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From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
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Subject: FW: haiti News

See highlight – unclear who posted it on HUFFPost

From: Toiv, Nora F
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2012 9:40 AM
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1. Wyclef Jean Says 'History' Will Account For Failed Yele Haiti
2. Haiti and the Danger of a Single Story
3. State Department program brings Haitian troupe here

October 18, 2012

HUFF
POST WORLD

Haiti and the Danger of a Single Story

Posted: 10/17/2012 12:33 pm

I feel ashamed. I had been warned. 'The danger of a single story' is my favourite TED talk but, on a visit last week to Haiti, I found that I - along with many many others - had fallen into the trap.

It's almost three years since the earthquake that left the lives of 3.5 million individuals and their families in tatters and killed some 220,000 people but say the word Haiti aloud among friends and who doesn't immediately still conjure up a visual image of devastation, helplessness, vast tented cities, fragmented aid, foreigners driving white land cruisers and the rubble of a National Palace that has become shorthand for a ruined country, a symbol of collapse. We've heard so many versions of this single story of Haiti, sadly partly true.

But only partly. Look at the country's HIV situation and Haiti has succeeded in halving the prevalence rates in under two decades, from around 4% in 1994 to 2% now. The best, most cost-effective model of integrated HIV care, training and research I've ever seen is Haitian - the GHESKIO centre in Port-au-Prince. Haiti's antiretroviral (ARV) coverage is well over 50%, and they are switching their approach to preventing transmission from mother to child to the improved B+ option which not only provides the same triple ARV drugs to all HIV-infected pregnant women beginning in the antenatal clinic setting but continues the therapy for these women for life.

A forum of local NGOs is coalescing to claim leadership in the AIDS response and to reclaim prevention. Take for example the Alliance's member organisation in Haiti, POZ, which is providing prevention, care and support

at community level and, despite the challenges, is determined to scale up its work with men who have sex with men and sex workers if, as seems likely, the epidemic is increasingly affecting these at risk groups and their sexual partners.

In Cap-Haïtien in the north, I was stunned by the Caracol Industrial Park currently being built with multimillion dollar investment from the US government and the Inter-American Development Bank and which will create up to 65,000 jobs in the region in the coming year. Indeed POZ are hoping to run HIV awareness sessions with the construction workers and future employees in the months to come as well as work with people living with HIV on income generating opportunities. This is also Haiti, but such stories are rarely heard.

I've seen plenty of countries with no leadership, where donors do all the heavy lifting. That's not at all what I found last week in Haiti. While Pefpar, the Global Fund and other donors have played an important role in the HIV response, the real accomplishments are down to national organisations working tirelessly to mobilise communities and provide prevention, care and treatment services. I have little doubt that we'll soon count Haiti and its organisations among the great successes of the HIV response. And success in turn will lead to sustainability.

The danger of the single story, as the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie puts it so compellingly in her TED talk, is that it creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue but that they are incomplete and we risk a critical misunderstanding. So if you read the recent [Audit: USAID Haiti work 'not on track'](#) article, you may have assumed, as I did, that it's about the problems of working in Haiti. Instead it's about how the largest US contractor working to stabilize Haiti after the earthquake "has a weak monitoring system and is not adequately involving community members". Just another reminder that the single story can be so, so damaging.

We need to put an end to Haiti's single story and let its people find the ways forward. Meanwhile in Myanmar, a single story of a different kind - one where the hope and optimism we all share is dictating the simplified narrative - is in danger of being constructed. But that's a whole other tale, maybe for next time!

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The Miami Herald

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State Department program brings Haitian troupe here

By Jordan Levin
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Photo by Frederic Thalys

Haiti's Compagnie de Danse Jean-Rene Delsoin will appear at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center Saturday as part of a State Department sponsored tour.

Miami will get another look at contemporary Haitian culture this week with Compagnie de Danse Jean-René Delsoin, a Haitian dance troupe that blends traditional folkloric dance and music with ideas and techniques from American modern dance.

The troupe appears Saturday at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center as part of Center Stage, a State Department-sponsored tour of arts groups from Haiti, Indonesia and Pakistan intended to foster cultural understanding.

The template for Delsoin's company is similar to that of Ayikodans, the Haitian troupe whose 2011 and 2012 appearances at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts provoked a strong response from audiences and the Haitian community. The two companies are linked; Delsoin founded and co-directed Archo Danse, Ayikodans' parent organization and school, in 1987 with its current director, Jeanguy Saintus, before striking out on his own in 2004.

Delsoin, 45, grew up with Haitian entertainment — his father, Renel Delsoin, was a well-known actor on a popular Haitian TV show, *Languichatte au XXe Siecle*. As a child, he often imitated Michael Jackson and other American acts he saw on TV, but it wasn't until he began taking ballet classes in his mid-teens that he found his creative niche.

In the early '90s, Delsoin went to New York to study at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, an experience that inspired him to use contemporary dance to express his Haitian identity and culture.

"The work I'm doing is shaped differently because I have both worlds, my background as a Haitian and my experience abroad," he says by telephone from his home above the studio he runs in Port-au-Prince.

His troupe has performed in festivals in Martinique and China, and he has worked as a backup dancer with Dominican pop singer Angela Carrasco.

"I love traditional dance. I have 10 classes a week at my school so people can learn the background. But as a choreographer I wanted to go further. I don't want to limit myself to one country. I consider myself a choreographer before saying I'm a Haitian choreographer."

The Center Stage program, launched this year by the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, brings contemporary artists from countries of strategic importance to the United States, with the aim of promoting understanding and human connection. Delsoin's troupe will present free dance classes Thursday evening at the Little Haiti Cultural Center and Saturday morning at the South Dade Center.

Saturday night, the touring troupe's five dancers and three drummers will perform *Trilogy*, a male trio that honors ancestors and Haitian voodoo divinities, set in part to music by Haitian-American composer and violinist Jean-Bernard Roumain; *Gason Solid*, a solo about a man who finds hope after surviving a shipwreck, and *Drum Passion*, a group piece that seems strongly influenced by Delsoin's time at the Ailey school.

"If you want to put something traditional on stage you have to do it differently," he says. "For me as a choreographer it's a chance to see dance from a different angle."