



USAID
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USAID/HAITI GENDER EQUALITY & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

FACT SHEET

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BACKGROUND

Women and girls are the backbone of Haitian society and local economy. Nearly half of Haitian households are women-led. Women are also pillars of economic life, as they form the majority of street vendors and support agricultural supply chains. However, women and girls continue to be affected by severe inequality, and gender-based violence (GBV).

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is committed to promoting gender equality and advancing the status of women and girls in Haiti and around the world. The Agency also supports integrating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment across all sectors with programming focusing on economic growth, poverty reduction, health improvement, increasing access to water and sanitation services, and GBV reduction.

KEY CHALLENGES

Gender-based violence: Civil unrest, political instability, lack of infrastructure, and poverty constitute a set of factors that contribute to high rates of gender-based violence. One in three Haitian women, ages 15 to 49, has experienced physical and/or sexual violence. Considering the central role of women in Haitian society and economy, and the debilitating effects of violence against women, the reduction of GBV is critical to Haiti's development.

Need for safe spaces in schools: Among girls ages 13 to 17 who reported sexual abuse, school was the second most common place for unwanted touching. Of women ages 18 to 24 who received money for sex before turning 18 years old, 27 percent reported that schools were the most common location to meet people paying for sex.

Weak judicial system: Laws criminalizing rape and domestic violence were not enacted until 2005, and the penal code has not been revised since 1835. Additionally, women and girls often face unequal legal protection. Sexual harassment often occurs without redress and victims frequently find themselves blamed for rape and abuse.

USAID STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES

BETTER ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

In the health sector, USAID supports gender equality and women's empowerment through its service delivery project SANTE which supports a network of 164 clinics providing maternal child health services, nutrition,

HIV/AIDS and reproductive health services. These life-saving services give women increased access to prenatal and maternity services, post-natal care and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. In 2019, 245,000 pregnant women benefited from United States Government (USG) supported nutrition programs, 40,000 women accessed antenatal care, and USAID-supported health clinics delivered 24,500 babies.

BETTER ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES

Recognizing that women and girls are disproportionately affected by poor access to these services, USAID aims to empower women in Haiti through its water and sanitation utility capacity-building project to take leadership roles in their respective communities for the design, development, and management of resources and enterprises in the water and sanitation sector. An estimated 52 percent of the 18,000 new water customers in FY19 were female-headed households. This decreases the potential of women remaining at home taking care of sick family members and allows them time for social, educational and entrepreneurial endeavors. On-going monitoring will enable USAID to track future progress.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Through its agricultural and economic growth portfolio, USAID supports gender equality and women's empowerment with capacity building and training initiatives. Since 2011, of the 27,000 permanent jobs created through USAID's micro, small and medium enterprise activities in high growth sectors such as construction, agribusiness, textiles, tourism, alternative energy, manufacturing, and water treatment, approximately 53 percent benefited women. Of the 1,300 micro, small and medium enterprises supported by LEVE, 40 percent were women owned.

In the agricultural sector, U.S. assistance has helped 70,000 farmers increase crop yields. The U.S. government has also introduced improved seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, and other technologies to more than 118,000 farmers through food security programs. 30 percent of these beneficiary farmers were women.

USAID has also helped increase women's financial literacy and access to credit and financial services. At the end of August 2019, USAID-Supported microfinance institutions were providing services to 1.2 million clients, 55 percent of which were women. During FY 2019, the Accessible Finance project continued to pilot its Field Officer Banking methodology that helped approximately 2,640 members, of which 61 percent were women, get access to banking services. Under the "Homeownership and Mortgage Expansion" (HOME) Program approximately 43 percent of the HOME-supported financial institutions housing-loans were disbursed to female clients.

INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

USAID's elections support during past cycles has made critical contributions to ensuring women's participation in Haiti's electoral process, including facilitating a National Gender and Elections Strategy and a Political Leadership Academy for hundreds of women from several political parties. USAID will work to consolidate the Haitian Government's 30 percent quota and push further women's participation in public life, including in parliament and local governments.

USAID's Supporting the Efficient Management of State Resources (GERÉ) project will aim to identify how to strengthen inclusive participation of all citizens, including women, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups in the development planning of their community.

IMPROVED ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Through its democracy, rights and governance projects, USAID will support the implementation of a gender strategy including women's access to justice and legal protection. USAID'S Justice Strengthening Sector Project (JSSP) increases the availability, accessibility and quality of formal legal services by providing free legal representation, free consultation services in civil and criminal matters, mediation for out-of-court settlements in

civil matters, mobile units to bring legal services closer to the people (“proximity justice”), and civic education in response to the needs of remote, rural and underserved communities. USAID’s legal assistance goes chiefly to victims of trafficking in persons and gender-based violence.

ADVOCACY AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Effectively addressing GBV requires immediate actions to improve security and provide support to survivors. Adopting legislative provisions and effective law enforcement practices, community outreach and economic strengthening are equally relevant to the reduction of GBV.

USAID supported the “Centre de Promotion des Femmes Ouvrières” and other women’s organizations in their advocacy work for a GBV-free Haitian society. Those organizations brought together women’s rights stakeholders and agreed on key actions to be taken and best ways to consolidate and advance gains for women’s protection. They were joined by civil society groups to support coordination with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the parliamentary work needed to enact the Bill on the Elimination of Violence against Women. While the draft is ready for submission to the legislature, the ongoing political crisis has repeatedly disrupted the adoption of this law.

In 2019, USAID launched the “Building Enduring Systems to End Trafficking in Persons” project as the first instrument supporting the implementation of the National Counter-Trafficking Strategy. Through this activity, domestic servitude, child trafficking in orphanages, and cross-border trafficking, issues that disproportionately affect young girls, will be structurally addressed.

