



MORGANA WINGARD/USAID

WOMEN & GENDER FACT SHEET

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BACKGROUND

Political instability, chronic poverty, and crime all contribute to a high prevalence of gender-based violence and discrimination against Haitian women and girls. While Haiti's Constitution protects women from workplace discrimination as well as physical and sexual abuse, and guarantees the right to political participation, in practice women routinely face exclusion and harassment in public and private life. Haiti has an active women's movement, yet women face higher rates of unemployment, are more likely to suffer poor health outcomes, and are less likely to own land or hold political office than men. Women seeking political office face considerable obstacles, including patriarchal attitudes toward leadership, lack of financial support, and threats of violence and intimidation. However, some progress has been made. In 2012, the Parliament passed an amendment instituting a 30 percent quota for women in all elected and appointed positions at the national level, and the 2015 Electoral Decree added the same quota for local councils and political candidates.

KEY CHALLENGES

Gender-based violence (GBV): Poor legal protection, fear of reprisals and the social stigma attached to being a victim of sexual violence contributes to under-reporting. Domestic workers, especially young girls who live and work with other families, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender women are particularly vulnerable to GBV.

Weak judicial system: Laws criminalizing rape and domestic violence were not enacted until 2005, and women and girls often face unequal legal protection and enforcement. Sexual harassment often occurs without reprisal, and victims frequently find themselves blamed for rape and abuse.

Health outcomes: Women have poor access to health care and correspondingly low health outcomes—the maternal mortality rate is over five times the regional average.

Drop-out from schools: Girls are more vulnerable to school drop-out than boys, especially at the later stage of schooling. While boys tend to re-enroll, girls are less likely to come back to school.

USAID STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES

Reducing rates of GBV and empowering women are critical priorities for promoting Haiti's long-term economic and democratic development. To do so calls for a sustained engagement through legislative action, effective law enforcement, community outreach, increased literacy, and economic empowerment.

USAID works with the Haitian government, civil society organizations and the international community to address barriers to women's advancement across sectors.

Connecting women farmers and entrepreneurs to resources: Feed the Future Haiti supports women-led farmer associations, provides master farmer training and connects women to markets. USAID invests in female entrepreneurs and helps connect women to formal banking services and credit.

Democracy, human rights & good governance: USAID supported the Haitian parliament and the executive branch to pass and enact legislation that positively impacts the lives of women and children. USAID activities work with the Electoral Council and Haitian civil society advocacy groups to ensure that women are fully integrated into every aspect of the electoral process.

Protecting mothers and infants: USAID activities promote nutrition, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, family planning, and training for health care providers in maternal and child health.

Safe school environment: USAID works with the Ministry of Education to maintain schools that are free from any refusal and bias based on gender and to promote awareness of GBV.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Improving legislation: With support from USAID, the Haitian government passed two new laws to combat trafficking in persons and to promote responsible parenthood, and drafted legislation on the elimination of violence against women, now pending adoption.

Growing opportunities for women farmers: USAID's Feed the Future Haiti program has trained nearly 3,500 female farmers and certified over 900 female master farmers, helping to increase farm yields. Additionally, half of the 26,000 farmers enrolled in the Haiti Hope mango program are women.

Catalyzing growth in women-owned businesses: Roughly one-third of enterprises supported by USAID's economic growth projects are women-owned or women-led. These enterprises have received nearly \$2 million in funds, along with business management training.

Connecting GBV survivors to services & institutionalizing support: USAID's human rights project developed a mapping tool for child protection and sexual violence and GBV services covering 42 communes, now managed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Haiti's child welfare agency.

Expanding women's participation in politics: USAID's elections support project has made critical contributions to ensuring women's participation in Haiti's electoral process:

- Assisted the Provisional Electoral Council to draft a National Gender and Elections Strategy
- Set up a hotline for women candidates to report security issues
- Organized a Political Leadership Academy for hundreds of women from several political parties
- Collaborated with women politicians to develop an advocacy strategy to promote gender-sensitive political programs and public policies

Connecting low-income women to legal services: USAID's free legal clinics have provided legal aid to nearly 1,500 women in FY 2015, who in many cases are victims of GBV and domestic abuse.

Reinforcing gender-sensitive basic education: USAID developed curricula, educational materials and school activities to promote equity between girls and boys and incorporate specific strategies for ensuring adequate attention to their different needs.