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The Cultural Competence of Response & Recovery Workers in Post-Earthquake Haiti

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Miami, Florida

THE CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF RESPONSE & RECOVERY WORKERS IN
POST-EARTHQUAKE HAITI

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
PUBLIC AFFAIRS
by
Christa L. Remington

2017

To: Dean John F. Stack, Jr.
Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs

This dissertation, written by Christa L. Remington, and entitled
The Cultural Competence of Response & Recovery Workers in Post-Earthquake Haiti,
having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for
judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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Date of Defense: June 28, 2017

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Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2017

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my sister, Dr. Charity R. Remington, who earned the first doctorate in our family history and who continually inspires me, through her example, to strive for excellence both academically and personally. Without her steadfast support and encouragement, I would not have been able to achieve this milestone.

This dissertation is also dedicated to the response and recovery workers who participated in my study and the people of Haiti. To the response and recovery workers, who commit their lives to serving those affected by disasters and bringing hope to people on their ‘worst day.’ To the people of Haiti, who have stayed strong through countless disasters and hardships, and who have welcomed me as family over the past fifteen years. My hope is that, through this research, their voices will be heard.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

THE CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF RESPONSE & RECOVERY WORKERS IN
POST-EARTHQUAKE HAITI

by

Christa L. Remington

Florida International University, 2017

Miami, Florida

Professor Meredith Newman, Co-Major Professor

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Cultural competence is critical to public service, yet it is often ignored and underutilized, especially in post-disaster response and recovery. The current literature on cultural competence and frameworks developed by the private sector do not fully consider the complexities of a post-disaster public service context. This project explores the importance of cultural competence in post-disaster response and recovery, identifies effective training methods and organizational policies which may present barriers to competence acquisition, and proposes a new theoretical framework by which to assess cultural competence in international response and recovery work.

This study used focus groups with Haitian beneficiaries (n=7), in-depth interviews with response and recovery workers (n=50), close ended surveys with both groups (n=226), observation, and a review of secondary sources (e.g. job announcements, training manuals) to explore cultural competence from the perspectives of international response and recovery workers, their agencies, and Haitian beneficiaries after the January 2010 Haitian earthquake.

The analysis revealed that although 88% of participating aid workers identified cultural competence (CC) as critical to program effectiveness, 42% had no training before or during deployment. An analysis of the job announcements revealed that only 37% of agencies required cultural competencies. While aid workers and beneficiaries identified experiential strategies (e.g. immersion, mentoring) as critical to cultural competence acquisition, organizational policies (e.g. curfews, restrictions on travel) were often found to be at odds with these methods and more than 1/3 of participating aid workers felt that these policies were a barrier to cultural competency. Findings from this study may help aid workers better understand the importance of cultural competence and how it can improve the effectiveness of aid programs, and provide ways in which aid agencies can enhance cultural competence acquisition by their employees.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CC	Cultural Competence
CK	Cultural Knowledge
EL	Emotional Labor
ES	Emotive Skills
EX	Expertise
FIU	Florida International University
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IRB	Institutional Review Board
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
NIH	National Institutes of Health
PA	Personal Attributes
PAP	Port-au-Prince
UN	United Nations

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

On January 12, shortly before 5:00 PM, a 7.0 earthquake shook the Caribbean nation of Haiti, leveling 50% of the buildings in the capital city of Port Au Prince (PAHO 2012). Homes, hospitals, and schools collapsed, displacing at least 1.6 million people, killing an estimated 230,000 and injuring countless others (OFDA/CRED 2012; World Bank 2011). Almost immediately, emergency aid groups from dozens of nations mobilized to help with search and rescue, medical care, and the disposing of the deceased. Relief groups erected base camps in soccer fields, on golf courses, and in hotels - providing food, water, and shelter to an estimated 3 million impacted Haitians (IOM 2011). Yet when the response phase finally ended, the work was just beginning for the thousands of recovery workers tasked with helping to rebuild a devastated nation.

In the succeeding months, as international NGOs (non-governmental organizations) began their post-earthquake relief efforts, Haitian resentment towards the international community grew steadily. This anger was fueled by a widespread perception that aid organizations were profiting off the almost \$10 billion pledged for Haiti's recovery, while the suffering of the majority of earthquake victims remained unchanged. Much of this anti-NGO resentment was spawned from pervasive frustrations over inadequate water and sanitation in the camps, and the quickly deteriorating temporary shelters that housed those made homeless by the disaster. These cramped and squalid conditions stood in stark contrast to those of many international aid workers who often lived in spacious homes in the mountains, shopped at American-style grocery stores and

spent their days off at restaurants and beach resorts. While such organizational policies were intended to protect aid workers and to ensure mental and physical rest for those in intense, high-stress service jobs, such contrasting lifestyles did little to facilitate trust between aid organizations and those they served. Spending their workdays in compounds behind high walls or in air-conditioned vehicles, a large number of aid workers were isolated from the general Haitian population and had little exposure to Haitian culture. Strict organizational regulations, curfews, and a lack of cultural skills limited the interaction between aid workers and those they were supposed to be helping.

This segregation heightened suspicions and misconceptions about the purpose and intentions of aid work, leading to a generalized frustration among the majority of beneficiaries and the codifying of already deeply entrenched stereotypes about aid workers and their motives. Haiti's historic relationship with NGOs has been a tumultuous one, often viewed as symbolic of the nation's history of both internal and external oppression. Already known as the *Republic of NGOs* before the earthquake, Haiti now received an unprecedented amount of international attention (Maguire 2008; Buss and Gardner 2005). Both organizations and individuals arrived to find little to no direction of aid, NGO coordination, or governmental oversight (Farmer 2011). When ten American aid workers were imprisoned for attempting to illegally take 33 Haitian children across the border to an orphanage in the Dominican Republic, the situation destabilized even further and fears of mass child trafficking grew (Addley 2010; Padgett and Gosh 2010).

While in the immediate aftermath of the quake, positive feelings ran high, such sentiments became moderated as time went on and the realities of long-term suffering became evident. In a 2010 opinion survey funded by OXFAM, more than 91% of

Haitians confessed to feeling unfavorable toward the long-term NGO sector, often rating it as inefficient or highly ineffective (Yves Pierre 2010).

In the fall of 2010, the already volatile relationship between Haitians and NGOs took on another layer of complexity as cholera spread rapidly through Haiti's Central Plateau. More than 650,000 people fell ill and well over 8,000 lost their lives (PAHO 2012). Cholera's rapid spread was like a spark igniting an already dry forest, fueling fear and frustration, and further compounding the challenges of those involved in recovery efforts. In the early days of the epidemic, rumors spread that cholera was merely an NGO invention, a fundraising ploy by aid groups to secure more money for their organizations (Wagner 2010). As the death toll climbed, rumor and suspicion gave way to widespread misinformation which greatly hindered relief efforts. News that cholera was introduced by way of troops at the UN Nepalese base resulted in violent anti-UN riots with multiple injuries, looting, and the subsequent burning of a World Food Programme warehouse (Valbrun 2012).

Such suspicion and antagonism made an already highly charged post-disaster context all the more volatile and many aid workers began to feel increasingly unwelcome among the people they had come to serve. This atmosphere of antagonism could even be physically seen in the anti-NGO graffiti on public walls around the capital city and in NGO run camps. One wall was painted with the names of 13 NGOs crossed out in red and labeled as "*Tout Komplis Nan Mizè Nou.*" "*All complicit in our misery*" (Valbrun 2012). Already insular aid organizations responded to such hostility by tightening curfews, increasing security measures, and limiting even further their workers' already restricted contact with the Haitian public.

International disaster response and recovery involves direct interaction with beneficiaries and is inherently cross-cultural. Research by Gudykunst and Kim (2003) suggests that all cross-cultural scenarios are, by their very nature, instantly fraught with uncertainty and anxiety. In disaster scenarios, this anxiety is heightened as the aid worker must be able to communicate effectively while navigating serious and often life altering subjects in unfamiliar societal and cultural norms. The sustained effort of cultivating trust and communicating comfort and understanding within an unfamiliar culture easily leads to misunderstandings, heightened suspicions, and reduced program effectiveness (Ditzler et al 2009; Grandey 2003; Paton 1996).

Whether before deployment or in the field, the majority of aid workers believe that cultural competence is a critical dimension of their work, yet few receive any cross cultural training. This dissertation examines this gap between the “experiential” perspective of the aid worker and that of the sending agency, providing insight into Haiti’s complex context and to the intercultural challenges in which its NGO sector is embedded.

1.2 Literature Overview

Cultural competence can be broadly defined as the behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enable effective communication between various racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups (National Center for Cultural Competence 2001). When used effectively, it facilitates compromise and friendship among coworkers and can improve trust, cooperation, and satisfaction with those being served. While existing frameworks, such as that of Hall (1976) and Rosen (2000), help to define cultural competence and provide methods for its evaluation, they offer little insight into the role that cultural

competence plays in post-disaster response and recovery or what hinders and enables its acquisition. They also, as a rule, fail to include the critical emotive components of cross cultural competence, such as emotional labor. Additionally, the existing frameworks do not fully integrate with the complex nature of the post-disaster context. Thus, this dissertation proposes a new framework for assessing cultural competence in post-disaster specific scenarios.

The proposed framework is comprised of four components: cultural knowledge, personal attributes, emotive skills, and expertise. *Cultural knowledge* includes context specific knowledge, such as language, cultural appropriateness, cultural behaviors, and the history of the host culture. *Personal attributes* describe the internal attitudes and mindset that are needed to put cultural competence into practice. This includes self-awareness, the ability to recognize one's own biases and stereotypes, compassion, empathy, the ability to cultivate trust, adaptability, and the ability to synthesize each of these into an intercultural attitude of respect. *Emotive skills* include the ability to manage one's own and others' emotions and to meet organizational expectations. This comprises the ability to communicate compassion, emotional labor, emotional intelligence, suppression, and acting. The final component, *expertise* refers to experience and job-specific skills required to effectively function in a cross-cultural response or recovery job, such as technical skills and international context-specific skills.

Missing from most models of cross-cultural competence are the emotive components of intercultural communication, such as emotional intelligence and emotional labor. Emotional labor, which refers to managing personal emotions to reflect organizational expectations through either the display of appropriate emotions or the

suppression of inappropriate ones (Hochschild 1983). Although often unrecognized, emotional labor is central to most public service and emergency management jobs. Like cultural competence, it is correlated with increased organizational productivity and client satisfaction. It also has profound implications for the public servant, by increasing job satisfaction and mitigating the negative impacts of post-disaster work (Grandey 2001; Hsieh and Guy 2009; Meier, Mastracci and Wilson 2006).

The performance of emotional labor depends heavily on the worker's ability to effectively sense the emotional state of the other. Subtle cues, expressions, and tones of voice which are taken for granted in one's own culture, may have vastly different meanings cross-culturally. In order to correctly sense, a correct understanding of one's own culture and the ability to decipher the beneficiary's culture are necessary. The art of recognizing, honoring and valuing similarities and differences between cultures is central to emotive sensing. Emotional labor also depends heavily on the context in which it is performed and what is considered culturally appropriate. Within multi-cultural settings, the concept of *appropriate* may vary greatly and are often bound by religious traditions, historic gender roles, and other unique societal norms. An inaccurate or incomplete understanding of these customs and norms may result in incorrect emotional labor, thereby missing out on its benefits or causing harm to the relationship and to the organization as a whole.

The lack of consideration for emotional labor in public administration is due, in part, to the view that cultural variations in public service delivery are invisible, illegitimate, and negative (Adler 1991). Public administration has a long history of embracing and encouraging the impersonal public servant. Traditional public

administration advocated for a rational, formal, and impersonal bureaucracy in an effort to place distance between the individual's norms, values, and emotions and their policy choices in the positivist world of administrative efficiency, effectiveness, and legitimacy. Unfortunately, this has left little room for individual values and emotions that govern the discretion required from a public servant (Adler, 1991; Fletcher 1999; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Simon 1947; Weber 1946).

Yet, in recent years, the postmodern approach and the new public service dialogue has rejected this traditional method by advocating for an emphasis on the humanity of public service and recognizing the importance of emotions (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Fox and Miller 1996; Morris and Feldman 1997; Stivers 2008). The management of emotions at work, or emotional labor, has gained recognition in public service for increasing operational productivity and client satisfaction, reducing turnover, and increasing employee satisfaction. As recognized by Hsieh, Yang and Fu (2012), values, emotions, and perspectives play a critical role in the performance of public service. These authors note that, "when public service delivery requires face-to-face or voice-to-voice exchanges between workers and citizens, successful performance of this work relies on how workers detect the affective state of the citizens, adjust their own affective state, and exhibit work-appropriate emotive behaviors (p. 241)".

The topic of cultural competence in public administration has been slowly emerging over the past decade, but has yet to become an integrated and standard component in public administration or emergency management. Although cross-cultural interactions are an integral part of disaster response and recovery, the literature remains largely silent on the subject (Galbraith 2000; McCall and Hollenbeck 2002; Zweifel

2003). Over the past 40 years, research from fields such as business management and social work have shown that cultural competence is of immense significance in cross-cultural interactions, but to date, has yet to be fully integrated into public service (Applewhite 1998; Northouse 2007). While best practices and proven cross-cultural assessments are fairly common within private sector domains, perhaps surprisingly, the public sector has largely ignored the critical role that cultural competence plays in public service. This is unfortunate, for research agrees that cultural competence is critical to all cross-cultural communication and to program and organizational effectiveness in the international context (Kohls and Knight 2004; Schein 1992; Storti 2007).

This dissertation brings the conception of cultural knowledge as an essential modifier into public sector research. In this framework, cultural knowledge serves as a modifier for the other cross-cultural competencies: personal attributes, emotive skills, and expertise, without which cultural competence is not possible.

1.3 Research Questions & Findings

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

Q1. Which skills/traits are necessary for aid workers to be culturally competent in disaster response and recovery?

The purpose of this question was to increase the understanding of the connection between cultural competence and post disaster aid work and to identify cultural competencies that are critical to job performance. It also generated insight into differences between the perceptions of agencies, aid workers, and beneficiaries in terms of the cultural competencies that are needed to work in disaster response and recovery.

The data revealed a profound disconnect in perspectives, with sending agencies primarily focused on hiring aid workers based on expertise and experience, aid workers believing that personal attributes are of prime importance, and beneficiaries looking for a balance of personal attributes, cultural knowledge, and expertise. Additionally, this study proposes a new framework for analyzing and conceptualizing cross cultural competence. This framework will be discussed in detail in chapter three.

Q2. What are the factors that hinder or enable aid workers to acquire cross-cultural competencies? This question examines a number of organizational factors that hinder (i.e., curfew restrictions) or enable (i.e., training) response and recovery workers in the acquisition of the cross-cultural competencies they need to work in post-disaster contexts. In the close-ended survey that provided key data for this study, 88% of aid workers surveyed described cultural competence as a critical dimension of their work, yet 42% did not receive any cross-cultural training at all, whether before deployment or in the field. This study found that, not only was the lack of formal training and mentorship a barrier to acquiring cross-cultural competencies, but other barriers exist, as well, including organizational policies that separate aid workers from beneficiaries, such as curfews, restricted zones, and the refusal to allow Haitian friends to visit NGO bases.

Q3. How can response and recovery agencies facilitate the acquisition of cultural competencies that are needed in disaster response and recovery?

The third question seeks to identify the most successful training methods and organizational strategies which cultivate intercultural skills and establishes a set of best practices to train and prepare culturally competent aid workers for post-disaster work, including a combination of formal classes, mentoring, and immersion in the field and

reconsidering policies and regulations that isolate aid workers from those they are trying to help.

1.4 Preliminary Research

The data collected for this dissertation builds upon a prior project funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) entitled *Emotional Labor after the Haitian Earthquake: Haitian and International Disaster Relief and Early Recovery Workers in the Rubble* from September 2010-June 2013 (Principal Investigator: N. Emel Ganapati). This study was part of the Haiti Initiative, a larger project undertaken by Florida International University and the University of Miami (Principal Investigator: Mario De La Rosa) with approval from the country level National Ethics Committee in Haiti. This project used in-depth interviews, close ended surveys, observation, and a review of secondary sources to explore the challenges of both Haitian and international response and recovery workers after the January 2010 Haitian earthquake. As a graduate student, I was recruited to be part of a team of researchers from Florida International University and Arkansas State University. Due to my previous experience in Haiti and knowledge of the culture and language, I conducted the majority of the in-depth interviews and observations and collected the surveys both in Haiti and in the United States.

The NIH study established the centrality of emotional labor in disaster response and recovery and provided us with insights into the skills required in the field. It also generated new questions and highlighted the need to know more about cultural competence, its components, and how it is acquired. This dissertation aims to answer these questions and builds upon data collected through the NIH study.

This dissertation focused on the post-earthquake context of Haiti. It had a qualitative research design and utilized focus groups with Haitian beneficiaries, in-depth interviews with response and recovery workers, participant observation, review of secondary sources (e.g. training materials), and a survey. These methods provided a wealth of data on the importance of cross-cultural competence in post disaster work and on the unique perceptions and perspectives of aid workers, agencies, and beneficiaries. Each of these methods will be discussed in further detail in chapter two.

Qualitative methods were appropriate for this project because cultural competence is subjective to the individual and cannot be captured solely by numbers (Griekspoor & Sondorp 2001). Additionally, observing the post-disaster context, work, and living conditions of the aid workers added an important dimension to the data and enhanced the understanding of cultural competence, its importance, and how it is acquired.

The nation of Haiti was uniquely suited for this study for a number of reasons. Its long history with foreign aid, NGOs, and aid workers reaches back to the mid 1940's when the Franklin Roosevelt administration began providing the nation's first foreign aid. Since then, many hundreds of billions of dollars have passed through the nation's NGO sector, including \$13.5 billion just in the wake of the 2010 disaster (Valbrun 2012). Even before the quake triggered an NGO influx, Haiti was already home to more than 9,000 international NGOs from countries around the world. Additionally, the nation's proximity to both the United States and South America ensured that response and recovery workers were able to arrive on the scene within hours of the disaster. Because of this, the potential pool of participants was larger and deeper than in many other countries and was particularly diverse.

1.5 Layout of the Dissertation

This study explores the nature of cultural competence and specifically seeks to identify and communicate the cross-cultural competencies necessary for effective international response and recovery work. The analysis of its data has yielded a variety of implications, the discussion of which takes place in six chapters. Each chapter will have a different focus and will include a discussion of the literature pertinent to that focus. Chapter 2 reviews the data collection and the analysis methods used for this study, as well as the prior NIH study, which will be expanded upon later, on which this dissertation is built. Chapter 3 explores existing literature on cultural competence and proposes a new cultural competence framework specific to the post-disaster context based on the data collected for this study. Chapter 4 uses data from in-depth interviews, focus groups, and secondary sources to compare and contrast the perspectives of aid workers, their agencies, and the beneficiaries they serve. This chapter highlights the centrality of cultural competence to program effectiveness and identifies the disconnect between the agency perspective and that of the aid workers and beneficiaries. Chapter 5 reveals the pervasive lack of organizationally-directed training and discusses how aid workers acquire cross-cultural skills, mainly through time spent in the field, having relationships/friendships with the community, and through mentorship. It also identifies organizational barriers to cultural competence acquisition. Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter that proposes implications of this study for aid workers and provides recommendations for agencies seeking to better equip their employees. It also discusses the study's significance, strengths and limitations, and suggests avenues of future research.

Taken as a whole, the following chapters contribute significantly to the existing literature on cultural competence and post-disaster response and recovery and proposes a new framework for understanding the relationship between cultural knowledge and the other components of cross cultural competence. It also has important implications for aid organizations and aid workers alike. This dissertation gives a rarely-heard voice to the international aid workers and the Haitian beneficiaries. Their perspectives, experiences, and wisdom have the potential to increase the trust between aid workers and beneficiaries, reduce the negative impact of aid work on public servants, and increase our understanding of how cultural competence can make aid programs more equitable and effective.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The previous NIH study and the gaps in the literature prompted further investigation into cultural competence in the unique context of post-disaster response and recovery. Using in-depth interviews with international aid workers, focus groups with Haitian beneficiaries, content analysis, and close ended surveys, this dissertation explored cultural competence from the perspectives of the aid worker, aid agency, and Haitian beneficiary. It aimed to explore the importance of cultural competence in post-disaster response and recovery, identify effective cultural competence training methods and assess organizational policies which may present barriers to competence acquisition. The following chapter will discuss why Haiti was chosen as a case study, explain each method and why it was used, and discuss challenges I faced during field work and how they were addressed.

2.1 Rationale for Study Design

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Haiti is a good case study when looking at post-disaster response and recovery work and aid workers for multiple reasons. First, the 2010 earthquake was one of the deadliest earthquakes in recorded history, claiming over 200,000 lives and causing more than 7.8 billion dollars in infrastructure damage (World Bank 2010). Due to widespread poverty, much of the infrastructure which would have assisted in the recovery of the country was non-existent or severely underdeveloped. In response, thousands of aid workers arrived to work in multiple areas of response and recovery (housing, medical care, food distribution etc.) Second, more than 15% of the

country's population was displaced by the disaster and formed new communities in makeshift tents and shelters (World Bank 2010). Aid organizations were tasked with the managing of these communities and providing security, sanitation, and eventual transition to permanent homes. This led to a high level of interaction between international aid workers, Haitian aid workers, and the Haitian beneficiaries. Third, through decades of foreign humanitarian assistance, Haitians have formed often strong opinions and expectations about aid workers, their cultural competence, and their level of trust.

Because cultural competence and its components are subjective to the individual and cannot be captured solely by numbers, the research questions could only be answered by a qualitative study. Additionally, observing the post-disaster context, work and living conditions of the aid workers added an important dimension to the data and enhance the understanding of cultural competence, its importance, and how it is acquired. For the dissertation data collection, I was the sole researcher, conducting all field work myself both in Haiti and via the Internet for those in the U.S. or stationed abroad.

The team for the prior NIH study was made up of researchers from multiple institutions both in the United States and in Haiti. All members had previous experience conducting international post disaster research (Turkey, Haiti) and some were either Haitian or Haitian American. As discussed in the previous chapter, I have over 15 years of experience working in Haiti which enhanced my ability to conduct quality field work, communicate with participants (both international and Haitian), and to understand the context of this study. My familiarity with the Haitian context and my longevity as an aid worker helped me build rapport with both Haitian beneficiaries and aid workers. During my dissertation, a Haitian-American team member and a non-Haitian team member

assisted in the design of my instruments and gave extensive feedback on my initial findings. Having feedback from researchers both inside and outside the cultural context helped identify and mitigate any bias on my part (Yin 2009, p.72).

At the onset of both of these studies, approval was obtained from Florida International University's Institutional Review Board. After that, international agencies that responded in the aftermath of the earthquake and were still working in Haiti on the recovery were identified. Agencies were selected from a wide range of sectors (e.g. search and rescue, medical care, shelter provision). For both studies, participants came from 44 agencies from both the response and recovery phases. Table 2a below shows a selection of the main agencies which participated, a full list of agencies can be found in the appendix. To recruit participants, we first contacted the relevant authorities (e.g., Country Director, Public Information Officer) to obtain permission to conduct the interviews. If necessary, these authorities gained the final approval from their agency headquarters (e.g., New York, Geneva). For those deployed in Haiti, limited Internet access, unavailable contact information, and the hectic work load of aid workers hindered my ability to gain access to some agencies in advance. Due to slow response times, approval was often gained while in the field by going to the organization's field office and requesting access in person.

Table 2a Selected Participating Agencies

Action Against Hunger International (ACF)	Lifeline International
American Refugee Committee	Mission of Hope Haiti
Catholic Relief Services	Project Medishare
International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	Samaritan's Purse
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	U.S. Army (Southcom)
JP/Haitian Relief Organization	World Vision International

During the field work, I stayed with a small organization that I am affiliated with about 20 miles north of the capital city of Port au Prince. This organization provides housing for orphans, many who lost their parents in the 2010 earthquake. Since thousands of Haitians who lost their homes in the earthquake resettled in this region, these accommodations provided a central location from which I could travel each day. For the dissertation data collection, I made six trips between March 2014 and October 2016, ranging from one to three weeks, totaling more than three months.

2.2 Data Collection Methods

Literature review: Prior to designing my study, I conducted a qualitative review of the existing literature on cultural competence in post-disaster response and recovery using the FIU library and Nvivo. In addition to helping me choose my research design and creating my instruments, I later combined this analysis with the collected data to formulate the framework proposed in this dissertation. This framework and a more in-depth discussion of how I conducted the literature review analysis is explained in chapter 3.

Focus groups: At the onset of the study, seven focus groups were conducted with Haitian beneficiaries of international NGOs in order to better understand the cultural competencies that are expected of aid workers in post-disaster contexts (Question 1). This method was used because it allowed for beneficiaries to express their thoughts and perceptions toward aid workers on topics relating to cultural competence (e.g. language skills, cultural knowledge), and provide examples of their interactions.

Each of these focus groups had six to ten participants (56 total) and targeted Haitian beneficiaries at different levels of recovery, specifically those who live in tent camps (i.e., the JP/HRO camp), transitional/temporary shelters (i.e., those constructed by Samaritan's Purse), and permanent housing (i.e., those constructed by Mission of Hope). Since frustrations over a lack of development are common in Haiti, I chose camps at different levels of recovery in order to have diversity of opinion toward aid workers. The camps selected for participation did not exist prior to the 2010 earthquake and consisted mainly of those who lived near the epicenter of the earthquake and lost their homes. These camps were between five and 25 miles from the capital city, Port-Au-Prince. Table 2b shows the breakdown of the participants at each location, the gender breakdown, and the types of housing in that community.

Table 2b Focus Group Participants

	Total	Male	Female	Tent	Temporary Shelter	Permanent Home	Other
Group 1	8	5	3	1	6	0	1
Group 2	7	2	5	2	5	0	0
Group 3	10	6	4	1	3	5	1
Group 4	8	5	3	0	0	7	1
Group 5	9	6	3	0	7	2	0
Group 6	8	5	3	6	2	0	0
Group 7	6	2	4	1	3	2	0
Total	56	31	25	11	26	16	3
Percent		55.4%	44.6%	19.6%	46.4%	28.6%	5.4%

The focus group participants were recruited through community gatekeepers (e.g. local community leaders, pastors, etc.), which were identified via connections made during previous field work and social networks gained from my NGO work. The day before the focus group, I would visit the gatekeepers to explain the purpose of the research and to ask for their help in identifying the location and participants. Participants were selected based on their residence in that community and their experience with aid organizations during the earthquake response and recovery. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 66 and included 25 females and 31 males and represented diverse religious and educational backgrounds. The focus groups were conducted in common meeting areas in the communities where the participants lived (e.g. churches, community pavilions).

Prior to the focus groups, participating individuals were briefed on the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of their responses, and their rights as a participant. They were also informed that they would receive no benefit or penalty from their participation. All questions were asked in English by me, and then translated into Haitian Creole by a bilingual moderator, who then simultaneously translated the responses into English. Participants were asked to discuss the topics of cultural competence amongst NGO workers and the perceptions of the Haitian beneficiaries toward the international aid workers. The duration of the focus groups ranged from 45 minutes to two hours, with the average session lasting one hour and a half. Focus groups were audio recorded with the informed consent and permission of participants and later transcribed word-for-word. I also took notes during the focus groups which were later transcribed. These notes helped

me record elements such as body language and the dynamic between participants that would not have been captured by the audio recording.

After the focus groups, participants filled out a survey which included demographic information, the length of time they lived in the community, their housing situation, and questions about their experience with aid workers. They were asked to rank aid workers job performance on several indicators such as job performance, cultural competence, and the ability to show care using a four-point scale (very good, good, poor, very poor).

In depth interviews: In order to understand the traits and skills necessary to become culturally competent in post-disaster work and the factors that hinder or enable acquisition of cultural competencies, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with aid workers stationed in Haiti (total 50), 11 of which were follow up interviews with study participants of the earlier NIH study.

To identify participants, several strategies were used, including a detailed search in websites of the targeted agencies, contacting the spokespersons of the agencies, and requesting referrals from the participants of the earlier NIH study. The sample was then expanded through snowball sampling. The sample for this group was 50 participants and concluded when theoretical saturation was reached. Many of these agencies had participated in the prior NIH study and expressed their interest in collaborating with FIU researchers in the future. Table 2c shows the number of interviews collected and analyzed as a part of the prior NIH funded study (n=85) and the number of additional interviews conducted solely for this dissertation (n=50).

Table 2c Aid Worker Interviews (Total 135)

	Male	Female	Haitian	International	Response	Recovery
NIH	57	28	44	41	56	29
Dissertation	22	28	2	48	0	50
Total	79	56	46	89	56	79
Percent	58.5%	41.5%	34%	65.9%	41.5%	58.5%

Interviews were conducted at locations convenient to the participants (e.g. agency offices, local cafes). For those who had already returned from deployment, interviews were conducted via telephone or Skype. The interview guides were developed based on the current body of literature and the themes discussed during the interviews in the NIH study. The instrument focused on the aid worker's perspectives on the value of cultural competence and emotional labor, the training they received from their organization, the most effective way to acquire these competencies, and common barriers to skill acquisition at a personal and organizational level. The interviews were conducted in English and audio-recorded for transcription with the informed consent of participants. They lasted about an hour, on average, and were transcribed verbatim.

In addition to these interviews, the study also analyzed data from interviews conducted with international and Haitian response and recovery workers as part of the earlier NIH study (total 85). Although the focus of these earlier interviews was not on cultural competencies per se, several study participants highlighted the importance of culture and the development of cultural skills in post-disaster contexts.

Participant Site Observation: In order to gain a better understanding of the level of interaction between aid workers and beneficiaries and the context in which aid workers lived and performed their duties, I used observation and participant observation to gather

empirical data and insight into the cultural competencies of response and recovery workers. Observation occurred at 11 locations where aid workers were present, such as agency operations bases in Haiti, offices, and internally displaced person (IDP) camps to observe the intercultural context of aid work.

Depending on factors such as the level of aid worker presence, general atmosphere, and what types of activities were taking place (e.g. food distribution or medical clinics). While most of the time I was a complete observer, occasionally I adjusted my role to that of a participant observer in order to mitigate the chance of my presence impacting the findings. For example, in one location, food was being distributed to beneficiaries. Because the aid workers were occupied, I participated in the distribution in order to be near to the action and to not stand out. I recorded empirical observations and my interpretations through field notes (either during the observation or immediately following the event). These observations enriched the data and offered an added dimension to the research by providing contextual insight into how response and recovery workers worked, lived, and used their intercultural skills in interactions with beneficiaries.

Review of Secondary Sources: During the NIH study, many participants suggested that organizational regulations (e.g., curfew restrictions specified in work contracts) limited development of cultural competencies by putting barriers between aid workers and the local population. To confirm this finding and identify additional factors that may limit or enhance acquisition of cultural competencies, I reviewed the content of additional secondary sources. Sources were identified using online data bases or obtained from interview participants and included training manuals, organizational rules and

regulations, social media forums, and news pieces (e.g. The Miami Herald), among others (see Table 2d). I also reviewed job announcements (total 146) for response and recovery workers to be deployed to Haiti found on agency websites and other online job networks (e.g. indeed.com). These materials allowed me to see which skills and competencies were most used in training, valued, and recruited for by the aid agencies and was later compared to the skills and competencies identified as most valuable by the aid workers and the Haitian beneficiaries.

Table 2d Secondary Source Materials

Job Announcements	146
Training Manuals	17
Organizational Rules	4
News Articles	33
Social Media Posts	46

Close ended survey: To supplement the in-depth interviews and the focus groups and explore cultural competence from the perspectives of the aid workers and the Haitian beneficiaries, I conducted with international response and recovery workers involved in the Haitian earthquake (total 134) and Haitian beneficiaries (total 140). The first survey with response and recovery workers was conducted in the final stages of the research, after the in-depth interviews had been conducted. I forwarded the survey to spokespersons of international aid agencies currently based in Haiti, as well as to aid agency workers who were interviewed as part of this project and the previous NIH project for wider circulation within their agencies. The survey was available to participants through hard copy or online via the Qualtrics program and took approximately 30 minutes to complete. The survey consisted of a demographic section and 30 questions which focused on the cultural competencies and emotional labor

required in post-disaster contexts and the factors that hinder or enable the acquisition of such competencies.

The second survey with Haitian beneficiaries focused on their perception of cultural competence among aid workers and was conducted in the neighborhoods and IDP camps that are managed by international NGOs. Initially, I asked only the participants of the focus groups to fill out surveys, which consisted of a demographic section and 18 questions. It asked participants to rate community members and public figures (e.g. neighbors, local politicians) on their level of cultural competence (e.g. language skills, cultural knowledge), their behavior (e.g. listening, showing care) and the trust they had in them, in order to explore connections between perceived cultural competence and beneficiary satisfaction and cooperation.

After the focus groups, there was an overwhelming number of residents wanting to participate in the study and desiring to have their voices heard, especially in communities where there was widespread discontent toward the managing NGO. Since each focus group was limited to ten participants, the survey was also distributed to the wider community (140 total). Tables 2e and 2f provide further details on the demographics of the participants, their level of education, religion, and housing situation.

Table 2e Survey with Haitian Beneficiaries

Demographics	Total	Percent
Female	82	58.6
Male	52	41.4
Unemployed	127	92
Never Attended School	36	25.7
Primary School	51	36.4
More Than Primary School	53	37.9
Roman Catholic	52	37.4
Protestant	72	51.8
No Religion	5	3.6
Other Religion	10	7.2
18-25	25	17.9
26-35	35	25
36-45	40	28.6
46-55	22	15.7
56+	18	12.8

Table 2f Housing of Haitian Beneficiary Survey Participants

Housing	N	Percent
Tent	32	23
Temporary Structure	56	40.3
Permanent Home	48	34.5
Other	3	2.1

Reporting Back: To confirm the reliability of my data and to clarify my findings, I conducted three follow-up meetings in Haiti at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) base, the Global Headquarters compound, and via telephone (June 2012, September 2015, and October 2016). At the time, the IOM base in Haiti was the operations base for the United Nations and the Global Headquarters was a place where aid workers from multiple organizations would meet socially once a week. The meetings involved 5-10 Haitian and international NGO workers and were announced via email and word of mouth by contacts I had in the managing agency. Participants were presented

with the initial findings and asked to give feedback. On most points, they confirmed the findings and included additional insight about personality types, coping mechanisms, cultural competence, and the importance of forming community with other aid workers and with Haitian colleagues. Emotional labor was another reoccurring topic and was identified as necessary for both coping with the challenges of aid work and becoming cultural competent with beneficiaries. These meetings were audio recorded and transcribed for later analysis.

2.3 Confidentiality

As a part of the informed consent, all interviewees, survey participants, and focus group participants were briefed on the purpose of the study, their rights as a subject and the confidentiality of their responses. For interviews that took place in person, the informed consent form was signed and retained. For interviews that took place over the phone, or, in the case a participant was illiterate, verbal consent was granted. Subjects were offered a copy of the informed consent form with contact information for myself and the PI of the study.

Ensuring confidentiality was important for gaining the trust of participants and increasing the likelihood that their responses were straightforward and true. For the aid workers, confidentiality was of particular concern, as many questions explored the successes and failures of their agency in terms of recruitment, employee support, and training. Organizational policies and procedures were also often criticized as being ignorant, paternalistic, or even racist. For the beneficiaries, confidentiality was important

to allay the fear that the aid agencies would retaliate by withholding or withdrawing assistance from them or their community.

Prior to analysis, steps were taken to ensure the confidentiality of all participants. Each interviewee was assigned a number, which was used in the transcriptions in place of their name. A file containing a master list of names and contact information was stored in a separate, secured account. Contact information for both the NIH project and the dissertation study was retained for future follow-up purposes with the permission of the participants. If specific quotes were used, a broader job description was used in place of the individual's name or agency (e.g. camp manager, aid worker).

2.4 Data Analysis:

I used the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software *NVivo 11* to generate themes, organize the material, and draw comparisons between the data. Studies have shown that the usage of a qualitative data analysis software, such as NVivo, increases the validity, robustness, and thoroughness of qualitative research compared to traditional analysis methods (Davidson & Skinner 2010; Siccama & Penna 2008; Zimawe 2015).

First, focus group and interview recordings were transcribed word for word and uploaded into NVivo. The demographic information (e.g. gender, age) of each participant, the type of job (e.g. shelter, medical) and the disaster phase (e.g. early response, long-term recovery) was linked to their transcript to facilitate later analysis. Next, word frequency queries were used to identify keywords within the sections of the transcripts which pertained to the research questions. For example, queries were

cultural knowledge, emotive skills, and expertise. After reading the transcripts multiple times, these keywords were used to code the data collected from the focus groups, interviews, surveys, participant observation (i.e., field notes), and secondary sources (i.e. job announcements, training manuals). I coded entire quotes in order to capture the context of the responses. Interview questions were also coded individually. Tables 2h and 2i below represents a sample of the keywords which were used as codes. Several types of queries (word frequency, comparison diagram) were performed using NVivo 11 to look at specific data sets (e.g. aid worker only, beneficiary only). These will be further discussed in the following chapters to address the specific aims of each chapter.

Table 2h Coded Skills Categories

Personal Attributes	Cultural Knowledge	Emotive Skills	Expertise
Ability to cultivate trust	Language skills	Emotion suppression	Job specific skills
Empathy	History, religion, political knowledge	Managing others' emotions	Formal education
Ability to synthesize cultural knowledge	Understanding nonverbal communication	Emotional labor (surface and deep acting)	Years of experience
Skills self-assessment	Understanding cultural appropriateness	Ability to communicate compassion	Global business literacy
Self-awareness		Emotional Intelligence	

Table 2i Codes used for job announcements

Communicative Skills	Leadership Skills	Emotive Skills	Experience	Technical Skills
Cross-cultural communication	Adaptability	Acting	No experience	Job specific knowledge
Ability to show care	Level-headedness	Ability to remain positive	Minimum 3 years	Computer skills
Active listening	Stress management	Emotion suppression	Minimum 5 years	Certificate
Language Skills	Management experience	Detachment	Minimum 7 years	Bachelor's Degree
Excellent written and oral skills	Motivation	Ability to show selective emotion	Minimum 10 years	Master's degree or higher
French fluency	Ability to delegate	Empathy		
Haitian Creole fluency	Initiative	Ability to show hope		

2.5 Methodological Strengths & Limitations

By design, this study had several methodological strengths which contributed to the reliability and validity of the findings such as being built on a prior study, the long period of time covered by both studies (six years), the knowledge and diversity of the research team, and the usage of NVivo to manage and analyze the data (Davidson & Skinner 2010; Marshall & Rossman 2011; Siccama & Penna 2008). Additionally, my personal background in Haiti was beneficial because I was already familiar with the cultural lens, was able to navigate the country with ease, and converse with beneficiaries in their own language, I also used triangulation of multiple sources to increase the dependability of the study and I used follow-up methods (e.g. reporting back, survey) to confirm the initial findings at intervals throughout the study (2012, 2015, and 2016).

These and other strengths and some limitations of this study are further discussed in detail in the conclusion (chapter six).

2.6 Challenges

In addition to the agency access issues discussed above, there were several other challenges to data collection and analysis which had to be overcome. First, as a fragile state, Haiti's infrastructure is immensely underdeveloped. Furthermore, political and social protests are a common occurrence. This made traveling within the country difficult due to poor road conditions, blocked streets during protests, and deadlocked traffic in the capital city. Multiple times I was late arriving to my destination or had to reschedule the meeting for the next day. Aid workers and beneficiaries understood this as an inevitable part of working in Haiti and had no issue adjusting their schedule to participate.

Another challenge was illiteracy, which is as high as 80% in some areas. Due to this, I obtained verbal consent, in place of written informed consent. I also had a small team of Haitian university students which assisted participants with filling out the survey when required. Additionally, the Haitian beneficiaries who participated in the focus groups and surveys face poor living conditions, widespread hunger, and low employment rates. Sometimes, participants would deviate from focus group questions and voice their complaints about their personal situation with housing, food, or money. In order to mitigate the chance that the beneficiaries were expecting or hoping to receive some assistance by participating, I stressed multiple times before and during the focus groups that this discussion was for educational purposes only and that nothing would be given

for participation. Despite this, no participants decided to quit the focus groups and all members continued enthusiastically.

2.7 Chapter Summary

Despite being from vastly different backgrounds and circumstances, many of the aid workers and the Haitian beneficiaries felt marginalized and forgotten by those in NGO leadership and were extremely pleased to have the opportunity to share their thoughts and have their wisdom sought. Overall, both groups were more than willing to, at times, wait hours to participate and expressed a desire to both be briefed on the findings of the study and to participate in future research.

Because of my long history in Haiti, my familiarity with the culture, and my ability to speak the language, focus group participants were comfortable and candid in their responses, something which strengthens the validity of my research. Providing a platform for these voiceless- whether disaster victims, beneficiaries, or aid workers - was a driving force behind this dissertation.

This chapter focused on the methods used in this study to both collect and analyze data. The proceeding chapters will delve deeper into what was found through my analysis and propose a new framework for understanding cross-cultural competence, with a particular emphasis on the post-disaster context. As the recovery continues in Haiti, my goal is to provide recommendations to aid agencies that will help them provide more effective and more culturally appropriate care to disaster victims and to better train and support their employees who are dedicating their lives to response and recovery work.

CHAPTER III

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR POST-DISASTER CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Most international response and recovery work occurs in developing nations where a lack of preparedness and poverty intensifies the impact of the disaster resulting in an influx of international assistance. Because of the global nature of aid work, it is vital that individuals possess a wide set of cross-cultural competencies in order to analyze and adapt to international contexts and to work with and manage culturally diverse employees. Existing cultural competence frameworks identify various skills, values, qualities, and practices that are part of cross-cultural interactions, but most frameworks neglect aspects which are central to post disaster work.

This chapter posits a new framework for cultural competence, specific to the international response and recovery context. After reviewing the existing literature on this topic and analyzing the data from the prior NIH study and that which was collected for my dissertation, this framework divides cultural competence into personal attributes (e.g. empathy, self-awareness), emotive skills (e.g. emotional labor), and expertise (e.g. technical skills, years of experience) which become modified by cultural knowledge (e.g. language, customs, silent culture). This framework also highlights the link between emotional labor and cultural competence, an aspect which is missing from most cultural competence frameworks. This framework fills an important gap in the cultural competence literature by bringing the conception of cultural knowledge as an essential modifier into emergency management research.

3.1 Context

International disaster relief is fraught with challenges. Not only are aid workers under considerable physical stress, they must also learn to communicate effectively despite significant cultural barriers inhibiting communication with those they came to serve. At times, response and recovery workers must operate under extreme conditions while communicating in an unfamiliar language. Communication, which takes place through more than just language, can be easily hampered by subtle cultural cues, such as social structures, humor, body language, and level of directness (Hofstede 1980, Hall 1976). These cultural differences can become cultural barriers and can lead to misunderstandings, frustrations, and even suspicion (Pierre 2010).

The art of recognizing, honoring, and valuing similarities as well as differences in belief systems, values, and approaches is necessary to not only assess a new culture, but to reflect upon one's own culture by being able to transcend individual cultures (Hall 1976). This capacity for 'transcendence' is further complicated when the worker is thrust into high-risk situations, as in the aftermath of disasters, that test an aid worker's ability to adapt under severe stress, pressure, and danger.

In disaster scenarios, the need for cultural competence is particularly high. Beneficiaries facing trauma and loss need comfort and reassurance, both of which are culturally relative and require contextualization in order to be efficacious. Aid workers unable or unaware of how to communicate and signal comfort and reassurance within a culture's unique interpretive frame may find that their intentional signals are not being received as they intended or that their intentions are being misinterpreted altogether.

Cultural barriers, however, are not limited to those outside of the organization. Usually composed of team members from around the world, cultural diversity is common among most international disaster response and recovery agencies (Talty 2015). The cultural barriers between co-workers can prove to be an immense challenge and a significant source of additional stress for aid workers. For response and recovery workers, these high stakes scenarios are often the norm and despite the fact that many agencies have operated cross-culturally for decades, the survey data for this dissertation revealed that nearly half of all aid workers receive little to no cross-cultural competency training.

3.2 Cultural Competence Literature

Models of cultural competence are drawn from a wide variety of fields and disciplines. Since the 1960's, intercultural research has furthered our understanding of the similarities and differences in human culture. The term cultural competence is a polysemous one with multiple definitions and connotations across disciplines. For this study, cultural competence refers to the “set of cultural behaviors and attitudes integrated into the practice methods of a system, agency, or its professionals that enables them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (National Center for Cultural Competence 2001, 9). While there are many notions of the concept of culture, for the purposes of this study, culture refers to norms, roles, belief systems, laws, and values that are interrelated in meaningful ways (Triandis et.al 1972). Research on cultural dimensions, as studied by Hofstede, Hall, and others, helps to measure and compare the values and practices found in human culture and explain the inherent challenges of “communicating with strangers”

(Barber & Badre 1998; Gudykunst and Kim 2003; Hofstede 1991; Morrison 2002, Grove 2005). Whether in the public or private sector, those in cross-cultural work, and particularly those within an international context, are faced with numerous challenges, both obvious and more obscure.

Culture, has both overt and hidden components. Overt culture, which refers to easily observed aspects such as demographics, language, and religion, can be deceptive to those entering a new culture. Hidden culture, which refers to how people deal with uncertainty, inequality, and social relationships, may also remain unrecognized by the undiscerning outsider (Hall 1976; Hofstede 2001, Zweifel 2003).

When attempting to transcend cultures, many expatriates inadvertently cause misunderstandings by focusing solely on the overt culture. According to Geert Hofstede (1980), hidden culture (i.e. social structures, humor, body language), which unconsciously shapes human interaction, presents barriers to effective cross-cultural communication to those unwilling or untrained to recognize it. This invisible culture is equally as important as the overt, yet all too often overlooked. Hofstede warned, that if we “maintain the naïve assumption that because they look like us they also think like us, our joint efforts will not get very far (p. 453).” Because of this, tensions can run below the surface and remain unnoticed by aid workers from low-context cultures until they reach a breaking point (Storti 2007). The culturally competent aid worker can, not only recognize these variations, but has learned how to signal empathy, compassion, and trustworthiness to beneficiaries within the context of the beneficiary’s culture.

Hofstede (2001) asserts that, more often than not, cultural variances are a “source of conflict rather than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a

disaster (p.8).” This can be seen during response and recovery operations, where cultural norms influence organizational dynamics, determine patterns of communication between co-workers, and create dissonance in the relationship between aid workers and disaster victims. During a humanitarian crisis, these “cultural disasters” can pose grave threats to mission efficacy and even to individual lives. Failure to listen to first responders regarding evacuations, health information, or ways to obtain resources in an emergency can lead to illness, loss of life, and human suffering.

Most literature on cultural competency highlights the importance of language skills. When communicating between languages and across cultures, the inability to speak the local language can be a significant barrier to the effectiveness of response operations. While translators are common during international emergency response operations, Bolton and Weiss (2001) assert that communication through simple interpretation "is insufficient for cross-cultural communication (pg. 252)." The use of a translator adds another layer of complexity to cross-cultural communication. Varying skill levels, incompatible personalities, and words that are not directly translatable may hinder accurate translation and become a barrier to effective service delivery. Mistranslations in medical or health information can have grave and lasting repercussions while lack of trust between translator and beneficiary can lead to beneficiaries failing to disclose important information (Bolton & Weiss 2001)

Additionally, effective communication takes place on multiple levels and requires much more than linguistic understanding. National history, body language, symbolic understanding, and issues of power distance and time orientation, along with values and practices found in human culture all create the filters through which

communication occurs. The culturally competent aid worker must not only transcend linguistic barriers, but also transcend these elements of invisible culture in order to communicate effectively with those they serve (Hall 1976).

Much of our current knowledge on the actual practice of cross-cultural management comes from the private sector which focuses on cross-cultural competencies within the context of the multinational business partnership and is geared towards helping global executives become more effective at communicating, establishing relationships, and conducting business while living abroad (Galbraith 2000; McCall & Hollenbeck 2002; Zweifel 2003). The following section will highlight some of the most prominent cultural competence frameworks and discuss the deficiencies that make them incompatible with international post-disaster aid work, especially in fragile states or developing nations.

3.3 Frameworks of Cultural Competence

In his book, *Global Literacies* (2000), Dr. Robert Rosen identifies four dimensions of cultural competence that he terms *global literacies*. These four dimensions comprise a framework for identifying the skills, values, qualities, and practices that are part of intercultural efficacy. Based on findings from a four-year study involving more than 1,000 international business leaders from organizations and nations around the globe, Rosen's global literacies are as follows: (1) Personal literacy- this dimension includes that which is internal and personal, including an individual's capacity for self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-development. (2) Social literacy- this second dimension covers the soft-skills needed to collaborate in a shifting global environment, such as pragmatic trust, urgent listening, and collaborative individualism. (3) Business/technical

literacy- this includes the ability to institutionalize practice in varied global contexts and to effectively navigate chaos. (4) Cultural literacy- this final dimension covers both explicit cultural knowledge and the implicit cultural mindset that makes possible learning, synthesizing, and utilizing such knowledge and experience in cross-cultural scenarios.

Many other models divide cultural competence into the areas of awareness, knowledge, and skills (Pope and Reynolds 1997; Campinha-Bacote 1999; Pedersen 1983; Rosen 2000). *Cultural awareness*, refers to values, attitudes and assumptions that are vital for successful communication with clients who are culturally different from the service provider. Awareness requires self-evaluation, self-reflection, acknowledging one's stereotypes, biases or culturally based assumptions, and understanding how their culture is perceived by members of other cultures (Pope and Reynolds, 1997).

Cultural knowledge involves understanding the worldviews of various cultural groups. This includes knowledge about the history, values, attitudes and behaviors in other cultures and how members of other cultures interpret their own rules, customs, and laws. Merely possessing this knowledge is not enough. The aid worker must be able to put it into practice in often chaotic, high stress post-disaster situations. *Cultural skills* are the appropriate behaviors, interventions, and strategies resulting from the cultural awareness and cultural knowledge (Hochschild 1983; Pope and Reynolds 1997).

Another prominent framework by Adler and Bartholomew (1992), identifies five cross-cultural competencies that global leaders must develop in order to improve global team effectiveness. *First*, workers must be able to understand worldwide business, political, and cultural environments. *Second*, they must learn the perspectives, tastes, and

language of the targeted culture. *Third*, they must be able to work simultaneously with people from different cultures. *Fourth*, they must have the ability to adapt to living and communicating in an unfamiliar culture. *Fifth*, they must relate to people from other cultures from a position of equality rather than cultural superiority.

3.4 Flaws in Current Models

Other research, such as that of Jay Galbraith (2000), Morgan McCall (2002), Gudykunst and Kim (1984), and many others undergird both Rosen's literacies and that of Adler and Bartholomew (1992) and suggest that, variety and context considering, intercultural competencies are surprisingly translatable across language, culture, and chronologies. Despite this, these frameworks have some significant drawbacks. They tend to treat culture as static rather than dynamic, more as something that can be learned as opposed to something that must be prepared for and interacted with. They are also frequently laden with cultural assumptions and come to cultural research with a "one size fits all" approach. Yet culture is not static nor is it uniform. Instead, it is ever in a state of flux and, within every culture, exist subcultures based on religion, personalities, socioeconomic status, education, and much more.

Frameworks that fail to recognize the complexity and active nature of culture are in danger of quickly becoming irrelevant, particularly within the context of disaster work. In nations like Haiti, where instability is a constant threat, disasters and the nation's long history with aid workers can profoundly impact local culture. This includes the changes that occur within a culture when members of the host culture have significant and

continual interaction with those from different cultures, such as Haiti's large and diverse population of foreign aid workers.

While not unique to post-disaster contexts, this ability to synthesize and quickly adapt is a necessity for the aid worker operating in the high-stakes world of cross-cultural response and recovery. Current cross-cultural frameworks do little to address this reality, rendering them insufficient and, therefore, ineffective to meet the needs of post-disaster aid.

Another component missing from most models of cultural competence is that of emotive skills. These emotive components of intercultural communication are how aid workers and first responders communicate strength, comfort, and trustworthiness when working with impacted beneficiaries, but in cross-cultural scenarios, how such emotions are communicated may vary widely. Emotive skills, such as emotional labor and emotional intelligence, have been linked to job performance in that they influence peoples' capacity to interact with others, communicate effectively, handle conflict, manage stress, perform under pressure, and create a positive work environment (Lopes et. al 2015).

The term *emotional labor* was first used by the sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild in her book *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983) to describe the effort that is involved in managing personal emotions to reflect organizational expectations through either the display of appropriate emotions or the suppression of inappropriate ones. Analogous to manual labor, emotional labor is a required component of job performance. While manual labor requires physical work, emotional labor requires emotional work. Emotional labor has two components- surface

acting (managing the expression of emotions through facial and/or bodily display without changing the true emotions) and deep acting (modifying actual inner emotions) (Hochschild 1983; Grandey 2000). Also known as “faking in good faith,” deep acting is performed in order to appear authentic whereas surface acting only alters the visible emotive displays.

In their article entitled *Women’s Jobs, Men’s Jobs: Sex Segregation and Emotional Labor* (2004), authors Guy and Newman argue that although often unrecognized, emotion work is central to most public service jobs and is also correlated with increased organizational productivity and client satisfaction. Since then, research has shown that emotional labor not only benefits the public, but also has profound implications for the public servant. Those engaging in deep acting have been shown to have higher job satisfaction and pride in their work, as they connect with clients in a meaningful and effective way (Grandey 2001; Meier, Mastracci and Wilson 2006; Hsieh and Guy 2009). Conversely, surface acting may have negative or dysfunctional consequences for workers, including emotional exhaustion, compassion fatigue and burnout (Adelmann 1989; Erickson 1991; Hochschild 1983; Grandey 2001). For aid workers, who bear continual responsibility for those who have been the victims of disaster, the stakes are even higher. The success or failure of their emotional labor can have grave emotional and physical consequences, for themselves as well as for disaster victims.

Guy, Newman and Mastracci (2004), identify four steps involved in the performance of emotional labor by a public servant. First, emotive sensing requires the worker to quickly assess the emotional state of the individual and use this information to

respond accordingly. Second, the worker must analyze their own affective state and compare it to that of the citizens. Third, they must judge how alternative responses will affect the citizens and select the best one and fourth, behave to suppress or express an emotion in order to elicit desired response. These four steps help the public servant better consider the perspective of the client and act in a more humane and compassionate manner.

In a cross cultural setting, knowledge of customs, norms, and the societal appropriateness of emotional expression, are known as *feeling rules* (Hochschild 1983). Miyamoto & Ryff (2011) describe these affective display rules as *cultural scripts*, which can vary dramatically across cultures and impact not only emotion expression, but experienced emotions as well. During intercultural exchanges, communication can be hindered, misinterpreted, and even interrupted altogether. Likewise, the performance of emotional labor requires that the aid worker submit to the organization's display rules, which may or may not be culturally effective.

A prime example of cultural misunderstanding occurred during the height of Haiti's cholera outbreak. The need for emotional labor was very high as dozens of victims arrived sick and dying to clinics in rural areas. The affective state of the Haitian aid workers differed greatly from that of the international staff, leading to the perception that Haitians did not value life as much as the international staff. Exploration of this topic revealed that the Haitian aid workers managed their emotions differently than their international counterparts. Haitian workers sought to appear solemn, calm, and unemotional, expressions that were considered by Haitians to be indicative of competence, wisdom, professionalism, and self-control. A lack of cultural competence

among both Haitian and international aid workers led to multiple misunderstandings, frustrations, and stereotyping, with North American aid workers perceiving their Haitian counterparts as callous and rude and Haitian aid workers believing their international partners to be incompetent and overly emotional.

3.5 Literature Review Methodology

To formulate the framework introduced in this chapter and identify the cultural competencies which were most important to aid work, I conducted a qualitative review of the existing literature on the topic using Nvivo and analyzed the focus groups and in-depth interview transcripts, and job announcements. Since the literature on cultural competence is widely dispersed throughout various fields, I took an interpretive/constructionist approach. First, I conducted a keyword search of online databases in multiple fields using the FIU library using the words individually or a combination of the words that represented the topic (i.e. cultural competence) and the context (i.e. post-disaster). Table 3a below shows selected keywords that were used to search the online databases for relevant literature.

Table 3a Selected Keywords

Cultural competence	Cross-cultural	emergency
Culture	Humanitarian	Aid work
Intercultural competence	Training	disaster

I then read the abstracts to make sure they fit within the scope of my research and uploaded the full text of the articles into NVivo 11. The aim during this part of the analysis was to condense the various frameworks into broad categories of cultural

competencies. Using NVivo, I created a node (category) for each cultural competency identified by the literature and coded the article with these nodes. Table 3b below shows a selection of the nodes used to code the articles.

Table 3b Selected Nodes for the Articles

Technical literacy	Collaboration	Experience	Training
Business literacy	Cultural literacy	Emotional labor	Cultivate trust
Self-esteem	Language skills	Emotive skills	Personal attributes
Self-awareness	Empathy	Expertise	Bias

Using coding stripes, I looked for places where the frameworks and categories overlapped and revised or combined categories accordingly. I continued searching for literature until new categories stopped emerging. Figure 3c below shows the emergent categories and how each of the sources are connected to one or more category. This representation of the literature was helpful in identifying where terms overlap or coexist. For example, some articles on post-disaster response and recovery identified personal attributes (e.g. empathy, listening) and cultural knowledge (e.g. language, awareness) which are important to cultural competence, but only labeled them as critical to post-disaster work, not cultural competence per se.

Table 3c Sources Connection Map

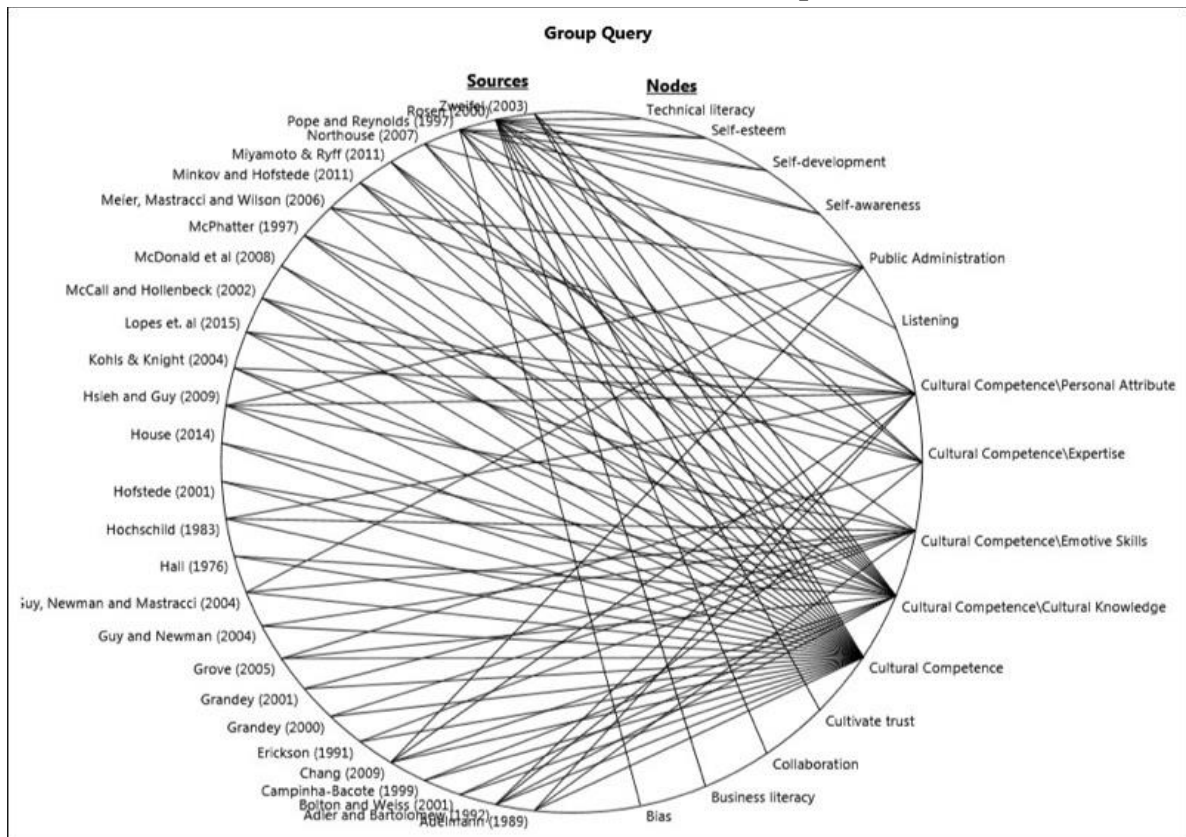


Figure 3c Source NVivo 11

Next, I isolated the parts of the in-depth interviews, job announcements, and focus group transcripts pertaining to skills and competencies and performed a word frequency query for all sources together, and for the aid worker, beneficiary, and aid agency materials individually.

The word cloud below (Figure 3d) represents the most commonly mentioned skills and competencies across all sources. The size of the word is proportionate to the number of times it was mentioned. Terms like experience, compassion, care, culture, and Haitian Creole were frequently mentioned throughout the data. I used the word cloud to refine the categories from the existing literature to develop the framework.

represents a significant shift from the traditional representation of cross-cultural competence for a few reasons. First, it treats cultural knowledge as both a component of cultural competence and as a modifier. Its context-specific knowledge influences the expression of personal attributes, emotive skills, and expertise.

In the graphic below (Figure 3e), the white boxes in this figure represent personal attributes, expertise, and emotive skills before they are modified by cultural knowledge. The red boxes represent those same components after they have been modified by context specific knowledge. The three components are all equally a part of cultural competence, but cannot be so until they have been modified by culturally specific knowledge. In addition to this, this model recognizes the unique nature of emotion work and includes emotive skills as their own vital component. Cultural knowledge, expertise, and emotive skills, along with the other components of this framework are discussed in the following section.

Figure 3e Post-Disaster Cultural Competence Model



Source: By Author

Personal Attributes

Internal attitudes and the mindset to put knowledge into practice

Self-awareness, ability to recognize stereotypes and bias, compassion, empathy, flexibility, listening, patience, ability to cultivate trust, adaptability, skills self-assessment, intercultural attitude of respect

Personal attributes (PA) are internal and personal attitudes and abilities which help the aid worker connect effectively with those from a divergent culture in order to meet organizational goals. They are the internal traits and interpersonal skills necessary to relate to others in a way that engenders trust and leads to organizational success. They also include the skills and knowledge combined together to fit the situation.

In this category are skills such as the ability to cultivate trust with beneficiaries, show empathy, listen actively, and the ability to synthesize cultural knowledge. It also includes the ability to recognize one's own perceived stereotypes and biases, be self-aware, and be willing to consider another's culture on its own terms. Most of the cultural competence curricula analyzed as a part of this study emphasized culture-specific knowledge, rather than personal attributes which allow the aid worker to adjust to variations within cultures and individuals. In contrast, many of the interviews with experienced aid workers identified the ability to synthesize and modify their behavior based on cultural knowledge and their perception of the other person's emotional approach as more important than explicit cultural knowledge.

Emotive Skills
Ability to manage own and others' emotions to meet organizational expectations

Emotion suppression, acting, communicate compassion, emotional labor, emotional intelligence

Emotional management and regulation falls within this domain, as does the ability to suppress one's emotions and help regulate the emotions of others. The ability to modify emotional displays and internal emotions based on what is culturally or contextually appropriate comes out of knowledge of one's cultural setting and knowledge of the societal appropriateness of emotional expression, known as *feeling rules* (Hochschild 1983). Emotive skills are also critical to sensing the emotional state of the beneficiary or co-worker, and choosing the most appropriate way to respond. Without cultural knowledge, the emotional displays can easily be misinterpreted.

When discussing skills needed in international post-disaster jobs, many interviewees mentioned that being able to quickly adjust their emotional approach depending on the circumstances was vital. One first responder, who arrived days after the earthquake, described this capacity as being able to ad-lib.

Well you need to be able to ad-lib. Everything is going to be different so you have to be able to think on your feet and try to deal with difficult situations. You know, a family member may freak out and you just took someone out of a building and maybe you had to amputate their leg or their arm to get them out

now you got to deal with that. So you got to be able to deal with that and just adlib. There's no script to follow.

Expertise

Experience and job specific skills

Technical skills, international context-specific skills

This component covers job specific skills, formal education and training, and the years of experience an aid worker brings to their position. Technical expertise is gained through formal training and experience and is adjusted to the specific cultural context the aid worker must operate in. In Haiti, home to more than 10,000 international NGOs, the issue of aid workers' professional skills and the lack thereof has long been a bone of contention. In the wake of the 2010 earthquake, volunteers from around the world came flooding into Haiti to help. There was little coordination of the response and relief process and no official oversight to ensure that those who came to offer medical, engineering, or other relief were certified in their work (Jobe 2011).

As one article which focused on the humanitarian response to the Haitian earthquake explained,

Many individual volunteers with minimal equipment, no pharmaceutical or supply cache, no mechanism for providing their personal food, water, shelter or security arrived in Port-Au-Prince offering their services. Medical workers appeared at existing NGOs to volunteer their services without any means of verifying their clinical capability or credentials for the organizations. These volunteers often became a liability to an organization in the setting of an ongoing

disaster and a resource poor environment as well as putting themselves at individual risk (Jobe 2011, p. 2).

As chapter 4 explains, while agencies ranked technical expertise as of highest import and aid workers ranked it of lowest import, it is interesting to note that beneficiaries ranked expertise more important than aid workers did and more than one focus group member emphasized the desire for aid workers to be truly qualified with expert skills instead of merely good-hearted. Haitian frustration over perceived “poverty tourism” has long been expressed by beneficiaries receiving aid and the subject came up more than once during this study’s focus groups.

Cultural Knowledge

Context specific knowledge used to modify emotive skills, personal attributes, and expertise.

Language, cultural appropriateness, history, cultural behaviors

Cultural knowledge, refers to both explicit cultural knowledge and the implicit cultural mindset that makes it possible to put it into practice in cross-cultural scenarios. It includes context-specific knowledge such as the history, politics, and religion of a specific region. It also includes language skills and a deep knowledge of customs, norms, and what is culturally appropriate. Decades of research from the fields of leadership, organizational behavior, and the private sector have revealed explicit cultural knowledge as a critical modifier for the effective performance of soft skills. Because of this, researchers have sought to map cultural preferences worldwide in order to help

organizations better understand how to lead and manage effectively in cross-cultural contexts (GLOBE 2004; Hofstede 1980 and 1990; House 2014). Although understanding explicit cultural knowledge is an important first step in understanding diverse people groups, it is crucial to note that culture is dynamic and constantly evolving (Burke 2009; Kraidy 2005). However, an understanding of cultural norms, such as verbal and non-verbal communication, customs, and appropriateness helps the aid worker adjust their own body language, emotional display, and actions in order to effectively perform their job, gain the trust of the beneficiary, and provide equitable public service.

An example of this was seen in one agency where there was perpetual frustration between aid workers and the team of Haitian women who cooked and provided care to children the NGO served. The aid workers felt that, no matter how hard they tried, they could not build a positive rapport with the female Haitian team members. During mediation, it was discovered that the Haitian women felt slighted and as if they were disliked by the aid workers. Why? Because even though the aid workers greeted them daily, they did not greet them every time they entered the room nor did they ask after their families each day. The Haitian cultural expectation was that friends greet each other every time they see each other, even if they are busy or “on a mission.” Once the aid workers understood this, they were able to use cultural knowledge to modify their behavior and build friendship and a positive rapport with their Haitian team.

3.7 Chapter Summary

The framework presented in this chapter fills a gap in the post-disaster literature by providing a view of cultural competence that accounts for the unique challenges of international aid work. Existing research on emergencies and cultural competence has

mostly focused on domestic, rather than international response and recovery scenarios. This is a significant gap because in a domestic setting, response and recovery workers are coming from the dominant culture and must adjust to working with minorities within this dominant culture. In international aid work, response and recovery workers *are* the minority within an often-unfamiliar culture. This chapter seeks to close the above-mentioned gaps by providing a framework for understanding the aspects of cultural competence which takes into account the unique context and challenges of international post-disaster response and recovery and the need for adaptive cultural competence that is able to synthesize the components and use them appropriately.

Each competency, while important to public service on its own, is not cultural competence. Cultural competence occurs when personal attributes, emotive skills, and expertise are modified and adjusted using context-specific cultural knowledge. Stauss and Mang (1999) explained,

If the employees have inter-cultural experience, and if they are aware of the verbal and non-verbal codes used in different cultural areas, they are able to vary their body language, e.g. eye contact, in order to adapt to the type and scope of the explicit information.

This idea of knowledge-modified behavior is central to this framework. Its usage has implications for not only furthering academic research and study on cultural competence and aid work, but it also has practical implications for aid worker recruitment and training, along with agency policy which should normalize and prioritize cultural competence training.

In the chapters that follow, this framework and the data from this study will be used to evaluate the competencies which are most important to effective international response and recovery work from the perspective of the aid workers, aid agencies, and the beneficiaries. It will also discuss how these competencies are best acquired and what agencies can do to help their employees develop their cross-cultural competence and better serve beneficiaries while also more effectively fulfilling organizational goals.

CHAPTER VI

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE: THREE PERSPECTIVES

4.1 Introduction

The January 2010 earthquake placed Haiti and its needs on an international stage. More than 13.3 billion dollars of aid was pledged by dozens of nations, including countries as far away as Japan and Qatar (Connor, Rappleye, & Angulo 2015). Nations from around the Western Hemisphere sent first responders to Haiti within days of the quake, offering supplies, emergency services, and medical support. Yet, even before the 2010 earthquake, Haiti was no stranger to international aid groups. In addition to bilateral (e.g. USAID) and multilateral (e.g. United Nations) partners, an estimated 9,000 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were already active in the country at the time of the disaster (World Bank 2011, p.7).

While sentiment toward the international aid workers was favorable in the initial aftermath of the earthquake, blame for the 2010 cholera outbreak and accusations toward the UN of sexual assault and violence triggered protests against aid workers, such as the October 2010 protests in the seaside city of St. Marc and the burning of a World Food Program warehouse (AP 2010; Valbrun 2012). As the antagonism escalated, anger was often expressed in anti NGO graffiti around Port-au-Prince. Phrases like “*Aba OIM!*” and “*Aba Croix Rouge!*” (*Get out IOM! Get out Red Cross!*) appeared on walls, on piles of rubble, and on the side of buildings (Engler 2010; Rachmandran and Walsh 2012; Valbrun 2012).

Haiti's long history of instability and corruption and its volatile relationship with other nations, including the United States, has contributed to deep mistrust between the Haitian government, donor nations, and other stake holders. Because of this, the majority of post-earthquake response and recovery aid bypassed the government altogether and was delivered through the thousands of international NGOs operating in Haiti (Knox 2015).

Due to Haiti's history of fiscal mismanagement and the generalized confusion on the ground, most NGOs failed to participate in the post-disaster action plan prepared by the Haitian government, which established priorities for recovery and rebuilding, or remained completely unaware of its existence. This led to most organizations responding to the quake on their own terms, operating in "silos" with little, if any, cooperation with one another. Lack of strategic planning, coordination, and uniform effort left many gaps in servicing (Farmer 2012). Some communities received comprehensive aid, while others received none at all, and still others were "over serviced", receiving duplicate services from multiple NGOs (Julmy 2011). This resulted in a volatile climate, with accusations of aid workers being corrupt and profiting off of the nation's misery.

International disaster response is fluid, multifaceted, and complex. It requires aid workers to communicate comfort, cultivate trust, and gain cooperation, often in a foreign language, while navigating unfamiliar societal and cultural norms. These cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings, heightened suspicions, and reduced program effectiveness (Hall 1976). As the cholera outbreak intensified, such outcomes became increasingly evident. The pervasive lack of trust in and suspicion toward international aid workers had grave consequences and hindered response and recovery programs. Rumors

that the cholera outbreak was manufactured by the NGOs as a fundraising ploy led many infected Haitians to refuse medical attention and ignore health information intended to stop the spread of the disease (Wagner 2010). Over the ensuing months and years, books, articles, and journalistic exposés examined the distinctive problems within the response of Haiti's NGO sector to the 2010 earthquake, leading many to conclude that both the response and recovery phases were notable failures (Joseph 2015; Katz 2014; Zanotti 2010).

While best practices and proven cross-cultural assessments are fairly common within private sector domains, perhaps surprisingly, the public sector has largely ignored the critical role that culture plays in public service, both in public sector literature and in actual practice. A study into the cross-cultural practices and perceptions within public sector aid agencies can yield profound insights into the importance of cultural competence skills and how they are acquired. This chapter examines these response and recovery efforts from three distinct perspectives: that of the international aid workers, that of their agencies, and that of the Haitian beneficiaries they came to serve. Using the framework outlined in chapter two, this chapter examines these perspectives through the lens of cultural competence and provides insight into both their similarities and their differences.

The findings of the study are primarily based on focus group and survey data from Haitian beneficiaries (n=140), participant observation, and in-depth interviews (n=89) conducted with international response and recovery workers involved after the 2010 Haitian earthquake and Haitian beneficiaries. It also analyzes job descriptions (n=146)

from sending agencies in order to compare and contrast agency perspectives with those of beneficiaries and aid workers.

The findings detailed in this chapter are significant because they address a gap in the public administration and disaster management literature on cultural competence, specifically in the post-disaster context. This chapter will also help disaster response and recover workers better understand the significance of the cultural aspects of their work and draws attention to the unique perspectives of beneficiaries, a voice that is seldom sought or heard. Additionally, it demonstrates a distinct disconnect between the skills that agencies believe their aid workers need for successful field work and those that the aid workers themselves believe they need and those that beneficiaries believe are required to better serve in their home context.

4.2 Literature review

What we already know about the role of culture in public service suggests that cross-cultural competence is vital to the success of post-disaster response and recovery work (Chang 2007; DHHS 2003). Despite this, cultural competence is a frequent and often intense challenge for aid workers. To the worker or researcher living abroad, navigating a new culture can be a source of stress, where “cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster” (Hall 1976; Hofstede 2001; Storti 2001). According to McCall and Hollenbeck (2002), a study of more than 250 multi-national corporations and their expat employees concurs with this, indicating that the ‘inability to adapt’ is the leading cause of assignment failure among those working abroad (McCall and Hollenbeck 2002; Windham 1999).

Research from both the private sector and nonprofit context agrees that cross-cultural competence is also critical to successful communication and program effectiveness within the international context and that its absence can have severe and lasting consequences (Schein 1992; Kohls and Knight 2004; Storti 2007). This culturally appropriate service delivery, which Brach and Fraser (2000) describe as an “ongoing commitment or institutionalization of appropriate practices and policies for diverse populations (p.183)” is essential to the production of successful outcomes (Fuertes and Ponterotto 2003).

Private businesses spend millions annually promoting the development of cross-cultural competence in order to help global executives establish better multinational relationships and become better communicators while living abroad (Galbraith 2000). In the previous NIH funded study that this dissertation is built on, a recurring theme among aid workers who gave in depth interviews was that cultural competence was not a priority for organizations and seldom a component of training.

Research strongly suggests that such lack of attention has profound consequences. The failure to understand both positive and negative cross-cultural signals can lead to strained relationships between humanitarian aid organizations and the public they serve. As Doherty explains, “Well-intentioned attempts to help can easily be at risk for being misunderstood as meddling, interference, or even political attempts to influence or control (2007, p. 56).”

By failing to comprehend culturally unique signals of empathy and integrity, public service organizations can undermine their own attempts to build trust with beneficiaries and strengthen their public images. Cultural competencies prepare aid

workers for effective conflict resolution, communication, stress coping, language acquisition, and adapting to life in another culture (McDonald et al. 2008).

In the post disaster context, research suggests that intercultural competencies are of even deeper importance. In order for recovery procedures to be effective, emergency managers must recognize the deep complexity of disasters and approach each situation with an understanding of the underlying history, culture, ethics, and systemic structures of the affected population (Chang 2007). Culturally competent management plays an instrumental role in emergency management by helping managers to comprehend these complex challenges and redirect solutions to best meet beneficiary needs. Poor disaster management can occur when recovery strategies fail to recognize differences in culture and language which are vital to achieving program efficacy.

4.3 Findings

The findings presented in this chapter shed important light on the specific cross-cultural competencies needed for effective response and recovery work in the post-disaster context. It explores these competencies from three distinct perspectives: the aid agency, the aid worker, and the beneficiaries. When taken as a whole, the data reveals a noticeable disconnect between these three groups and the skills that they believe are important for cross-cultural response and recovery workers.

The Agency Perspective: Expertise Above All

In the wake of the 2010 earthquake, organizations from around the world flooded Haiti and recruiting websites were awash with NGOs seeking new hires. Job announcements advertised positions for both short-term emergency work and long-term

recovery work, seeking candidates from around the globe. Some of these announcements were for organizations that already had long histories of operating in Haiti, while others were for organizations new to the island nation. Each announcement outlined the individual agency's skills requirements for that position, revealing much about the agency's perspective on the skills needed for success.

This study analyzed 146 of these post-earthquake job announcements for response and recovery positions in Haiti in order to gain a better understanding of the cultural competency requirements by aid agencies. Using the framework outlined in chapter three, this study evaluated the announcements for expertise, personal attributes, cultural knowledge, and emotive skills, the four components of the cultural competency framework.

The word cloud below (Figure 4a) depicts the frequency in which skills related to each cultural competency were included in the job announcements. Frequently used words like ability, experience, development, and skill are prominent, whereas soft skills such as leadership and collaboration were used less.

[illegible]

In the job announcements analyzed, formal education was consistently highly sought after. Graduate degrees or higher were required by nearly 37% ($n = 54$) of

agencies, while a bachelor's degree was required by approximately 41% ($n = 60$) as seen in Table 4b below.

Table 4b Expertise Required by Agencies

Experience	<i>N</i> (146)	Percentage	Technical skills	<i>N</i> (146)	Percentage
No experience	21	14	Job specific knowledge	111	76
Minimum 3 years	21	14	Computer skills	99	68
Minimum 5 years	60	41	Certificate	8	5
Minimum 7 years	33	23	Bachelor's degree	60	41
Minimum 10 years	11	8	Master's degree or higher	54	37

Another common requirement was prior experience. At least 3 years of experience were required by 14% ($n = 21$) of job announcements, while 41% ($n = 60$) of agencies required a minimum of 5 years of experience. Additionally, some agencies required even greater experience, with 22.6% ($n = 33$) of sending agencies insisting on 7 years of experience or more and 7.5% ($n = 11$) requiring a minimum of 10 years of experience. A minority of jobs, 14% ($n = 21$) had no strictures on experience or education ($n = 24$) at all. These were primarily advertised during the early days of response and recovery when the immediate need for workers was at its height.

The figure below (Figure 4c) was selected from the 146 job announcements analyzed during this study. The qualifications are reflective of the “average” skill sets sought by most agencies (e.g., computer skills, education, and experience).

Figure 4c Job Announcement for WASH Sanitation Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree in relevant field (health management related) • A minimum of 3 years of work experience • Fluency in English and either or both French (required) • Proficiency with Internet, Excel, Microsoft Word, and other office applications • Takes initiative and makes the work progress with minimal direct supervision • Organizational resources needed for large scale projects and ensures the availability of these critical resources • Creates and measures criteria to monitor progress of plans and programming against objectives

Source: indeed.com

Emotive skills (such as the ability to manage own and others' emotions to meet organizational expectations, suppression, acting, communicate compassion, emotional labor, and emotional intelligence) is not represented at all in the announcement, while personal attributes (such as self-awareness, the ability to recognize stereotypes and bias, compassion, empathy, flexibility, listening, patience, the ability to cultivate trust, and adaptability) receive a slight nod in the requirement of the candidate to take "initiative and make the work progress with minimal direct supervision."

This breakdown of cultural competences, with a heavy emphasis on expertise, is typical of the announcements analyzed and representative of the "hierarchy of cultural competences" from the perspective of response and recovery agencies. The job announcement pictured below (Figure 4d) is an atypical example, one that covers most aspects of cross-cultural competence.

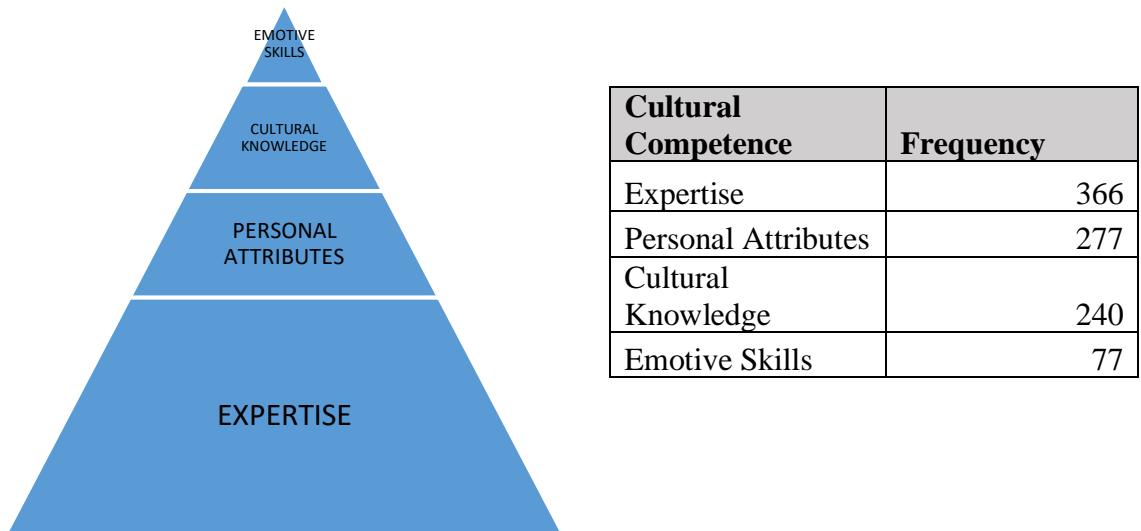
Figure 4d Job Announcement for Shelter Development Manager
<p>Description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain appropriate, regular, transparent and supportive communication structures with the assigned shelter team, in-country and HQ shelter managers and advisers and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. beneficiaries, community leaders, local and national government officials, UN agencies and other NGOs), with the objective of ensuring good cooperation and partnerships. <p>Qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding of humanitarian standards such as Sphere and HAP. • 12 months or more relevant relief or development experience • Ability to read and write English and willingness to learn Haitian Creole • Prior overseas intercultural experience. <p>Personal qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to consultative and servant-minded leadership. • Capacity to work under pressure and manage personal stress levels. • Able to cope with basic living conditions in the field and during field trips. • Able to live and work in a multicultural team under difficult conditions. • Strong character traits, such as emotional stability, adaptability, ability to handle stress, cultural and gender sensitivity, honesty, and physically fit. <p>Final selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All potential candidates for field positions must successfully complete the Relief & Recovery Orientation Course (ROC).

Source: indeed.com

The pyramid below (Figure 4e) depicts the agency “competence hierarchy”, showing the weighty position of expertise and the near non-existent position of emotive skills from the agency perspective. The accompanying frequency chart displays the exact

number of times each competence appeared as a job requirement within the announcements.

Figure 4e Competence Hierarchy According to Aid Agencies

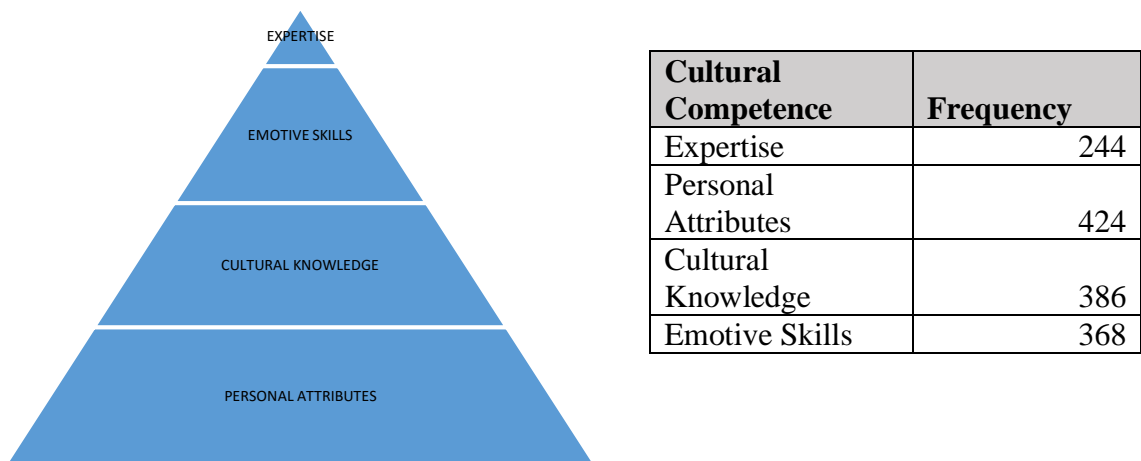


The Aid Worker Perspective: Personal Attributes are Paramount

While data on the agency perspective was derived from an analysis of job announcements, that on aid worker perspectives came from close ended surveys and in-depth interviews with aid workers who worked directly with Haitian beneficiaries. During the close ended survey that was collected as a part of this dissertation, 90% (n=76) of aid workers described cultural competence as a critical dimension of their job. Using NVivo, interview transcripts from this study were coded for personal attributes, cultural knowledge, expertise, and emotive skills to identify which cross-cultural competencies were considered most important. The data showed that personal attributes (n=424) were of prime importance to aid workers. Cultural knowledge (n=386) was of secondary importance, followed closely by emotive skills (n=368) while expertise carried

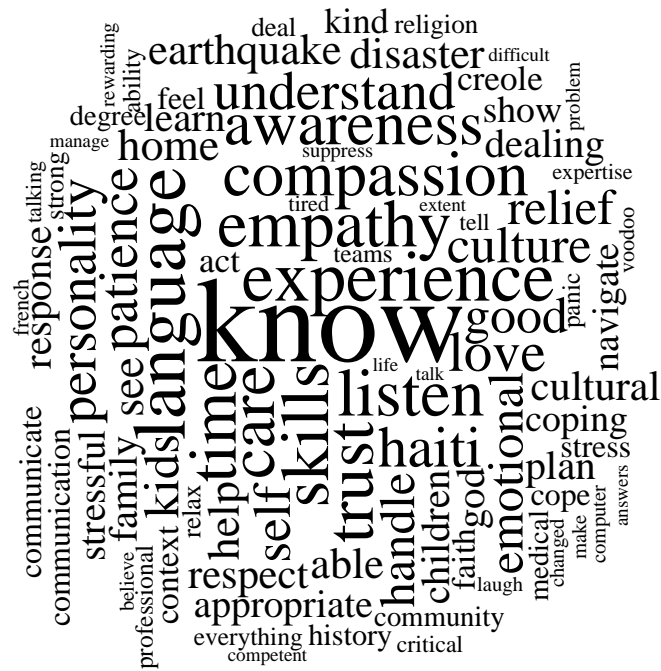
significantly less weight ($n=244$). The chart below (Figure 4f) expresses these findings and the accompanying pyramid reflects the hierarchy of cultural competency importance from the perspective of the aid workers.

Figure 4f Competence Hierarchy According to Aid Workers



In contrast to the perceptions of aid agencies, personal attributes were considered of far greater importance than expertise by most aid workers. The word cloud below (Figure 4g) demonstrates the perceived importance of the skills connected to these competencies, with the size of the word proportionate to the amount of times it was discussed in the interviews with response and recovery workers. Compassion, awareness, understanding, listening, and trust are all strongly represented as are components of cultural knowledge, such as culture, time, and language. Words representing expertise, such as medical and professional appear far less frequently.

Figure 4g Most frequently used words in aid worker interviews



In-depth interviews provided deeper insight into why frontline workers prized personal attributes so highly. One aspect of this cultural competency, self-awareness, allows the aid worker to be sensitive to the cultural context and the post-disaster conditions and to act accordingly. For example, one of the IDP camp managers who interacted with disaster victims on a daily basis explained in the following way how he avoided eating in front of the people he served since he knew that they were likely hungry:

...I could be very hungry, like I would never eat, for instance, there in front of the people. So, I guess, there are things that, yeah, you just have to be really careful, because you have to be very sensitive to those issues,

because it's very unfortunate situation to them and you don't want to make it more painful, any more painful than it already is.

Many participants likewise spoke of the need to be self-aware of their own culture, both individual and national, and to not view Haiti through the lens of their own culture. When asked about the personal characteristics that an aid worker needs to interact cross-culturally after a disaster, one program manager explained:

But the basic things that one must have would be the realization that America isn't the greatest country ever, you don't have the answer to save Haiti, your ideas probably won't work because you don't know the culture, you will fail, and-this is the biggest- that Haitian's are amazing, smart people that don't need a savior in khakis and Chacos - they need a catalyst and someone that believes in them. And that they are more normal than you think.

Other commonly referenced personal attributes were those aid workers need to collaborate interculturally, such as the ability to cultivate trust, active listening, and the ability to synthesize cultural knowledge and put it into practice. The ability to actively listen was a common theme among the interviews. One interviewee described how attentiveness and careful listening can improve trust with beneficiaries and help the aid worker become more familiar with the surrounding culture.

An intuitive ear and sharp focus of your surroundings and environment are great skills to have. There are many nuances in the Haitian culture that, if you pay attention, closely, you can read a situation so much clearer. You need to be able to read the situation for what it truly is and

not what it appears to be.... so I would say listening and attentiveness are two very important skills, also, just generally being a person who is willing and ready to learn is incredibly valuable in and of itself.

This theme of active listening and attentiveness cropped up again and again among the interviewees. One camp manager of Haitian descent who was fluent in Haitian Creole described how beneficiaries would sometimes call him just to vent their frustrations.

So, I always call back. They really appreciate it . . . sometimes they just want to vent, they just want to talk. Because when they call you, that's not always because they want a tent, it's not always because they want a tarp they just want to talk to you. And if that's all I can do, sometimes really I feel that's all I can do, because I wish I could build them a shelter, I can't do that. So, what's the harm in listening to them, what they have to say?

Ranked second to personal attributes, aid workers rated cultural knowledge as a significant cultural competency for job performance. Cultural knowledge, includes context-specific knowledge such as the history, religion, and customs of a specific region. It also covers language skills, which were the most highly valued of any competency.

Referring to the skills most needed for post-disaster aid work, one participant responded: “*Creole. My life and how I understood and helped Haiti improved 80% after I knew Creole.*” Being able to communicate in people’s own language, or at least showing an interest in their language conveys respect for the local population.

An aid worker who spent most of her time outside her office interacting with people explained the importance of language as follows:

I really think language is very important. I really, really think. Being able to communicate with people in their own language. It's so, so important...Or at least showing the effort to learn the language, like, I mean, especially, in post-disaster...make an effort to learn how to greet people and that to me is showing respect . . . Or at least, show that you are interested in their language."

In addition to language skills, a familiarity with the country's history was also critical to being just and effective. A soldier who was deployed to Haiti after the earthquake explained how an understanding of language and especially history (e.g., U.S. occupation of Haiti) was essential for the military personnel in their interactions with the Haitian population as follows:

There's two things, that I think, that are essential: Language and culture. If you don't understand, that could be just the largest barrier, and you could be doing just an injustice. You really, really need to understand where the people are coming from or where they're going.

Another aspect of cultural knowledge, familiarity with the local context, helped aid workers gain the trust of beneficiaries, adapt to life in Haiti, and to have realistic expectations. During one interview, one recovery worker explained that cultural knowledge contributed to realistic, appropriate goals, and reduced frustration:

Because sometimes I think people can get frustrated because they expect too much of themselves, just too ambitious and when they get here

and realize that it's not going to happen, you know, that could make you quite depressed that you aren't going to achieve your goals. The thing is, I think that we need to be realistic about goals. Part of being realistic is understanding what is culturally appropriate, what is possible given the local context. I mean I'm not saying that you should be under ambitious, but just to be aware of how things function or not.

This point was echoed by an interviewee who pointed out that it was also necessary to engage with diverse groups of beneficiaries, not just with those who were young, outgoing, or spoke English, explaining,

...if you don't make an effort, you'll find that most of your interactions with Haitians are with young, English-speaking men - find other people (women, older people, etc.) to teach you about Haiti as well; 5) just because one Haitian says this is true or Haitians don't like this or that, doesn't mean it's true. Just like Americans, Haitians are diverse.

Aid workers who limited their interactions to those they felt most comfortable with or who spoke their mother language were likely to end up with skewed cultural knowledge and a biased view of what their host culture is actually like.

Another aid worker discussed this need for cultural knowledge beyond formal training through an example from their own experience, saying,

Our agency...attempted to keep its employees behind the compound walls and we didn't get a chance to interact with the true Haiti much our first year here. After that, we moved to a Haitian neighborhood and were on our own. We did a lot of things wrong and still do. It is a learning curve for sure. The best cultural

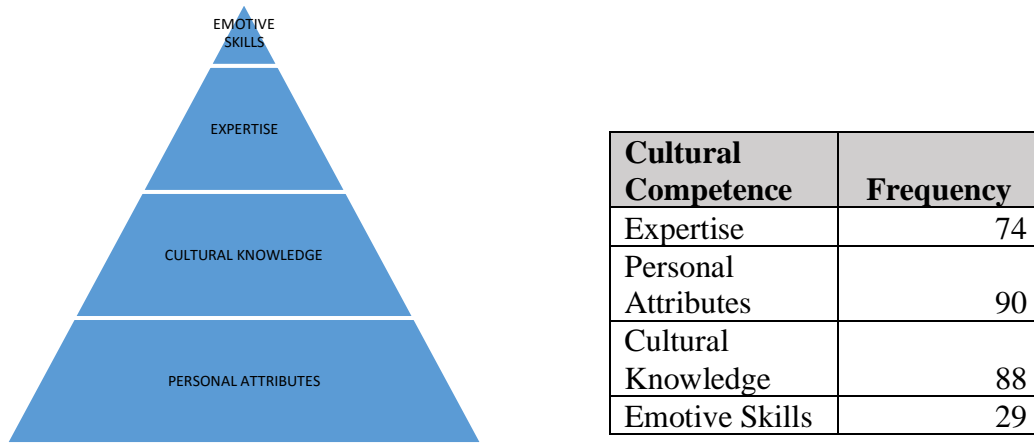
competency training we received is that we allowed Haitians to live with us and help us. They were our teachers. We also lived pretty 'Haitian'. We rode local transportation and didn't have running water or consistent electricity for two years. Most foreigners don't get this experience. We didn't necessarily want it but are thankful for it in hindsight. I will always be a foreigner but now I do understand why our neighbors wash their faces the way they do.

Many aid workers seemed to agree that there was knowledge that could only be gained living among communities of beneficiaries, building friendships, and learning to engage effectively.

The Beneficiary Perspective

While agencies prioritized expertise and aid workers emphasized personal attributes supplemented by cultural knowledge and emotive skills, beneficiaries had their own unique perspective on the cultural competence skills most needed for effective aid work. In seven focus groups, Haitian beneficiaries shared their thoughts, experiences, and advice. As with the aid workers interviewed, personal attributes were ranked of prime importance ($n=90$), but were followed closely by cultural knowledge ($n=88$), as the chart below (Figure 4h) demonstrates.

Figure 4h Competence Hierarchy According to Beneficiaries



In post-disaster response and recovery, trust between aid workers and beneficiaries is central to the concept of cooperation (Christie et.al 2015; Hagen et. al 2013). Securing the cooperation and trust of beneficiaries increases the efficacy of programs and safety measures by encouraging participation and eliminating some of the concerns and fears that beneficiaries may have (e.g. during health initiatives, evacuations).

Personal attributes, such as active listening, patience, and compassion signal trustworthiness and positive motives while failing to practice these skills can lead to suspicion, anger, and mistrust. An example of this was described during the NIH study, when one interviewee who worked directly with beneficiaries recalled how beneficiaries refused to evacuate as Hurricane Tomas (2010) approached, despite adamant warnings from aid workers. This was due, in part, to rumors and suspicions that aid workers were using the hurricane as an excuse to remove Haitians from the temporary communities that

had formed after the earthquake. This connection between trust and cooperation came up again and again during focus groups.

One community member in his 40s who had worked for two local organizations explained that organizations that had strong relationships of trust were organizations that treated people well. He clarified, “There are organizations that come and they *make you* trust them. I worked with [Agency Name] for 6 months in the canteen of Gonaives. Whoever worked with them, they treated them good and made sure everyone was happy. That is why now when anyone sees [Agency Name], they think that [Agency Name] is coming for a good reason.”

Another beneficiary described other personal attributes that contributed to cross-cultural efficacy, including the ability to signal integrity through word-deed match (Simons 1999). He explained, “I cannot say that I trust them 100%. We are here because what they gave us allowed us to live. If they give us hope but the goal is never met, then I wouldn’t trust them. I don’t trust those who have a meeting, then after the meeting they leave. They can just come here, like we are gathering here, they give us hope and say that they are going to build us a house, then they never come back. They offer us things and then we never see them. We just see stuff passing by and we are here but we never see anything. We sleep in a tent house.” This disconnect between what is promised and what is performed can have disastrous consequences and lead to anger, stress, and paranoia (Simons et al. 2011).

Another beneficiary shed more light on the subject by describing how one organization cultivated trust within his area. He explained, “After the earthquake, everyone was living in tents around here. The tents were given by [Agency Name]. There

was an authority...who did the intervention with [Agency Name] to get this land, so they can build these houses. Before, they were saying for people to receive these houses there is a maximum each month. After they calculate the situation that people are living in, they say that they are going to give the houses for free. *Effectively, how they said it, they did it.*” This match between words and deeds was cited frequently, with beneficiaries telling numerous stories of promises made, but never kept and of organizations they respected for their integrity and forthrightness.

Another frequent theme was that of bias. Beneficiaries expressed their frustration that they were often treated like a uniform group by aid workers, instead of treated as individuals. They wanted to be given the benefit of the doubt and to have assumptions made about them based on the negative actions of others. This sense of not being seen and heard as individuals was a recurrent one among focus groups, with many expressing strong frustrations. As one beneficiary explained,

For me, I think when the missionaries come they shouldn't put in their mind that we are all the same. They judge all of us by the behavior of the first person they met when they came here. There is a difference between the masses and others. They have to approach the people as individuals to understand the culture better. That way they will understand that the Haitians are not waiting on a handout all the time. The same way they believe about work in the United States is the same way we believe about work in Haiti. The same way the U.S. has bad people, we have bad people. We will let you know that us, with the good mentalities, suffer the

most. Whenever the missionaries would like to give us help, we are always ready to receive it.

An additional competency frequently brought up by beneficiaries was that of collaboration. Many shared stories of projects begun without community involvement and children enrolled in “programs” without parental permission. Likewise, many praised organizations that worked well with the community. One beneficiary spoke highly of an NGO in his area, saying, *“When we meet them, they always show that they want to collaborate with us. Like we were saying earlier, they are always asking us questions, they show us good character, they show us that they are here for us.”*

Beneficiaries also emphasized other components of cultural knowledge that they believed to be important. Due to the high level of mistrust toward Haitian translators and aid workers, language skills, particularly the ability to speak Haitian Kreyol, was rated highly. One beneficiary explained, *“When the missionaries come and speak Kreyol, when they make the effort to speak it, we feel more respected.”* Another said, *“If I understood you and you understood me, we would work faster and better together. When I see you, you can laugh with me and smile with me. Language differences make it very hard to advance the relationship.”*

When asked if professional skills were more important than personal qualities, many Haitians identified specific expertise, such as medical skills and engineering skills. Overall, technical skills were seen to be less important than interpersonal qualities that established trust. One community leader explained how technical skills were secondary to other skills, saying,

“The world speaks of what it needs. So if you find a sick person, you need a doctor. If you find a person who needs prayer, they need a pastor. Whatever the skill or quality of the person [aid worker], they will find a way to put it to use.”

While future research is needed to better understand the reasons for this disconnect, it is important to note that public service frequently overlooks soft skills, such as emotive skills, and the cultural contextualization of competencies (Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Simon 1947; Weber 1946).

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the importance of culture and examined the development of intercultural competencies from the perspective of the international organizations involved in disaster response and recovery after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The intercultural competencies mentioned reflect intercultural awareness, knowledge, skills, and the ability to listen and cultivate trust. These categories include acknowledging one's stereotypes, biases, or culturally based assumptions and an awareness and respect of the culture they will be working in; being educated in the local history, language, religion, and culture; being able to communicate in the beneficiary's own language; and being able to listen to beneficiaries and cultivate trust. From the perspectives of the aid workers, in-field experience, relationships with beneficiaries, mentoring, and instructive training were the most effective ways to gain these skills.

Despite some notable examples, the data showed a widespread lack of organization-directed training. Existing cultural competence curriculum and self-

assessment tools, such as *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Cultural Competency Curriculum for Disaster Preparedness and Crisis Response*, are either unknown or underutilized and don't necessarily crossover to the international post-disaster context. Other well-developed assessment tools are geared toward measuring cultural competence in private business, rather than having a post-disaster focus.

Agencies can address these deficiencies by providing cultural competence training, both before deployment and while in the field, and encouraging periodic self-assessment and organizational assessment. Agencies should also reconsider policies and restrictions (e.g., curfews, compounds) that isolate employees from becoming familiar with the local population and adapting to life in the field.

While this study begins to fill the gap on cultural competence in the public administration literature, there are still many questions to be answered. The current categories of cultural competencies come are geared more toward private business. These categories could be adapted to the post-disaster response and recovery context.

Additionally, self-assessments and curriculum that focus on domestic healthcare should be broadened to include post-disaster workers in developing countries. Further research is still needed to look at these issues from the rarely heard perspective of the beneficiaries receiving the aid.

The findings of this study reveal the high value placed on cultural competence by response and recovery workers in the field. Intercultural competence reaches beyond context-specific knowledge, develops a set of skills that allow the aid worker to step into any cultural context and provide compassionate and competent care, to build trust with

disaster victims, and to communicate hope in a way that is culturally appropriate and effective.

CHAPTER V

CULTURAL COMPETENCE ACQUISITION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters of this dissertation highlighted the importance of cultural competence to effective post-disaster response and recovery work. They emphasized the need for personal attributes, emotive skills, expertise, and cultural knowledge. They also introduced the concept of cultural knowledge as a modifier for the other three components (personal attributes, expertise, and emotive skills) and discussed the perspectives of aid agencies, aid workers, and Haitian beneficiaries.

While this dissertation sought to discover which cultural competencies were most necessary for response and recovery workers (first research question), it also sought to discover how these skills are best acquired (second research question). Research from the private sector suggests that cultural competence skills are acquired through a combination of training, intercultural experience, and life experience, but there has been little discussion of how these competencies are acquired in public sector work and, in particular, among disaster response and recovery workers (McCall and Hollenbeck 2002).

Using a combination of data from the focus groups, in-depth interviews, surveys, and secondary sources, this chapter will discuss these issues with a specific focus on two facets of cultural competence acquisition. First, it will discuss the strategies identified by the aid workers as most useful in acquiring cultural competencies. The interview and survey data showed that having relationships with trusted community members, being immersed in the host culture, and mentoring with experienced aid workers were the primary ways that cultural competence was acquired. Second, it will compare the

perspective of the aid worker with that of the agency by examining agency cultural competence policies and training manuals and discussing how they facilitate or hinder acquisition. The data from this study reveals that, with some notable exceptions, most organizational practices are in direct conflict with the strategies identified by both aid workers and Haitian beneficiaries. From reading books, to formal classes, to mentoring, and immersion, agency-directed cultural competence training is diverse and not standard, and often non-existent.

5.2 Methods

The in-depth interviews (n=89) were taken from international aid workers who responded after the 2010 earthquake, many who were still stationed in Haiti at the time of data collection. 89 interviews were included in this sample, 48 collected solely for this dissertation and 41 during the previous NIH study. The interviews with Haitian aid workers are not included in this sample because the aim of this chapter is to uncover how international aid workers develop the ability to work in a context that is not their own.

In total, 44 agencies participated in this project. I was able to obtain cultural competence training material from 17 of the 44 participating agencies; 13 of the 44 had no training materials at all. The 22 remaining agencies either didn't respond to my request or were unsure of their organization's confidentiality policies. The analysis of these secondary sources, along with that of 146 job announcements, yielded significant insights and helped us better understand the cultural competency requirements by aid agencies and the means by which agencies trained their staff to acquire them. This study also utilized 134 closed ended surveys with response and recovery workers involved in

the 2010 Haitian earthquake. The results of this data were analyzed using Nvivo and generated numerous insights into the nature of cultural competence and how it is best acquired.

5.3 Findings

In the close-ended survey that provided key data for this study, 89% (n=119) of aid workers surveyed described cultural competence as a critical dimension of their work. Despite this, 42% (n=56) of respondents had received no formal training, either before coming to Haiti or while in the field. Many of those who received no training reflected on the damage that not being culturally competent caused early in their deployment. One aid worker who had been in Haiti for seven years explained,

I have worked in an NGO here with hardly any knowledge of Haitian culture and look back and shudder at the damage I probably caused. I believe now that it is probably necessary in any position in any NGO to truly understand Haitians.

Another field worker echoed this sentiment, explaining that he wished he had been more prepared for recovery work in Haiti. “*Sensitivity training and some language skills should have been offered me (or required!) before I was allowed to serve here,*” he said. “*When I came the first time I wasn’t prepared in any way, at all. Not technically, not emotionally, not any way.*”

In-depth interview participants from the NIH study and this dissertation were asked to provide a copy of their cultural competence training material. Training material ranged from a 1 page “Haitian culture tip sheet” to an 83-page booklet covering religion, politics, language, and non-verbal communication. Of the 17 training manuals collected,

the median amount of page numbers was 12. During the in-depth interviews, aid workers were asked about the type and quality of cultural competence training they received both prior to deployment and while in the field. While most organizations relegated their cultural competence training to a single-day seminar, orientation packet, or reading assignments, some organizations provided training and debriefing to help develop and enhance intercultural skills. One social worker described her training experience in the following words:

Most of our employees and volunteers go through training where they are given background information on the country and some basic cultural and religious norms since most of the country is heavily attached to some type of religious belief. Once in Haiti they are given times to debrief daily and then weekly, as they process the changes that they are seeing, experiencing or being exposed to.

Although not the norm, some organizations provided a high level of support both prior to deployment and while in the field. One aid worker, employed as a health education manager explained: *“There is an orientation before you come and you take Creole classes and have instruction in Haitian culture; 25 hours per week for your first few months in Haiti.”* The training manual acquired from this organization included 43 pages on Haitian customs/norm and stated at the bottom of each page *“This information is intended to be used as a basis for further exploration rather than generalizations or stereotyping.”*

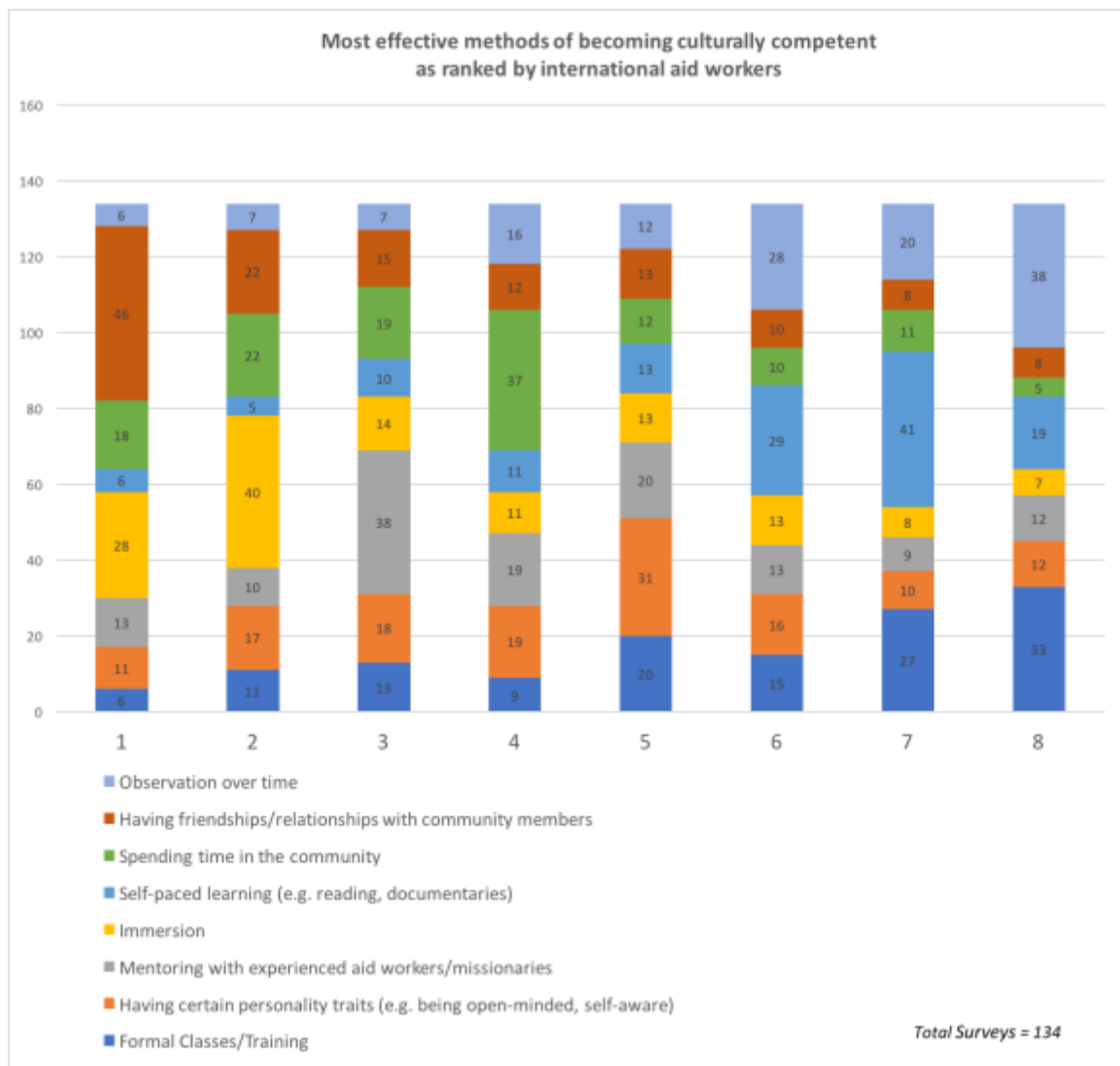
Formal classes

Formal classes and training can help aid workers to acquire context-specific knowledge, such as information about a host country's history, geography, and demographics. It can provide insight into political situations and basic insight into cultural practices. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, simply acquiring cultural knowledge is not enough and presents culture as a static construct, running the risk of causing stereotyping. According to this study's in-depth interviews, exposure to culture while also having relationships with those in that culture helps the aid worker learn the local mindset, which was considered much more valuable than cultural knowledge alone. A recovery worker with more than 5 years of experience emphasized the importance of having *"trusted Haitian friends, so you learn the local mindset. You can't learn that in a book or a class. These relationships take time to develop, but they are well worth it if you want to understand the culture and be most effective in your work."* Another interviewee who had been in Haiti since the earthquake stated that, while it was beneficial to have a formal *"education of the culture before one comes, there also is a learning curve of just being in the culture and having experience..."* This concept of a learning curve, of skills that can only be acquired experientially and authentically, came up repeatedly during interviews.

Despite this, many interviewees still emphasized the need for organizations to also offer significant pre-departure training programs that focus on intercultural skills, specifically language skills. As discussed in the previous chapter, language skills are the most valued in terms of cultural knowledge from both the perspective of the aid worker and the beneficiary.

The chart below (Figure 5a) shows the most effective ways of acquiring cultural competence from the perspective of the international aid worker. The survey asked the aid workers to rank 8 methods of acquisition (observation over time, having friendships/relationship in the community, spending time in the community, self-paced learning, mentoring, immersion, having certain personality traits, formal classes/training) in order of effectiveness. According to the online survey, having friendships/relationships with community members was the top method, followed by immersion second, and mentoring third. Formal classes and self-paced learning ranking in the bottom three, below having certain personality traits (e.g. being open-minded, self-aware) and spending time in the field.

Figure 5a Ranking of Cultural Competencies by Aid Workers



Source: Nvivo 11

Immersion

Many response and recovery workers included in the study highlighted the fact that the best ways to acquire the necessary intercultural skills were to immerse themselves in the culture and spend time with the local population. In the words of one of the interviewees, although one could try to familiarize himself/herself with a particular culture by reading books, there is only so much one can learn from the books. In her eyes,

what mattered the most was to build relationships based on trust so that people can open up to you and allow you to experience their “true” culture:

There is no better way of learning the true culture of a country than actually being in it and immersed in it. You can read all you want, but after a while, until you get to know people, and they get to know you, and open up to you, that's the other thing. Until they get to trust you and open you, you can't really start making that connection, or that relationship that you need in order to build or progress or head forward.

Another aid worker reiterated this point, emphasizing that it is incumbent upon the aid worker, who is a guest in another culture, to proactively take advantage of every opportunity to connect with those they serve, saying, *“Learn the language. Get out in the community as much as possible - don't wait for the Haitians to go to you...meet them where they are. Don't just work with the Haitians, play with them too: play cards with the old men, play futbol (soccer) with the boys, play marbles with the kids, sit and cook with the women.... your work won't matter to them if they don't matter to you.”*

Relationships/Friendships

The theme of proactively seeking out cultural knowledge through relationships/friendships came up frequently. Aid workers emphasized the need to see beneficiaries as more than numbers and statistics, a shift in viewpoint that they believed could only occur by getting out into the community and viewing beneficiaries in their life contexts. As one aid worker explained, *“I go out to the camps, just on my own, to look on for people we've built relationships with now. These aren't numbers. These are families.*

These are people that we've come to know. So I often go out just to see how they are, just to say hi, to see if there's a change in the camps." Genuine relationships helped aid workers connect with their work and see their beneficiaries as unique individuals with personal needs, tragedies, hopes, and dreams.

Another aid worker emphasized the fact that cultural knowledge is the result of dialogue with those being served. *"Listen and ask questions to make sure to understand the situation. Know the whys,"* they explained. *"Get them to understand why you are there and that you really do care. Spend lots of time in Haiti and always work to improve language and cultural knowledge."* This sense of building a database of cultural knowledge through dialogue was a theme that came up regularly.

This was echoed in the focus groups with Haitian beneficiaries. When asked what they would do if tasked with training aid workers to be culturally competent, the responses overwhelmingly pointed toward spending time in the community and having friendships/relationships with local members. One focus group participant discussed how the aid workers, referred to as 'missionaries', would spend time with the Haitian elite and therefore be uninformed about the day-to-day challenges facing the community,

...sometimes the missionaries [aid workers] do not go to meet the people who have the problems, they go to those in the high places (i.e. the elite). In this area, we know the problems that we have here. The ones in the high places don't know the problems we have. If the missionaries want their programs to work they need to meet with the population that live in the area.

In another focus group, many participants described how they would take time to teach the aid workers the individual characteristics and needs within and between communities and reiterated the opinion that having a trusted Haitian friend/colleague who could provide explanation and insight was essential to truly understanding the culture and specific life experiences of those in the community rather than attempting to learn generalized information from a secondhand source. A young university student in his 20s explained,

You need to have someone who knows the customs of the country and lives in the country so they can explain things to you. You can learn from them how to best live in this country. I think it is going to be better if you do it like this, better than taking a class or reading a book.

During the focus groups, the act of spending time with the beneficiaries and taking time to listen to them speak was greatly appreciated. Beneficiaries in some camps expressed numerous times how this was the first time that they had ever been sought out and given a platform to share their voices. Because so much of their lives depended on NGO assistance, their relationship with aid workers was often complex, and their shared opinions were nuanced, multifaceted, and changed from location to location.

During one focus group, the conversation revealed that there was significant bitterness toward the organization that managed their camp. This bitterness centered on the organization's failure to connect with and get to know the local community. When asked what aid workers could do to better learn the culture, a male in his 50s who is a community leader stated, *"This is a big question. This is a big problem that you're*

talking about. The missionaries [aid workers] never sit with us how we are sitting now, talking. Every organization just looks at everything within themselves.”

Mentoring

Another recurring theme among aid workers was the desire for formal mentoring. Mentoring placed first more often than formal classes, personality traits, self-paced learning or observation over time (see Figure 5a). Many aid workers strongly believed that newcomers could gain a significant advantage from learning cultural knowledge from those who had come before. As one interviewee explained,

I think mentoring is perhaps the greatest way to become able to work in this culture, even more than spending time in the field. If you are alone in the field you may misinterpret things. It is eye opening to walk along with someone who has been there and done that.

According to one interviewee, training programs should ideally include a mentorship with an experienced aid worker who was familiar with what was referred to as ‘on-the-ground realities.’ “...*I think what people could do is have briefings with colleagues who’ve worked in some of the situations before who can share their experiences and maybe give you a heads up as to what to look out for.*”

Personality traits

In the online survey there was a box for optional comments after the participants ranked the methods of acquisition. Dozens of respondents took this opportunity to lend additional insight to their responses. Referring to personality traits, one aid worker

mentioned *“You have to be humble and unbiased...assume nothing.”* Other responses such as *“be humble and go slow”* and *“awareness that it takes time”* revealed that, despite training and other factors, personality traits played a role in becoming culturally competent. In the in-depth interviews, while some participants stated that personality traits could be taught, others believed that they were innate, and that personality was a major determinant of whether or not someone could thrive in an intercultural setting. This topic of personal attributes was discussed previously in chapter 3.

In order to confirm the findings from the survey, I turned to the transcripts of the in-depth interviews. Using NVivo, I coded the questions of the interviews that asked about cultural competence acquisition. The word cloud below (Figure 5b) represents the most commonly used words in the responses about acquiring cultural competencies. Words like “ask,” “go,” “see” are prominent, along with the words “community,” “mentoring,” and “friends.” This further supports the findings from the survey that the most effective way to become culturally competent is through experiential and relational methods.

emphasized

intercultural field

spending classes

questions

workers

training

give

close

time

task

see

learn

books

mentoring

personality

social

teach

caused

effective

beneficiaries

briefings

cultures

groups

alone

organizations

relationships

understand

formal

flexible

response

community

culture

use

aid

mentor

open

trusted

awareness

agency

perspective

fact

answer

humble

assume

learning

experience

programs

reading

explained

media

establish

local

embrace

ways

experiences

colleagues

experienced

facebook

worked

depth

build

As shown in Figures 5a and 5b above, of the most effective ways to acquire cultural competence, having friendships/relationships with community members was the top method, followed by immersion, and mentoring. This is important because on this same survey, 41% of the respondents indicated that they felt the policies of their

organization were a barrier to cultural competence acquisition by preventing these very things. During the follow up group interviews, participants had the chance to confirm the preliminary findings of this study and weigh in on the topic of organizational barriers, such as curfews and policies that restricted travel or interaction and relationship building with the local population. As one aid worker explained,

I feel like it puts a barrier between you and the local population and not in necessarily a positive way. I understand it as well; organizations have a responsibility to keep employees safe as well. Sometimes, I feel that it makes it a bit more challenging to get the buy in and the trust that you need to do effective work.

Some interviewees also indicated that, in addition to the training they received pre-placement on culture, their organizations needed to reconsider some of the restrictions, such as curfews and restricted zones, that kept them from being fully immersed in the Haitian world. They believed that curfews, which require aid workers to be inside their base's gates by a certain time in the evening, and restricted zones, which describe areas of the country aid workers are not allowed to travel or only allowed to travel with specific preapproval, are in reality, counterproductive. Such restrictions led to less interaction with the outside world and prevented aid workers from engaging with and learning from those they served. These restrictions also limited their ability to learn and practice the language, understand the culture, and build community trust. As one interviewee, a grant writer who lived in Haiti, explained, staff members often struggle to understand the rationale behind such strictures and that they can quickly become a source of frustration:

The UN have their own curfew and restrictions. All the major organizations have them. Some people I know have curfew as early as 6:00pm every night, so basically they go to their office and they go home so they can't have leave and things like that. Ours is a bit more flexible but even so there are certain parts of town you can't go to, you're not really, there is a list of restaurants and bars and places that you're supposed to go to. Anything off that list you're supposed to get security clearance to do. But, you know, like a local, cheap hangout are definitely frowned upon because those places are looked at as more dangerous. You know, some of it seems very arbitrary to me.

These restrictions are considered standard operating procedures for many aid agencies. Often, they are incorporated into worker contracts and are requirements instead of guidelines. In these organizations, workers must follow these restrictions or consequences will follow. One interviewee touched on this subject, explaining how though they appreciated their organization's desire to protect them, they felt frustrated by the nature of the restrictions, which seemed arbitrary, overly fearful, and confusing.

According to many of the interviewees, the purpose behind many organizations' restrictions was, to a certain degree, understandable. Organizations need to make an effort to protect their employees from harm. However, the trade-off for this 'enforced safety' frequently erected barriers between the aid workers and the people they were meant to serve. As one aid worker explained:

I think one of the biggest things I've had difficulty with, or the hardest part has been all the security regulations in Haiti and just the separation of the aid

communities from Haitians from the local population. I think it makes it really difficult to, earn trust and really integrate into communities and things like that when there are really rigid security restrictions about where you can go, and how long you can be in a certain place and all these different kinds of protocols that make it very difficult. To engage the community in a way that I'd like to and a way that I had prior, in situations other than Haiti. So that has essentially been a challenge. Even things as simple as the restaurants we are allowed to go to and things like that. They are really very high level and it's somewhat stressful at times, you know, to be driving to a restaurant where you're going to spend like \$30 on your meal, probably for something to eat and you are driving past IDP camps the entire way. That was very difficult for me...

The Haitian beneficiaries' perspectives were in line with the aid workers. Some beneficiaries described the compounds that aid workers lived in as “cages.” These tall, high-walled, tightly secured compounds were designed to protect the expats within, but projected an unwelcome, exclusive, and divisive front to Haitian beneficiaries. More than once, focus group participants mentioned that Haitians were not even allowed on NGO property. While this is likely rumor, it reveals the level of separation felt between the Haitian beneficiaries and the aid workers who have come to help them.

5.5 Chapter Summary

The data from this study revealed an overall lack of organization-directed training on cross cultural competence among NGOs. Of those organizations that provided training materials, little of it was comprehensive and even less organizations provided mentoring, immersion, or language programs. Tools already available, such as the Cultural

Competency Program for Disaster Preparedness and Crisis Response by the U.S.

Department of Health & Human Services, were unknown by most organizations. Those that were aware of their existence either did not employ them or didn't believe they were relevant to international post-disaster scenarios.

Additionally, other assessment tools were born out of private business, with a focus on helping global corporations develop their international teams. Because of the delicate nature of post-disaster response and recovery work and the complexities of cross-cultural interactions within an international context, both training and assessment instruments need to be geared toward the needs of aid agencies and victims of disasters and deal with the serious personal and emotional nature of the work.

Agencies can help to address these unique needs by taking cross-cultural competence training seriously and by creating comprehensive training programs and systems of evaluation and assessment. This includes training before deployment and recurring training and evaluation for those in the field. It is also important to note how frequently aid workers expressed the detrimental nature of isolating agency policies and restrictions (e.g., curfews, compounds). Many aid organizations not only require curfews and limit their employees access to the outside world, they also frequently have organizational policies that completely prevent Haitians friends from even coming on base during off-hours. This not only isolates employees, keeping them from gaining confidence and familiarity with the local community, but it also inhibits their ability to adapt to life in their host country, and sends strong signals of distrust and even disdain to the surrounding population.

While the survey did rank some methods of acquisition higher than others, this by no means discounts the importance of those methods. In the comments box, one recovery worker explained, “Great survey. This is always so hard to know the RIGHT answer. All of these things need to happen for expats to really "get" a culture.” While cultural information can be acquired through traditional means of learning, this dissertation emphasizes the living nature of acquisition. Cultural competence skills are a synthesis of explicit cultural knowledge and professional skills with dynamic and changing emotive skills and the vital personal attributes that make acquisition possible. Such lively and fluid competencies require a comprehensive approach on the part of training agencies. They need to do more than communicate knowledge. They must train aid workers to be able see, think, and respond outside of their cultural paradigms and norms and to adapt to circumstances that are ever in flux. As one aid worker explained, *“Our cultural lenses don't always fit here, so find out what the Haitian cultural lens is and filter everything through that.”*

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In 2010, collective international governments and private response to humanitarian crises spent an estimated \$18 billion on humanitarian response (GHA Report 2012). The slow global economy has led to scrutiny of this expenditure and has put pressure on relief organizations to be more effective and more ethical, with less cost. In addition, thousands of response and recovery workers are deployed worldwide, serving millions of people impacted by disasters. Despite this, there has been little research into the role that cross cultural competencies play in this work, how they are acquired, or the impact of their absence.

These findings from this dissertation have implications for both research and practice. This study contributes to the disaster, public administration, and cultural competence literature by highlighting the importance of cross-cultural competencies in international disaster response and recovery work and how they are viewed in terms of increasing program effectiveness. The findings also reveal which training techniques and strategies are most effective at preparing aid workers for cross-cultural aid work and provides recommendations which may help response and recovery agencies tailor policies to facilitate the acquisition of these skills prior to entering the field.

The previous chapters of this dissertation answered the following questions: Which skills/traits are necessary for aid workers to be culturally competent in disaster response and recovery? What are the factors that hinder or enable aid workers to acquire cross-cultural competencies? How can response and recovery agencies facilitate the acquisition of cultural competencies that are needed in disaster response and recovery?

This chapter will summarize the main findings of the dissertation and the implications of these findings for both research and practice. It will discuss the methodological strengths and limitations and provide directions for future research on this topic.

6.1 Recommendations

The previous chapters discussed the importance of cultural competence in effective aid work and highlighted the deficiencies that exist from an organizational perspective in terms of training and preparation. Agencies wanting to increase cultural competence must address these deficiencies from both an organizational and individual perspective. This can be done through recruitment, training, and creating an organizational culture which values diversity and encourages the development of intercultural skills. First, cultural competence must be a normalized part of organizational policies and priorities. This must occur long before a crisis happens. Many of the organizations who responded in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake arrived in Haiti with no prior involvement in the nation and little cross-cultural experience. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, it is too late to train aid workers in the complexities of cross cultural work or provide them with the necessary experience and training that will enable them to adapt to their new environment.

Second, these policies must extend to individual employees through policies which expect cultural competence and facilitate its development. Careful selection of employees can recruit individuals who have a commitment to cultural competence and the personal attributes (self-awareness, compassion) necessary to develop it. Adding cultural competence expectations to job announcements and considering personal attributes and expertise during interviews is a step in the right direction. Screening

questions and personality assessments help ‘tip the scales’ early on in favor of cultural competence success.

Organizations must also provide an environment for healthy dialogue and exchange between international and domestic employees. One interviewee shared how her organization provided these opportunities during what they called “poukisa parties”, (*poukisa* means *why* in Haitian Creole).

Just ask questions. We have "poukisa parties" on our campus sometimes. All the Americans/Haitians/Canadians/Norwegians or whatever other nationality we happen to have on staff at the moment write down anonymous cultural questions and we read them out loud and everyone answers them. It's a lot of fun, especially with a crowd who is open and not easily offended.

Third, organizations can address these deficiencies by providing intentional, agency-led training. This can include formal training in the ‘basics’ of a host nation’s culture and cultural propriety and sensitivity training. It should also include, as often as possible, language training, something particularly true for long term aid workers. While formal classes and training were not identified as the most effective way to become culturally competent, they are nevertheless important, and provide essential information which serves as a starting point for improving intercultural understanding. As discussed in the preceding chapters, this cultural knowledge can serve as a modifier for other components of cultural competence.

Fourth, organizations should reconsider policies that isolate employees from the local population and hinder or discourage employees from acquiring cultural competencies. While some measures of restriction and protection may always be

necessary, this study reveals that cross cultural competence acquisition hinges on aid workers' ability to understand and engage with their host nation and its context. Permitting employees to spend time in the communities they are serving, allowing Haitian friends at agency bases during off hours, and reconsidering curfews and restricted zones are all ways to encourage aid workers to form those relationships/friendships which facilitate intercultural skill development. Additionally, agencies may want to consider this when hiring, helping potential hires fully understand and consider the safety/efficacy trade-off that they are making.

6.2 Strengths and Limitations

A limitation of the sample used in this study is the possibility of self-selection bias, since interviewees opted to participate in this study. However, individuals in post-disaster response and recovery jobs have self-selected that career and are, in my experience, passionate about the work they do and very willing to discuss their work. Additionally, while participants self-selected, we approached a wide and diverse pool of organizations in order to include different aspects of response and recovery work. Nearly everyone asked to participate was willing to do so. Those who refused did so because of time restrictions or technological failures. Because many participants were afraid that their responses may reflect poorly on their agency or their community, confidentiality of the participants was ensured.

Although the data from this study is not representative, the findings may be transferrable to other post-disaster contexts and have implications for aid work in general. Although the scope of this study is limited to the Haitian context, the sample was diverse

and global in nature due to the high number of NGOs operating in Haiti, the ethnic, age, and gender diversity of participants, and the variety of sectors represented. Because of this, the findings may have general implications for post-disaster response and recovery operations and for other cultural contexts. This may be particularly true for other fragile states, where issues of infrastructure, autonomy, and scarce resources create complex response and recovery environments.

By design, this study had several methodological strengths. First, as discussed in chapter 2, the usage of the qualitative analysis software NVivo to formulate themes, organize materials, and find connections in the data strengthens the validity and thoroughness of the findings. Second, my experience and connections in Haiti helped me collect quality data by allowing me to build rapport with both aid workers and beneficiaries and gain access to communities and aid agencies. Additionally, my knowledge of the Haitian context enhanced my ability to interpret the subtle nuances in conversation and body language that would otherwise go unnoticed. how my identity and personal bias may have impacted this study. Third, the research team for the NIH project and of those advising my dissertation was from diverse international backgrounds, some of them Haitian-American. These diverse advisors helped me identify and see beyond my own biases.

Fourth, although the dissertation data was collected starting 4 years after the disaster, recovery operations are ongoing. By building upon the data from the prior NIH study which was collected in the response and early recovery phases, data from 6 years of recovery is available. Since recovery operations, especially in fragile nations such as Haiti, can take decades, this longer timeline strengthened the reliability and richness of

my findings. Some of the participants from the NIH study also participated in my dissertation research allowing me to compare how their perspectives had changed over time.

Fifth, my study design used multiple best practices for qualitative research to increase the reliability and confirmability of my findings. I used the triangulation of multiple types of sources. The secondary data collected (e.g. training materials, job announcements) came from the same agencies were a part of the field work (e.g. in-depth interviews, focus groups, surveys). Having this congruency between the three perspectives (agency, aid worker, beneficiary) in the same organizations provides a unique opportunity to validate the findings from the perspectives of all primary stakeholders in an organization and from three different points of view. By conducting follow up focus groups, my preliminary findings were both confirmed and strengthened by the additional insight provided by participants.

6.3 Future Research Directions

The findings from this study have generated many questions which should be explored through future research. The wealth of data collected between the two projects has yet to be fully explored and is rich in potential for future uses. First, the NIH project and my dissertation gained permission from participants and the IRB to retain contact information. As the work in Haiti continues, this may be useful for additional research looking at long-term recovery, which has been less studied than disaster response operations. Furthermore, many aid workers who were stationed in Haiti during data collection have moved to other international assignments, creating a global network of resources for future research and possible follow-up studies.

Second, because there was a large overlap between response and recovery work following the 2010 earthquake, this dissertation examined response and recovery from a unified perspective. Additional research may provide interesting insights into any possible differences between the cross cultural competencies unique to each domain.

Third, this project included multiple types of organizations, which may have been a factor in the quality and type of cultural competence training provided. Preliminary analysis shows that some of the most comprehensive and thorough cultural competence programs came from both large and small organizations. Likewise, some of the greatest deficiencies were found in the organizations with the most resources. However, other organizational variations such as age, mission, religious affiliation, and country of origin may shed light on these variations. This topic has yet to be explored and additional data would need to be collected for this analysis.

Fourth, more research is needed into cultural competence at the individual level. Factors such as gender, nationality, years of experience, and prior assignments may provide valuable insight into the best methods of acquisition and how agencies can select individuals better suited for the job and be more effective in training. Fourth, due to a weak government and poor oversight, thousands of NGOs operate in Haiti and many of them were established solely for work in the Haitian context. This study should be repeated in another region and post-disaster context to see if the findings are confirmed. However, although many of the organizations operate only in Haiti, the majority of the participating agencies had a global mission, with projects in multiple countries.

6.4 Conclusion

My first trip to Haiti was now more than 16 years ago. I was a teenager at the time and the impact it had on my life was profound. Over the years, Haiti, aid work, and the complex NGO sector increasingly became a focus of intense interest. Watching first-hand the repercussions of aid work, both positive and negative, in the lives of beneficiaries piqued my interest in NGO efficacy. Later, the privilege of working on the previously mentioned NIH study gave me the opportunity to understand the systemic relationship between cultural competence, aid work, organizational efficacy, and both aid worker and beneficiary well-being. This dissertation was born out of this experience and a strong desire to help improve the long-term impact of response and recovery work around the world.

This study has two primary takeaways. First, it proposes a new framework for cross-cultural competence that is particularly designed for use in international aid work, which is a significant contribution to the existing literature on cultural competence and post-disaster response and recovery. In this framework, cultural knowledge is a modifier instead of just a component, shown by the equation $CK (PA+ES+EX) = \text{Cultural Competence}$. When modified by explicit cultural knowledge, emotive skills, expertise, and personal attributes are contextualized in order to meet the specific needs of the beneficiary, increasing their efficacy. Second, this study reveals how these cultural competencies are best acquired and offers important suggestions to aid organizations on their development.

While these findings are important, this dissertation also has important secondary results. It gives voice to Haitian beneficiaries, a group that, though often served, is

traditionally marginalized. It also gives voice to the needs and perspectives of aid workers. These two groups' experiences, wisdom, and viewpoints have the potential to increase the trust between aid workers and beneficiaries, help aid workers adjust to working and living in a cross-cultural post-disaster environment, and increase our understanding of how cultural competence can make aid programs more equitable and just.

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APPENDIX 1

LIST OF AGENCIES

Action Against Hunger International (ACF)	Haiti Partners
American Refugee Committee	Handicap International
American University of the Caribbean	Healing Hearts International
Apparent Project	HOPE Mission International
Blessings International	Hope Rising
Bread to the Nations	Housing, Education, and Rehabilitation of Orphans, Inc. (H.E.R.O.)
Cabaret Haiti Mission	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Care	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Catholic Relief Services	JP/Haitian Relief Organization
Childhope	Lifeline International
Children of the Promise	Mission of Hope Haiti
Concern	Much Ministries
Crossworld	People for Haiti
Doctors Without Borders	Port Au Prince Fellowship
Elevate Haiti	Project Medishare
Enstiti Travay Sosyal ak Syans Sosyal	ReMission Inc
Family Health Ministries	Samaritan's Purse
Fearless Warriors for Haiti	Spanish Red Cross
Florida Baptist Convention	The Path of Hope
Freedom Global Outreach	U.S. Army (Southcom)
Global	World Orphans
GOALS	World Vision International

APPENDIX 2 INSTRUMENTS



Modified Consent to Participate in Research

You are asked to participate in a research study directed by Christa Remington and Dr. Nazife Ganapati from Florida International University in the U.S. entitled *Cross-cultural competence and the emotional labor of aid workers after the 2010 Haiti earthquake*. The purpose of the study is to learn about the importance of cultural competence training in effective job performance and in managing the emotional aspects of post disaster response and recovery. Your participation should take approximately 30 minutes to 1hr. You were chosen to participate in this study because of your job as a recovery worker in Haiti.

There are no known risks or benefits to you for helping with the interview. However, the study will help response and recovery workers better understand the emotional challenges and the role of cultural competence of their work in disaster zones. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. While completing the interview, please keep in mind that there is no right or wrong answer. What is important is your own personal experience on the job. Please be candid with your responses; they will be kept fully confidential. Although we ask for your name and your email address, this is only for follow-up purposes in the future. There will be no way to link the interview to you. We thank you for your help in advance.

You may keep this form in case you want to contact someone about the study. If you have questions about this study before or after you do the survey you can call Christa L. Remington at (863) 243-1579 [Email: cremi001@fiu.edu] or Dr. Ganapati at (954) 443-4957 (Home) or (305) 348-0436 (Office) [Email: ganapat@fiu.edu]. If you would like to talk with someone about your rights of being a subject in this research study or about ethical issues with this research study, you may contact the FIU Office of Research Integrity by phone at 305-348-2494 or by email at ori@fiu.edu. Your consent will be granted, as a result of completing the survey. If you choose not to complete the interview, no other action is needed.



Cultural Competence Among Aid Workers

You are asked to participate in a research study directed by Dr. N. Emel Ganapati from Florida International University in the U.S. entitled The cultural competence of response and recovery workers in post-earthquake Haiti. The purpose of the study is to learn about the importance of cultural competence training in effective job performance and in managing the emotional aspects of post disaster response and recovery. Your participation should take approximately 30 minutes. You were chosen at random to be in this study.

We ask that you complete the following questionnaire. There are no known risks or benefits to you for helping with the survey. However, the study will help response and recovery workers better understand the emotional challenges and the role of cultural competence of their work in disaster zones. You may withdraw from the study at any time. While completing the survey, please keep in mind that there is no right or wrong answer. What is important is your own personal experience on the job. Please be candid with your responses; they will be kept fully confidential. Although we ask for your name and your email address, this is only for follow-up purposes in the future. There will be no way to link your answers to you. We thank you for your help in advance. You may keep this form in case you want to contact someone about the study. If you have questions about this study before or after you do the survey you can call Dr. Ganapati at (954) 443-4957 (Home) or (305) 348-0436 (Office) [Email: ganapat@fiu.edu] or Christa L. Remington at (863) 243-1579 [Email: cremi001@fiu.edu]. If you would like to talk with someone about your rights of being a subject in this research study or about ethical issues with this research study, you may contact the FIU Office of Research Integrity by phone at 305-348-2494 or by email at ori@fiu.edu. Your consent will be granted, as a result of completing the survey. If you choose not to complete the survey, no other action is needed. Please click 'agree' to continue.

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree

Where were you born? _____

What is your nationality? _____

How old are you?

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-30
- ☐ 31-35
- ☐ 36-40
- ☐ 41-45
- ☐ 46-50
- ☐ 51-55
- ☐ 56-60

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

What is your marital status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Separated

What is the highest grade of school or degree you have completed?

- ☐ Less than high school (including rheto)
- ☐ High school (including philo)
- ☐ College level without a bachelor's degree (including bac)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree
- ☐ Other (Please Specify) _____

What type of work were you in before you began working in Haiti? _____

Which agency do you work for? _____

Please complete the following statement with the answer that describes you best. "In my organization I am _____"

- ☐ One of many, paid full-time employees
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ The sole employee
- ☐ The executive
- ☐ A volunteer

How long have you been working in your current job?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-5 years
- ☐ 6-7 years
- ☐ 8-9 years
- ☐ 10 or more years

Were you in Haiti at the time of the January 12, 2010 earthquake?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How long after the earthquake did you arrive in Haiti?

- ☐ Less than 1 week
- ☐ More than 1 week but less than 1 month
- ☐ More than 1 month but less than 3 months
- ☐ More than 3 month but less than 6 months
- ☐ More than 6 months but less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-6 years

In which response or recovery area have you been mainly involved in after the January 12, 2010 earthquake?

- ☐ Search and rescue
- ☐ Medical care
- ☐ Damage assessment
- ☐ Debris removal
- ☐ Shelter/housing provision
- ☐ Rehabilitation
- ☐ Safety/Security
- ☐ Infrastructure restoration
- ☐ Other (Please Specify) _____

Choose the answer that best describes how your organization's priorities are determined?

- ☐ Determined by an organizational board in my country of origin
- ☐ Determined by a sole organizational executive
- ☐ Determined by me
- ☐ Determined by a leadership or board in Haiti

How many disasters have you been involved in response and/or recovery-related issues as a professional before the earthquake? These disasters could be natural hazards such as

earthquakes, hurricanes and floods or man-made ones such as terrorist events. Please Specify.

- ☐ 0 _____
- ☐ 1 _____
- ☐ 2 _____
- ☐ 3 _____
- ☐ 4 _____
- ☐ 5 or more _____

Do you speak Haitian Creole?

- ☐ Some
- ☐ Fluently
- ☐ A little
- ☐ Not at all

Just in case we need to contact you for follow-up purposes, could you please provide your contact information (Name, Email, Phone number)? All information will be kept strictly confidential and kept separate from your answers. If you do not wish to give your information, please leave it blank.

Please describe your current job responsibilities in Haiti.

Is cultural competence a critical dimension of your job?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

In your opinion, what are some of the main differences between your culture and Haitian culture?

When interacting with a person from a different culture than your own, how do you ensure that communication is effective?

What qualities do you think are most important to have when working with disaster victims in a different cultural context?

How do you think Haitian beneficiaries expect aid workers to act based on their cultural norms?

Do Haitian beneficiaries expect you to behave in a certain way based on their cultural norms?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Do you conform to their expectations or not?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Explain _____

What has your organization done to provide culturally competent aid Haitian populations (e.g. educating workers in regard to different ethnic/cultural beliefs and practices; use of specific services—interpreters etc.)?

Have you ever received cultural competency training from your agency?

- ☐ Before
☐ While in the field
☐ Ongoing
☐ If you have, please describe the experience. _____

What are the best ways to become culturally competent? Please rank them in order.	
#	
1	Formal Classes/Training
2	Having certain personality traits (e.g. being open-minded, self-aware)
3	Mentoring with experienced aid workers/missionaries
4	Immersion
5	Self-paced learning (e.g. reading, documentaries)
6	Spending time in the community
7	Having friendships/relationships with community members
8	Observation over time

Either before deployment or while in the field, what has been most helpful when becoming familiar with the Haitian context?

Since arriving in Haiti, what has been the biggest barrier for you to become familiar with the Haitian context?

Do your agency's policies enable or hinder employees becoming culturally competent?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Explain _____

Anything else you would like to share on this topic? _____

BENEFICIARY PERSPECTIVE SURVEY

Moderatè: _____

zòn: _____

A. Etid sou lavi

Mwen ta renmen mande w kèk kesyon sou lavi ou.

A1. ki kote ou te fet ?

☐ pòtoprens ☐ Lòt zòn(tanpri endike): _____

A2. Ki laje ou?

<input type="checkbox"/> 18-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 41-45	<input type="checkbox"/> 61-65
<input type="checkbox"/> 26-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 46-50	<input type="checkbox"/> Pli pase 65
<input type="checkbox"/> 31-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 51-55	
<input type="checkbox"/> 36-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 56-60	

A3. Ki sèks ou?

☐ mal ☐ femèl

A4. Ki kondisyon vi'w(matrimonyal)?

<input type="checkbox"/> selibatè	<input type="checkbox"/> Divòse	<input type="checkbox"/> vèv
<input type="checkbox"/> Marye	<input type="checkbox"/> separe	<input type="checkbox"/> plase

A5. Èske ou ap travay kounye a?

☐ wi ☐ non

A6. Ki pi gwo klas lekòl oswa pi gwo nivo ke ou te rive nan etid ou?

<input type="checkbox"/> Pat al lekòl	<input type="checkbox"/> Reto
<input type="checkbox"/> kindègadenn	<input type="checkbox"/> filo
<input type="checkbox"/> primè	<input type="checkbox"/> nivo lisans, bakaloreya, oubyen pi wo nivo
<input type="checkbox"/> Lòt nivo(tanpri endike) _____	

A7. ki relijyon'w?

☐ katolik womèn ☐ pyès

☐ Pwotestan ☐ Lòt (tanpri endike)_____

A8. Konbyen tan ou genyen depi ou ap viv nan kominote sa?

☐ Pi piti ke 1 ane ☐ 4-5 ane ☐ 8-9 ane
☐ 1-3 ane ☐ 6-7 ane ☐ 10 ane oubyen plis

A9. Eske ou te gen kay pa'w lè tranbleman tè 12 janvye, 2010?

☐ Wi ☐ Non

A10. Eske ou gen yon kay kounye a?

☐ Wi ☐ Non

A11. Ki kote ou te rete avan tranbleman tè a? tanpri endike_____

A12. Ki kote ou ap viv kounye a? tanpri endike _____

A13. Konbyen tan apre tranbleman tè a ou te deplase nan kominote sa a?

<input type="checkbox"/> Pi piti ke 1 ane	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-36 mwa
<input type="checkbox"/> 1-6 mwa	<input type="checkbox"/> 37-48 mwa
<input type="checkbox"/> 7-12 mwa	<input type="checkbox"/> plis pase 48 mwa
<input type="checkbox"/> 13-24 mwa	

A14. Ki Kote ou rete kounye a ?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yon tant	<input type="checkbox"/> Yon kay pèmanan ki bati apre tranbleman tè
<input type="checkbox"/> Nan Yon tant ke ou te fè (Anba Prela)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yon kay ki te bati anvan tranbleman tè a
<input type="checkbox"/> Yon abri tanporè (Abri T)	<input type="checkbox"/> Nan kay mwen te rete anvan tranbleman tè a
<input type="checkbox"/> Nan kay yon fanmi, yon zanmi	<input type="checkbox"/> Lòt (tanpri eksplike pi ba a)

A15. Ki òganizasyon ki te fè travay ak ou pou 12 janvye tranbleman tè 2010 la?

tanpri eksplike _____

A16. Ki jan konfyans ou te ye pou gwoup moun sa yo?

	Trè konfyans	konfyans	Gen ti konfyans	Pa gen konfyans
Paran'w	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manm nan katye kote w ap viv	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travayè èd entènasyonal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ayisyen k'ap travay pou ajans èd entènasyonal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Desidè politik nan nivo lokal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
desidè politik nan nivo nasyonal la	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moun inivèsite (egzanp pwofesè)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contractè (sektè prive)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anplwayè (sektè prive)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A17. Kouman nou ta evalye to kapasite travayè èd entènasyonal yo sou aspè anba yo?

	Trè bon	bon	Ase byen	Pa bon
Fè travay yo byen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tande'm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Montre compasyon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trete mwen egal e go	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Montre respè	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compran kilti ayisyen an	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travay pou bi bon interè vwazinaj pa'm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travay pou bi bon interè haiti	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pale kreyol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pale kreyol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jere confli	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In Depth Interview Guide

International Aid Worker Perspective Job Context

1. Please describe your current job responsibilities. 2. Please tell me about a typical day at your job.

Emotional Labor

1. What kind of emotions (care, tolerance, affection, sympathy, hope) do you think that your work requires you to display when interacting with others (disaster survivors, supervisors or coworkers)?

2. To what extent do you need to manage your own emotions at work? By managing, I refer to, for example, trying to display emotions that seem professionally appropriate for a particular situation or trying not to show your true emotions.

3. To what extent do you find that you have to manage the emotions of others at work (such as guiding them through sensitive or emotional issues)? By others, I refer to disaster survivors, your supervisors or co-workers.

4. To what extent do you think that dealing with emotionally charged issues is a critical dimension of your work?

5. Please tell me if you think there are any differences in how you manage your emotions (showing or suppressing) in Haiti vs. in other countries. Can you think of any reasons for such difference?

6. In your opinion, are there differences in how your international and Haitian colleagues manage their emotions at work? If so, what are the main differences?

Haitian Context

1. When you feel like talking about the emotional aspects of your job, who are your go-to persons in your agency (your international colleagues, Haitian colleagues)?

2. How would you describe the relationship between international and Haitian workers in your agency?

3. How would you describe the relationship between the international aid workers working in your agency and the Haitian beneficiaries?
4. How would you describe the relationship between Haitian aid workers working in your agency and the Haitian beneficiaries?
5. What mechanisms, if any, are in place in your agency that promotes communication among international and Haitian aid workers?
6. What did you learn about yourself and your own culture simply by being in Haiti?
7. In your opinion, what are some of the main differences between your culture and Haitian culture?

Cultural Skills

1. In your opinion, what is critical to working with Haitians (e.g., being familiar with the economic, political, cultural context)?
2. What have you learned from working with Haitians?
3. What are some of the most important challenges you have encountered in working with Haitian populations?
4. How would you go about building rapport with a Haitian beneficiary? Could you please explain?
5. When interacting with a person from a different culture than your own, how do you ensure that communication is effective?
6. How do you typically communicate with Haitian beneficiaries?
7. What qualities do you think are most important to have when working with disaster victims in a different cultural context?
8. What do you think are the expectations of Haitian beneficiaries from aid workers based on their cultural norms?
9. Please tell me about a situation when you felt that Haitian beneficiaries expected to you to

behave in a certain way based on their cultural norms.

10. Please tell me the steps you take to conform to the cultural expectations of Haitians.

11. Are there any cultural expectations of Haitian beneficiaries that you feel like you have no

other option but to ignore?

12. Can you give me an example of a time where a cultural misunderstanding caused tension

between the aid workers and beneficiaries? How was this misunderstanding resolved?

Would you have done things differently to resolve a similar misunderstanding today? 13.

What are your personal qualities that you think enable your interaction with Haitians? 14.

What are your personal qualities that you think hinder your interaction with Haitians?

Agency led acquisition

1. What has your organization done to provide the best aid possible for the Haitian populations (e.g. educating workers in regard to different ethnic/cultural beliefs and practices; use of specific services—interpreters etc.)?

2. What are the characteristics of your organization that you think enable the interaction and understanding between its employees and Haitians (i.e., regulations, policies, organizational culture)?

3. What are the characteristics of your organization that you think hinder the interaction and understanding between its employees and Haitians (i.e., regulations, policies, organizational culture)?

4. If you were the Director General of your organization, what would you do to enhance the interaction and understanding between your organization's employees and Haitians?

5. Could you please tell me what your agency does to help employees gain a better understanding of the Haitian context before arriving in Haiti?

6. Could you please tell me what your agency does to help employees gain a better understanding the Haitian context while in Haiti?

7. When you hear the term “cultural competence,” what comes to mind?

8. In what ways are workers in your agency receive cultural competency training?

9. Have you ever received cultural competency training from your agency? If you have,

please describe the experience.

10. Imagine that I hired you to train the next generation of aid workers to be deployed to your agency's Haiti field office. What kind of training would you provide to these workers to ensure that they are culturally competent? What would you teach them about the Haitian culture?

Personal acquisition

1. How difficult has it been for you to adapt to living in Haiti? What has been the hardest part and what have you done in response?
2. Please describe your personal efforts to get acquainted with the Haitian context (economic, political, and cultural) prior to arriving in Haiti.
3. Please describe your personal efforts to stay current about the Haitian context (economic, political, and cultural) while in Haiti.
4. Either before deployment or while in the field, what has been most helpful when becoming familiar with the Haitian context?
5. Since arriving in Haiti, what has enabled you the most in terms of becoming familiar with the Haitian context?
6. Since arriving in Haiti, what has been the biggest barrier for you to become familiar with the Haitian context? What are some specific things you plan to do within the next two years to further your understanding of the Haitian context?

In Depth Interview Guide

Trainer/HR perspective

1. Please describe your current job responsibilities.
2. What is your hiring/recruiting process for a post disaster context like Haiti?
3. What are the main qualities you look for when hiring response and recovery workers?
4. To what extent do you think that dealing with emotionally charged issues is a critical dimension of the work of those involved in disaster response and recovery?
5. If at all, how does your agency prepare employees for the emotional challenges of the job?
6. What are the main qualities do you look for when hiring those who would be Haiti specifically?
7. In your experience, what qualities or skills are most important for effective job performance when working with disaster victims?
8. What has your organization done to provide the best aid possible for the Haitian populations (e.g. educating workers in regard to different ethnic/cultural beliefs and practices; use of specific services—interpreters etc.)?
9. What are the characteristics of your organization that you think enable the interaction and understanding between its employees and Haitians (i.e., regulations, policies, organizational culture)?
10. What are the characteristics of your organization that you think hinder the interaction and understanding between its employees and Haitians (i.e., regulations, policies, organizational culture)?
11. If you were the Director General of your organization, what would you do to enhance the interaction and understanding between your organization's employees and Haitians?
12. Could you please tell me what your agency does to help employees gain a better understanding of the Haitian context before arriving in Haiti?
13. Could you please tell me what your agency does to help employees gain a better understanding the Haitian context while in Haiti?
14. What mechanisms, if any, are in place in your agency that promotes communication among international and Haitian aid workers?

15. If I were hired today, what type of training would I receive to prepare me for the country that I would be deployed to?
16. What would these training sessions include?
17. Who would my trainers be? What would their backgrounds be?
18. When you hear the term “cultural competence,” what comes to mind?
19. Do workers in your agency receive cultural competency training?
20. If you provide cultural competency training, please describe the type of training that is provided.

Focus Group Guide

Haitian Beneficiaries

1. How would you describe your relationship with international aid workers?
2. What kind of emotions do international aid workers typically display when they deal with Haitians?
3. What kind of emotions would you like international aid workers to display when they deal with Haitians?
4. Let's talk about your trust in international aid workers. Tell me about why you trust or do not trust international aid workers in Haiti.
5. How would you describe your relationship with Haitians working for international aid agencies?
6. What kinds of emotions do Haitians working for international aid agencies typically display when they deal with Haitians?
7. What kind of emotions would you like Haitians working for international aid agencies to display when they deal with Haitians?

8. Tell me about why you trust or do not trust Haitians working for international aid agencies.
9. What are the main cultural differences between international aid workers and Haitians receiving aid? Can you give some examples of times when these cultural differences caused tension? How was the problem resolved?
10. How well do the aid workers typically communicate with you? Do you feel that you are listened to and understood by the aid workers? Tell me why you feel this way.
11. Is it important for aid workers to speak Haitian Creole or French instead of using an interpreter?
12. What is the most important quality or skill for an aid worker to have when working with Haitians?
13. What do you wish international aid workers knew about Haiti?
14. Imagine that I hired you to train the next generation of aid workers to be deployed to Haiti. What kind of training would you provide to these workers? What would you teach them about Haiti? What would you teach them about the Haitian culture?
15. If you were the Director General of an international organization, what would you do to enhance the interaction and understanding between your organization's employees and Haitians?

VITA
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Remington, C. & Ganapati, N. (2017) Recovery Worker Skills in post-earthquake Haiti: Exploring the disconnect between employer and employee perspectives. *Natural Hazards*

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