementation team. These aims seem different enough that they can coexist, but they inform very different work cultures and structures. Neither is willing to fundamentally change in a way that would allow them to meld together. However, both organizations see it as important not to ruin the relationship with each other, and I recommend that they continue to hold each other as resources as each moves forward. Both seem happy to refer projects to each other and both are happy to work on fixed projects together. Whatever the benefits of a different arrangement maybe, this referral and support relationship is what both organizations want right now.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the outset of the three months with SPN and Asirans I was given two key internship questions. 1) What does each of these organizations need to do in order to be

successful and stable, and 2) would they be better served by undergoing the process of

growth together?

In this paper I have presented several perspectives on organizational capacity and

its assessment for small international NGOs. I have identified several themes of particular

significance to SPN and Asirans. Additionally, I have compared SPN and Asirans to

frameworks from Lusthaus et al and CARE USA, which look at the organizations across a

number of themes. I engaged with Asirans and SPN through participant observation,

interviews and focus groups. I have tried to present a balanced and unassuming

assessment of the real current state of each organization. Having analyzed my data, I will

offer some recommendations relevant to these two particular young grassroots NGOs.

Asirans Recommendations Given the small size of this year-old organization, it's strong
institutional culture, which motivates team members, and the context of working in Haiti, I
recommend the following steps to increase organizational capacity.
- **Establish organizational processes**. A financial strategic plan, human resources
  policy, monitoring and evaluation tools and a 5-year organizational strategic plan
  are all important organizational documents not yet created. In order to showcase
  Asirans's work to funders, or to operate effectively as the organization grows,
  organizational processes must be implemented. In the first year of operations it's
  understandable to operate somewhat casually while the team discovers what works.
  However, this casualness cannot be maintained if the organization is to grow in size
  or in income.
    - **Investigate operating as a cooperative.** Given Asirans's pride in their
      egalitarian structure, their effort to make strategic decisions as a team, and
      their emphasis on everyone learning from each other, I recommend research
      and discussion on implementing a cooperative organizational structure.
      Asirans may benefit from a mutually affirming a structure where all
      members are involved in decision making for their common benefit.
- **Register for 501(c)3 status in the United States.** As a grassroots organization that
  emerged from a need for services and an abundance of mental health workers that
  wanted to apply their craft, it is not surprising that US registration was not the first
  priority. However, individual donors are inhibited by the tax on their donations, and
  funder organizations typically do not award funds to organizations that are not

registered. In order to open funding streams that go beyond start-up capital, registration is necessary.

- **Institutionalize financial planning and funding development.** Asirans, like many small NGOs, was founded by a team that ardently believes in providing their services. In moving towards being a stable organization that is confident of it's existence from year to year, it is necessary to engage in financial planning for the future. In the inclusive nature of the team culture I recommend at minimum, annual team financial planning meetings where the team assesses their financial standing and diversity of income sources and sets goals for the future. At least one team member must be responsible for financial planning, and pursuing current and new sources of funding on a weekly basis at minimum. If Asirans is to grow into an organization that can cover its costs and pay its employees, financial planning and development should be a major focus.
  - **Affirm professionalism through pay.** When Asirans becomes more financially stable and is able to pay its employees, I expect that team members will feel more legitimate and professional, due to their salaries. I expect that concerns from team members about lack of professionalism will disappear. If they do not, I recommend a cultural review to dig into the cause of these concerns further.

SPN Recommendations Given the small size of this five year-old organization, its registration in Haiti, strong team loyalty, and the Haitian context, I recommend the following steps to increase organizational capacity.
- **Become a consulting group.** SPN was founded as an implementing partner, and the whole team still seems to see themselves in that role – as effective community liaisons and researchers. SPN would be well suited, and sufficiently experienced, to market themselves as a consulting team. Through interviews and focus group conversations, it does not seem like SPN has a specific mental health intervention at the core of their mission. Rather, they are interested bringing various international theories into the Haitian context in a professional way. In recognizing themselves as a consulting group, they may be able to better, and more intentionally, market themselves to potential partners.
  - **Engage in continuous marketing and fund development.** For SPN to continue and to grow, the organization cannot wait for funders or research partners to discover them. As a young organization they were lucky to meet research partners in the field. I believe this pool is too small to support SPN on a continuous basis. I recommend that the team become more knowledgeable about how best to market themselves to international researchers; and engage in marketing and project development continuously.
- **Establish an office.** A sense of place is significant. There are power dynamics that play out as different team members host meetings, or as team members are suddenly called to assemble without having seen the SPN team in weeks. Having an office would provide tangible legitimacy and even professionalism. An office would

also encourage continuity as administrators would have a place to meet and work together regularly, to pursue new projects continuously.

- **Investigate Human Resource Management.** Human Resources, and the relationship between SPN members, needs more attention to become more healthy and effective. Managers have at times sensed a lack of motivation or respect from team members. Conversely, team members have sometimes felt that their time was not respected. Still team members show a strong team mentality and loyalty towards SPN. While there are strengths in the team culture, human resource management must be investigated further if SPN is going to be effective at implementing larger projects, or various projects concurrently, without internal conflict or disarray.

Recommendations for Partnership. Given the interviews, focus groups, participant observation which included mediating meetings and leading trainings for SPN and Asirans, I do not recommend an integrated partnership under the original terms considered.

Asirans is moving towards a cooperative organizational model, and holds their egalitarian structure proudly. SPN is a very cohesive team, with a strong hierarchy of decision-making power. While the two organizations have compatible theories of change and work in a similar field, they have different implementation styles. I see that their organizational cultures and structures are incompatible.

SPN and Asirans are motivated to remain in contact with each other, and not cut ties. It seems that the best way to 'grow up together' as SPN's general manager has said, is to stay in touch. The phrase is warm and familial, but leaves room for distinctiveness and independence. Neither organization would ever refuse an invitation to join a project or a meeting and come off as rude. However, at this time, a deep collaboration between the two organizations is not likely.

If the two organizations are interested in more than remaining in contact, I recommend that the terms of partnership be re-imagined. The two organizations would need to find a way to open up with a little more trust in each other. They need to think creatively about the value of their organization, and the value of their potential partner. From there I recommend that the two organizations draft up terms of partnership that are specific. At this time, it does not seem like either organization is interested in negotiating specific terms of partnership.

CONCLUSION

While there are many frameworks for assessing organizational capacity, there is no one-size-fits-all to increase the capacity of a young organization. What we have are a number of themes and frameworks with which we can measure an organization, and endeavor to look at that organization holistically. In this paper I strove to be balanced and

unassuming in presenting the particular situations of Asirans Community Counseling Center and Sekou Pou Nanm-yo. Asirans has a strong mission and organizational culture, which is compensating for a lack of financing or organizational processes. SPN has experience working on several research/implementation projects, and strong team unity, but does not have a clear plan for projects, or project financing for the future. They are operating in the context of Haiti – a nation of proud and hard won independence, but many hardships. Lack infrastructure and political instability make business operations challenging. Yet clients and staff members are exceptionally patient and passionate, valuing the mental health interventions offered by SPN and by Asirans.

By recommending interventions for these two small grassroots international NGOS, I suggest that SPN and Asirans are each capable of increasing their organizational capacity and can engage in further self evaluation to continue to strengthen their areas of weakness. SPN has already persevered the chaos and trauma that is the aftermath of a major earthquake, and both organizations have withstood months of operation without pay. They have significant resiliency driven by personally held belief in the impact of the services that they offer. These organizations can implement interventions to strengthen their project and financial income, as well as their internal stability – be it through infrastructure, human resources, or organizational processes etc. SPN and Asirans can each be models of how to grow the capacity a small NGO in the Haitian context, and in the international context of small grassroots NGOs motivated to make a positive difference in their community.

APPENDIX

Asirans May/June 2015	MISSION: A clearly articulated mission statement which all understand and to whichthey are committed.	HUMAN RESOURCES: Service Providers are committed, motivated, skilled and understand their roles and responsabilities	PROGRAM: Services are appropriate and responsive to needs and chatacteristcs of beneficiaries.	FINANCE: Organization can mobilize and manage sufficient financial resources to meet its goals over the long term.
PLANNING: The organixation undertakes regular processes which guide program implementation and the measurement of achievements	Annual report includes statement of Mission and Vision.	Weekly staff meetings allow for participatory learning and decision making.	Program plans articulated in the annual review.	Limited financial resources are thoughtfully dispersed. Financial plans for the future are a part of the annual report.
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: The institution is configured well to achieve its vision and carry out its programs.	The goal of Haitian sustanability is pursued in weekly staff meeting where everyone can contribute. Asirans is under the legal status of SPN.	Weekly staff meetings affirm roles and responsabilities for the coming week.	Three comlimentary programs play to the strengths of Asirans staff, and to the mission of the organization.	There is a plan for how resources are dispersed.
SYSTEMS: The administrative, financial and monitoring mechanisms organized permit efficient implementation & monitoring of activities.	Annual review presents opportunity for periodic organizational analysis and review of mission.	As of yet, personnel policy is not implemented for volunteer staff.	As of yet, monitoring and evaluation of impact is anecdotal.	Essential bookkeeping and financial planning implemented.
LINKAGES: The organization established and develops working relationships with other organizations	Key partnership with SPN provides legal status and client referrals.	Asirans is part of a community network, working in various hosptials, schools, as well as in homes.	Referrals to counseling program from SPN, as well as others in the community familiar with the organization. Continual networking with others interested pyschology in Haiti.	Pursuit of multiple funding options including private donors, social media campaigns, and corporate grants.
BOARD: The organization has an unpaid Board with clear roles & responsabilities	Could advocate for Asirans's mission?	could be composed of unpaid volunteers, men and women, Haitian and American??	Could work on policy formulation?	Could work on fundraising?
PARTICIPATION: The organization works with local government and participants to create a local ownership of its activities.	Participants articulate psychological relief - fulfillment of the mission.	Clients trust staff and see them as partners.	Certificate Program participants drawn in by their involvement with other Asirans programs.	Some financial contributions from clients.

Key

- Area of strength
- Area of weakness
- Neither strength nor weakness

Figure 4 Asirans ICAF - Institutional Capacity Framework (CARE USA 1997).

Sekou Pou Nanm-yo May/June 2015	MISSION: A clearly articulated mission statement which all understand and to whichthey are committed.	HUMAN RESOURCES: Service Providers are committed, motivated, skilled and understand their roles and responsabilities	PROGRAM: Services are appropriate and responsive to needs and chatacteristcs of beneficiaries.	FINANCE: Organization can mobilize and manage sufficient financial resources to meet its goals over the long term.
PLANNING: The organixation undertakes regular processes which guide program implementation and the measurement of achievements	Mission articulated in Introductory letter, and in Status de l'organisation (renewed every 2 years).	As of yet, individual work plans or performance review systems do not exist. Planning process is not conducted by manager alone.	Research includes proposals and work plans.	Financial plans are thoughtfully considered in project proposals.
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: The institution is configured well to achieve its vision and carry out its programs.	SPN has an articulated governance and has legal recognition from the Haitian government.	Job descriptions exist for the different titles of eam members.	Legal status appropraite to the type of services provided.	Legal status permits SPN to capture necessary financial resources. Financial structure has been tested through various funded projects.
SYSTEMS: The administrative, financial and monitoring mechanisms organized permit efficient implementation & monitoring of activities.	Legally required renewal of status every two years provides an opportunity for organizational analysis and review of mission.	Personnel are currently handled at manager discretion. There may be opportunity to implement personnel policy.	Research includes monitoring and evaluation of work (?).	Fininical management is currently handled at the discretion of the administrator.
LINKAGES: The organization established and develops working relationships with other organizations	Linkage with Asirans offers clinical services that compliment the work of SPN.	Organization has broad base of support in community.	Relationship with Asirans permits better service to beneficiaries and referrals.	Relationship exists with the government (regarding legal status), and with previous research institutions.
BOARD: The organization has an unpaid Board with clear roles & responsabilities	Could advocate for SPN's mission?	Could be composed of unpaid volunteers, men and women, Haitian and American??	Could work on policy formulation?	Could work on fundraising?
PARTICIPATION: The organization works with local government and participants to create a local ownership of its activities.	Participants display trust in SPN.	Communities see SPN staff as partners.	Staff are engaged in project design, monitoring and evaluation.	Participants continue using what they have learned after project ends.

Key

- Area of strength
- Area of weakness
- Neither strength nor weakness

Figure 5 SPN ICAF - Insitiutional Capacity Framework (CARE USA 1997).

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

External environment
- Administrative and legal
- Sociocultural
  - Technological
    - Stakeholder
    - Economic
    - Political

Organizational performance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Relevance
- Financial viability

Organizational motivation
- History
  - Mission
    - Culture
      - Incentives or rewards

Organizational capacity
- Strategic leadership
- Human resources
- Financial management
- Organizational processes
- Program management
  - Infrastructure
    - Interinstitutional linkages

Figure 6 Lusthaus, Charles. Assesing organizational Capacity 2002.

NEG MAWON

Figure 7 Photo credit Georgianne Nienbar 2015.

Figure 8 Photo credit Adam Buhler 2015.

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