

National Network of Human Rights Defenders (RNDDH), Amnesty International,^{lxvii} Human Rights Watch,^{lxviii} the International Rescue Committee and other watchdog groups in Europe, the Caribbean, and Canada. The right to be free of sexual violence is a “fundamental component of the right to health” that is often threatened in post-disaster settings, a point made repeatedly by rights advocates in their advocacy on behalf of sexual assault survivors.^{lxix} The human rights groups began publishing a regular stream of scathing reports on the poor conditions within IDP camps and the emerging sexual violence reports that were picked up by media outlets. These were used by media outlets to raise global awareness of the problem.

Haitian advocates also took their complaints directly to UN decision makers. In June 2010, KOFAVIV’s Malya Villard-Apollon, herself a survivor, testified on rapes taking place in camps before the UN Human Rights Commission on behalf of KOFAVIV, FAVILEK, IJDH-BAI, MADRE and other allies (see *Legal Justice* section). She later presented a joint petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, demanding that it push Haiti’s government take urgent action to protect women. In October 2010, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1944 (2010) on Haiti, which did just that, calling on Haiti’s leaders to work closely with the UN country team and MINUSTAH to protect women’s and children’s rights.^{lxx} In April 2012, Villard-Apollon was named a CNN Hero for her leadership, a reflection of KOFAVIV’s important role, too.

Certifying Rape

Haiti’s legal protocol for officially reporting a case of rape requires an individual to report an incident of sexual assault and obtain a physical examination and a medical certificate from a provider at a hospital approved by the Ministry of Health within 72 hours. Only rape cases backed by a medical certificate are considered “verified” for official reporting purposes. *Although it is not a de jure legal requirement to have a medical certificate in order to pursue a legal claim, Haiti’s courts and judges have often refused to accept copies of certificates issued by providers who aren’t the HUEH general hospital or GHEKIO, or to hear cases without a medical certificate. This issue has been increasingly challenged by legal advocates who have pushed for alternative evidence to be submitted in cases without certificates.*^{lxxi} (see *Legal Justice* section for more).[∞]

“Sensationalizing Rape”

As more groups and eyes focused on the crisis of rape in Haiti in 2010, not everyone agreed that an overnight “epidemic of rape” was taking place in Haiti,^{lxxii} including some of Haiti’s most seasoned activists on the issue. They have since publicly denounced what they viewed as the “over sensationalizing” of rape by foreign reporters and even U.S. feminist groups – a portrayal some Haitians considered tacitly racist. (see *Media* section).^{lxxiii}

“We have a big problem with the way some people have represented this subject and also the media,” stated Danielle Magloire of the advisory National Dialogue on Sexual Violence in a fall 2010 interview. “It’s not only Haitian men who rape; it’s a problem found in all countries.” She noted: “We also saw violence against women before the earthquake. So it’s not a new phenomenon to Haiti. It’s that there were already very bad conditions that were made worse.”

Magloire and others feminists in the KONAP coalition, among others, remain concerned about over-hyping the numbers on rape. “I feel we have to be very careful here,” she said in a follow-up July 2011 interview. “We have *not* been seeing the huge increase of cases that some other groups are reporting.” She was referring to the national registry of officially reported cases, which has recorded far fewer cases than those cited by some advocacy groups or in media reports. “These other cases are not all verified –

they have not been confirmed,” Magloire explained. “We can only be certain about cases that are documented.” (see *Media box*).

Compared to the media picture for rape in Haiti, and the testimonies provided by survivors to human rights groups, the number of officially “verified” cases is far smaller. This was true before the earthquake too. The advisory National Dialogue publicly acknowledges that cases in the official national registry likely represent the tip of the iceberg. The question remains: how big is that iceberg?

Fighting Media Hype

The issue of sensationalizing rape newly exploded in June 2011 when a US reporter for Mother Jones magazine, Mac McClelland, published a controversial (and widely-disparaged) article about how covering rape in Haiti helped her overcome her personal trauma about rape.^{lxxiv} Her highly personal essay unleashed a tirade of criticism against both McClelland and the international media’s coverage of sexual violence in Haiti.^{lxv} In response, a group of Haitian, diaspora, and international women journalists covering Haiti wrote an open letter denouncing what they called McClelland’s failure to adhere to ethical standards of professional journalism. (Some reporters had learned, via a lawyer for a rape victim, that McClelland and the magazine had been warned more than once in advance not to publish details of the victim’s story and did anyway, causing renewed trauma to the victim.)^{lxvi} For her part, McClelland defended her reporting but suffered a major blow to her professional reputation as a result.

The incident spurred creation of a Working Group on Media Protocols on Sexual Gender-Based Violence in Haiti, organized by veteran Haiti reporters and led by Michelle Karshan, a longtime Haiti advocate. The group has developed guidelines on how to sensitively report about sexual violence and avoid further harm to victims.^{lxvii} The issue sparked new headlines in 2011 following the media’s disclosure of a young man’s name in global coverage one of several recent Haiti MINUSTAH rape scandals, and the leaking to YouTube of a cell phone video capture of the alleged assault (see *MINUSTAH box in Security section*).^{lxviii}

The Missing Picture

The disparity between “official” cases vs. non-official reports raises the million-dollar question many have asked but no one can easily answer: How bad is the rape picture in Haiti now? How does it compare with before 2010? Why is there such a disparity between the official statistics and the suspected real picture – the “nightmare of rape” so many have reported? Most importantly, how has this picture changed with so many eyes and actors now focused on the problem? Are things improving? Has the recent, ongoing effort to close the most dangerous, overpopulated camps helped? Are sex crimes declining? Or is it more of the same in the still-dangerous slums and new shanties?

In the following sections we examine many of these questions and offer selected examples of field progress in each service area. Our reporting has sought to provide broad overviews of progress and probed the big gray area between what has been reported and what has been rumored -- and what has fallen between the cracks.

We’ve included selected capsule boxes about frontline groups, both established and newcomers, who have made an important contribution or represent innovative approaches in the field. We’ve also included portraits of leaders in the sexual violence and asked them to reflect upon challenges and leadership lessons learned since 2010. Overall, we’ve tried to capture what frontline actors have done, learned and observed, and what they think about the shifting picture of sexual violence in Haiti.



Portraits in Leadership

Carole Pierre-Paul Jacob, Director, SOFA

Carole Pierre-Paul Jacob has been a member of the Haitian Women's Solidarity Organization, SOFA, for almost twenty years. She continues to serve as its director, a role that she has occupied for 14 years, following re-election to the post in March 2010. SOFA is a grassroots nonprofit women's rights organization working at the national and international level. It has offered services for gender-based violence victims via a program that began in 2002. Its 21 Sant Douvanjou (Dawn Centers) serve women across the country (see boxes on SOFA in Reporting and Monitoring). In her own words, Pierre-Paul Jacob reflects on SOFA's recovery and role since the quake, and the challenges she faces as a leader.

"SOFA is a grassroots feminist organization and a decentralized Haitian women's network," she begins, introducing the organization she has helped to shape. "At SOFA we fight against the feminization of poverty. Over the past 14 years, I have been the coordinator of the SOFA's office. I've played leadership role with the organization for several years and I try to play an important role in the feminist sector.

The earthquake that Haiti experienced on January 12th, 2010 is recognized as the biggest in the world and struck a country that is the poorest in the American continent (Western Hemisphere). It was an incredible disaster, enormous and immeasurable as everyone knows. Women were very touched by this earthquake. We lost at least three major leaders -- Magalie Marcelin, Anne-Marie Coriolan and Myriam Merlet -- all well-known activists of the feminist movement in Haiti. So the earthquake was a moment that we experienced as very painful and we needed several months before trying to recover from this terrible shock. We later carried out a big ceremony in March 2010 to honor the dead women.

We were not paralyzed, though. From the first moments we were obliged to help the survivors. SOFA was practically the only organizational with a building left standing, so from day one we put our building to the service of others for meetings. It was really the great mobilization. At the same time we had to come to the aid of many working class and market women. We had to use all our resources to help women victims. In that sense, we helped over 500 women, providing them basic relief and aid.

So it was really a time of great urgency and even today we're living the consequences. We're still talking about the reconstruction of the country, and the damages caused by the earthquake. We continue to live very difficult moments because the strategies that were planned to put the country back on track haven't sufficed. The international community hasn't released the funds they promised, and other authorities haven't had the intelligence or the will required to really move Haiti forward.

As an activist, with a cause to defend, I have a responsibility to defend the social needs of the masses. SOFA is an organization that works close to the masses. We put a lot of emphasis on violence against women because it's one of our priorities. We've been working on this since SOFA was founded in 1986, and since 1997, we've been one of the few organizations to really address this problem. At the time (1990s), there wasn't much mobilization on this issue and even women's organizations weren't interested. They didn't see this problem as rooted in patriarchy. Even some progressive activists saw this as a problem secondary to women's struggles. I'm proud to say that SOFA is an organization that is courageous and we've achieved very significant results. Today, there's a great national awareness that's occurred and many other sectors have now taken up this struggle.

There are many lessons to share. We are engaged in a very complex struggle. SOFA links the struggle for women's rights to the struggle of the masses, which is to say that we believe that the liberation of women and their freedom from domination by the patriarchy can't happen without a global and political context. You need a democratic context to really deliver a solution to problems facing women.

At SOFA we believe that we're headed in a very good direction, given the advances that have made so far, whether it's the context of sexual violence or in another sector such as the economy. For example, there's a lot of talk today about female entrepreneurship, so we recognize that there's been a large national recognition of women's role in the society. I think that's

already great progress. Still, there's a long way to go to achieve a real transformation of the society and to give women their true place and role in Haitian history, which they've always played since 1804 (Haiti's independence). We know how important women's participation is in the construction of Haitian society.

So the lessons are many. We need more activism and conviction in this struggle. We know we can't solve the problem (of sexual violence) overnight. There's a long road ahead and generations who will have to cope with the challenges of this struggle.

I think that since 2010 there's actually a serious problem. The earthquake laid bare the social problems -- let's say the social schisms -- that have existed in this country since 1804. It's the problem of the excluded -- those who took over the public spaces (those made homeless by the quake). The economic situation is of great importance to the people. We got to see these problems, both in public arena and within families, and in the social relations between the genders that were laid bare. At the same time we witnessed a considerable disdain by leaders and decision makers responsible for addressing this issue (of sexual violence).

If you consider the issue of women and rape, I'd say this problem wasn't invented by the earthquake but has always existed in our society. This disaster and the problems that have followed were very poorly addressed by the leaders. That left the NGOs and other institutions of the society to do what was necessary. But I don't believe it's the earthquake that caused rapes to increase. In fact, I'll take this opportunity to even denounce certain maneuvers that have taken place since the earthquake, that's to say, the intrusion of certain NGOs who have taken advantage of the problem to make the question of rape their entry card into Haiti. I'm talking about international programs (NGOs), where the cases of rape have been exaggerated by them. Certain NGOs have made it seem, at the international level, that Haiti would be a nightmare with rape everywhere. This information doesn't serve the cause of the country. It's led to a trivialization of rape. The problem of rape is a structure problem, not a cyclical problem. It's a problem linked to a system that is fundamentally patriarchal and must be attacked as such. I believe that, on the contrary, the earthquake worsened the problem of sexual violence in that it led to completely catastrophic interventions with regard to the dossier on rape.

For us at SOFA, our priorities remain the same. We continue to accompany women in raising their consciousness and helping them, and increasing their capacity so that they can break their bad relationships with men and we can also work with men to address the problem. The question of violence is a matter of education, and training. Our (social) education deserves to be critiqued and diagnosed and that way we'll finally arrive at solutions.

Our priority is to continue reinforcing our welcome centers; we have 21 centers that operate in four geographic departments to cover the national territory. We need to create more services. Without them, women will continue to suffer from violence. Both the state and each of us has to assume our responsibilities to address the problem."∞

--Interview conducted by Mania Milien of Radyo Fanm for PotoFanm+Fi.

Global Allies: WE-LEAD

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Primary Target Group: Girls in metropolitan IDP camps.

WE-LEAD is a women’s empowerment and digital literacy program launched in Haiti in 2010 by Heartland Alliance, an international NGO based in Chicago, IL. Heartland Alliance is well known globally for its mental health programs and training courses, particularly in Africa. The WE-LEAD program is staffed by a small group of seven Haitians and a US co-director, and includes social workers and community agents (“animateurs”) that provide trainings in women’s leadership and rights training as well as legal support to women’s groups on cases that include sexual violence.

Heartland Alliance secured an initial two year-USAID grant to launch WE-LEAD and support the GBV activities of its main Haitian partner, KOFIVIV, working with other KOFIVIV NGO supporters, including MADRE, Digital Democracy and BAI-IJDH. Led by lawyer Guerly Leriche, WE-LEAD has also provided legal and rights trainings for women’s groups in Petit Goave and Grand Goave, among other cities. “Our mission is to do outreach to women leaders – especially younger women – and see how we can support these groups to have a greater impact in their community,” said Claudine Saintal, who heads their women’s empowerment trainings. “There are a lot of women and groups who are looking to have an impact. We can offer empowerment and teach them about their rights. There’s a great interest in that.”

WE-LEAD also collaborates with FAVILEK, a smaller GBV survivor’s network. (In August 2011, lawyers from Reed Smith, a US law firm, held a weeklong legal aid clinic there for FAVILEK members). A feminist center, WE-LEAD has reached out to help underserved and vulnerable populations gain visibility and support, including: lesbians (FACSDIS), HIV positive and transgendered Haitians (SEROvie), and sex workers. “There are still women and groups who feel they have to hide and they face additional stigma and discrimination,” said Marie de Cenival, who helped set up WE-LEAD in 2010 and training its dynamic youthful feminist staff – including Leriche, an ally of Haiti’s only men’s GBV group, ADHESE, in *Jacmel* (see box, *Vulnerable Populations* section). “We want to support the leaders who are mobilizing to defend their rights.” WE-LEAD also aspires to provide fresh energy for Haiti’s feminist movement, which was hard-hit with the death of several dynamic leaders in the earthquake

In June 2011, WE-LEAD opened a 12-computer cyber center and small feminist library –free to the public and open daily. “We started this to support and give more visibility to women’s groups who want to give their members basic Internet skills and to have a presence on the web,” explained de Cenival. “We deliberately didn’t target the best-known women’s groups because they were not those with the biggest needs related to computer training.” As of August 2012, their IT center in Pacot was providing free computer and social media training to 30 women a day – many younger women. Participants are taught how to write and design projects, use Excel to create databases, and overall digital literacy. The group recently changed location to a smaller site, but maintained its activities.

“We found that many of these young women - this new generation – know almost nothing about the history of the women’s movement here and what other women have done before them,” said de Cenival. “We want to change that. We hope to bring together the young women coming out of the camps to have a dialogue with the established women leaders. Hopefully this will help to revitalize the feminist movement here.” Toward that end, WE-LEAD began hosting a now-popular bimonthly “Club du Jeudi” (Thursday Club) discussion forum on women’s issues, inviting movement pioneers to meet a young generation. Their library is also collecting and sharing feminist books and materials, including those by and about Haitian women and the history of Haiti’s women’s movement.

WE-LEAD is newly focusing on sexual harassment in Haiti, having identified it as a big problem for women that needs greater advocacy by and for women and girls. The group hopes to facilitate 2013 forums on the pending reforms of laws on paternity, GBV, and domestic violence, to assure women and girls are updated on their evolving legal rights. “We have to make sure the changes aren’t just going to stay on paper,” said de Cenival, who now manages the US side of WE-LEAD, working with Haitian Executive Director Sophia Orthela. “I’m really inspired by what we’ve been able to do so far,” said de Cenival. “There’s such a demand among Haitian women to be educated and trained so that they can change the situation for women in this country. We are trying to help them realize that dream. Already, we can see the trainings work. They’re empowered and ready to lead.”∞

SECTOR PROGRESS

Reporting & Monitoring

Research

Vulnerable Populations:

Spotlight on Girls

Photo Essay: Girls In Haiti's Camps

Sex Workers

Boys and Men

Restaveks

LGBT

The Disabled

Security

Legal Justice

Housing and Safe Housing

Health: Post-Rape Medical Care

Reproductive Health Services

Mental Health Services

Concluding Remarks

Annex

Reporting and Monitoring

DEFINING THE PICTURE

How many women and girls were raped in Haiti in the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake? How many cases were officially reported and how many off the books? Who were the rapists? What about rural areas – what happened there? Two years later, what’s changed for the better?

These questions – and many more — have been at the heart of a growing collective effort by Haitian local advocacy and international human rights groups to better document the shifting picture of sexual violence since the earthquake, and compare it to what was known before. To date, the statistics offered by different groups vary greatly, based on factors that include the site and period of inquiry, the demographics of camps and populations surveyed, different approaches to identifying and interviewing alleged victims, and different research questions being asked. Many reports have loosely blended published figures by the media and other groups without distinguishing between officially certified cases – those verified by a medical examination and reflected in the national registry – with unconfirmed reports.

For the most part, the various reports since 2010 have provided dramatic, tragic, first-person, and eye-witness accounts of sexual violence directed primarily at women and girls in Port-au-Prince camps. These reveal a spike in rape occurred after the January earthquake amid an overall environment of increased insecurity, crime, violence, homelessness, and economic crisis – all factors behind sexual violence. But a close look at the data to date also suggests a different pattern for official versus unofficial cases.

Framing Sexual Violence

As Haitian feminists repeatedly stress, it’s important to remember that rape is hardly new to Haiti (or any other country). The further one goes back, even before Haiti’s independence, back to the earliest days of Haiti’s roots as the slave colony of then-St. Domingue, the more one finds cases of sexual violence there. It’s important, say feminists, to situate the problem of rape – and the responses to gender violence — as a reflection of Haitian society’s evolving views toward women and their rights (or lack thereof). Until 2006, rape was still considered a crime against honor under Haitian law, a squandering of virginity that could be settled with payment to a victim’s family. Gender inequity is an engine of sexual violence, and gender disparities are the fault lines intersecting the issue of sexual violence at many levels.

Given the focus on women’s sexuality, sexual crimes directed at boys and men have also remained largely hidden. It’s not accidental that male rape victims are often assumed and accused of being homosexuals and then feared for having AIDS – two stigmas that make it even harder for victims to disclose the crimes. That goes double for men who happen to be gay, and triple for individuals who identify as transgendered. (*See Vulnerable Populations section.*)

Engines of Conflict and Insecurity

Sexual violence has also been consistently linked with political and social upheaval in Haiti. Human rights groups have routinely documented the use of rape and sexual torture by Haiti's leaders, from the notorious dictator "Papa Doc" Duvalier and his son Jean-Claude, to the cabal of short-lived military strongmen who followed them, through the democratic election (and later overthrow and second term) of former populist president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. In the 1990s, Human Rights Watch documented the use of rape as a form of oppression under the regime of ex-General Raoul Cédras.

From 2002 to 2004, with Aristide struggling to stay in power, political violence and cases of rape exploded anew. Hundreds of women and girls – many very young – were raped, some by police, others by pro- and anti-Aristide supporters, say human rights groups. One study found that 35,000 women and girls were subjected to rape and sexual assault from 2004 to 2006, a figure cited by the UN Security Council. Another study, published in the *Lancet*, reported that 19,000 girls out of 100,000 were raped in the greater Port-au-Prince area between February 2004 and December 2005.^{lxxxix}

Here again, it's important to stress that these past studies are generally based on self-reporting – *what people say happened to them*. This information may not be "verified" or confirmed via a medical exam and requisite certificate, or a police or legal investigation. But in most cases, even absent medical exams, the majority of claims prove credible, say investigating lawyers working with rape survivors today (see *Legal Justice* and *Health Services* sections). During political crises, when individuals are being targeted, it may be even more dangerous and difficult to disclose politically motivated sex crimes too, so past studies may not fully capture what occurred then, either. But they provide critical snapshots.

The statistics generated in the politically hot period of 2002-04 by Haitian women's groups – primarily by SOFA and Kay Fanm, and the human rights watchdog group RNDDH – are much smaller and reflect "verified" cases. These also reveal a past pattern of child rape and gang rapes linked to generalized political and civil violence. From January to April 2004, for example, Kay Fanm documented 46 rapes, involving mostly young girls – roughly 13 a month. That compared with less than two rapes a month in the preceding four years. In January 2004 alone, SOFA documented 46 "political rapes" – sexual assaults by different armed political factions including *chimeres* – or ghosts, a name given to masked youth gang members.

Earlier Victories

Ironically, 2004 also marked a turning point for advocates, when the nascent movement against sexual violence gained some political muscle. As rape cases exploded, Haitian feminists including Danielle Magloire established the advisory National Dialogue on Sexual Violence, helped push through an ambitious 5-year national action plan, and, in 2005, won historic passage of a rape law that makes it a crime punishable by 10 years to life. They also succeeded in pushing the government to document the recent wave of sexual crimes. In 2006, the government reported, via its national EMMUS IV household census, that 26 percent of Haitian women and girls over age 15 had been victims of sexual or gender-based violence.^{lxxx} That statistic has remained a comparative official reference for national studies. In an oft-cited statistic, a joint 2006 Inter-American Development Bank and UNIFEM study found that a third of Haitian women and girls had been affected by sexual violence. Over half were under 18.^{lxxxi}

Yet the official numbers presented an overall picture of sexual violence before 2010 far smaller than what advocates daily encountered -- a fact still true. That's why Kay Fanm's website states: "We must stress that documented cases represent 10 percent to 15 percent of the real cases of aggression." The real number is anyone's guess.

Emerging from the Rubble: First Cases

Reports of rape began surfacing within days after Haiti's earthquake, according to SOFA and Kay Fanm leaders.^{lxxxii} In an early report, KOFIV cited 230 cases of rape in 15 IDP camps in two months. Many were identified by KOFIV members living in the camps themselves. At the 150-day mark, more than 250 cases of rape were reported in several camps, according to Amnesty International, and other monitoring groups including RNDDH and HRW were also issuing alarms. In May, MSF had catalogued 212 reported rapes. A month later, SOFA reported it had received 114 victims of rape in its 21 Sant Douvanjou centers from January to June 2010, including 56 girls.^{lxxxiii} *(see related boxes on SOFA's director and the agency).*

Newcomer groups were also jumping in, and their early efforts also capture a spike of 2010 cases. The global anti-trafficking group Survivors Connect teamed up with Fondation Espoir to launch an SMS mobile hotline linked to women leaders in some 16 camps *(see subsection, A New Tracking Tool: SMS)*. Their registry of over 800 calls from March to November 2010 includes many claims of rape, child sex abuse, and domestic violence. How many are "officially" documented isn't evident.

Loose Coordination

Given the mass displacement and the fact that virtually all of Haiti's government was in shambles, including the women's ministry, it's understandable that the official reporting picture for the early 2010 period is incomplete. Shortly after the earthquake, a UN GBV subcluster took over coordination of a loose network of humanitarian agencies and some Haitian NGO's concerned about sexual violence. By October 2010, the KOFIV survivor's network had launched their emergency SMS response system to track sexual violence; it soon recorded 400 cases of rape.

Like KOFIV, Kay Fanm also suffered serious damage to its building and operations and lost weeks of activity in the first weeks after the earthquake. But it quickly moved to help women emerging from camps to get help. In August, Kay Fanm's preliminary 2010 data totaled 1376 overall GBV cases, including 134 rape cases – half the total from before the earthquake. (Note: a report in April 2011 by UN Women of Kay Fanm's 2010 partial data showed a slight increase of these figures to 1450 total cases, with 157 sexual violence cases). That figure was less than 60 percent of Kay Fanm's total caseload for 2009.^{lxxxiv} Pre-quake, the group registered 2485 GBV cases, including 304 cases of rape, according to its director Yolette Jeanty.^{lxxxv}

Kay Fanm's logs, like those of fellow KONAP coalition members SOFA and Fanm Deside, suggest a different pattern for rape cases after the initial spike in early 2010. A year later, Kay Fanm had registered 358 total GBV cases in the first three months of 2011, including 36 rapes: four in January, 13 in February, 6 in March, and 13 in April. The rape data made up 10 percent of overall incidents, a similar trend to that reported by SOFA. Rape cases were also overshadowed by physical violence cases, most of them domestic violence cases.

SOFA issued an update stating it had registered 718 women and girls in its 21 Douvanjou centers in 2010, but there, too, rape cases made up fewer than 10% of overall cases (see box and table below). The majority of cases were reported to its two sites in Port-au-Prince, and linked to women displaced in the IDP camps.

Officially, the post-quake jump in *verified* cases is also backed by Haitian national police (HNP logs showing 794 reported cases of sexual violence in 2010 – almost four times the 218 cases the police registered from January to October 2009. By the year’s end, the Pulitzer Center issued a report declaring rape cases in Haiti had tripled in 2010, a reflection of the official view. Still, these figures number paled in comparison to the thousands of complaints reported by other groups.

The official numbers also seem to have evolved in another direction, judging from the data reported by individual agencies that also report their statistics to the national registry. In July 2011, representatives at several established agencies -- SOFA, Kay Fanm, RNDDH, GHESKIO and Kay Fanm -- shared a collective observation that rape cases had plateaued since mid-2010 and some even saw declines, back to pre-quake levels.^{lxxxvi} This is an opposite trend from the continued increases reported by survivor’s groups, including KOFIV.

A close look at the trends in data supports that view. It also appears that some media reports – and even analyses by agencies of their own data – occasionally conflate cases of gender-based violence -- which include domestic violence, beatings, verbal assaults, and child abandonment – with rape. Certainly rapes occur within domestic violence, but the reported “rape-only” data is a fraction of the overall GBV caseload for groups reporting “official” cases.

“It’s true that we had an increase of violence and rapes during the earthquake,” confirmed Carole Pierre-Paul Jacob, SOFA’s director in fall 2010, reflecting on cases registered by her organization (see related boxes). “Now, we are seeing a plateau of the cases. It looks more like what we saw before.” In early 2010, rapes made up 8.15% of the overall GBV cases registered at SOFA’s 21 Dawn Centers (Sant Douvanjou), including two Port-au-Prince sites. Overall, sexual assaults remained under 10% -- the same as the pre-quake picture.

An Official Plateau?

SOFA has been tracking sexual violence cases for over a decade via an electronic case registry and publishes biannual and year-end bulletins summarizing of trends and cases at their Sant Douvanjou centers. This includes the overall number of clients reporting violence, the number of specific incidents reported, and a breakdown of the different types of gender-based violence including physical, economic, psychological, and sexual (rape). It also analyses the data by age and geographic location. It divides perpetrators into four categories: conjugal (husbands, intimate partners), civil (friends, acquaintances, stranger, non-relatives), family (relations), and public (authority figures, including those in uniform).

A comparative look at SOFA’s overall GBV cases since 2003 *does* show a steady overall increase of violence against women and girls, from 113 GBV clients in 2004 to triple that a year later, to a later doubling up to 726 by 2006. That’s the year SOFA’s Coriolan and other feminist leaders helped win critical victories in the GBV arena (*see main discussion*). By 2008, GBV cases had again doubled to 1400 annual cases.^{lxxxvii} Although its activities were disrupted in early 2010, overall it registered 718 GBV cases, including 405 at its Sant Douvanjou 21 and Martissant centers in the capital.

This figure includes an increased number of referrals – 107 cases --from temporary shelters (*abris provisoires*). By the end of 2010, their client caseload had climbed to 857 clients nationally. That includes 552 from the Sant Douvanjou 21 and 60 from the Martissant centers, for a total of 612 Port-au-Prince

cases^{lxxxviii} moving into 2011, the half-year figure shows a small rise, up to 945 overall clients, with 593 from Port-au Prince. That's a steady increase, but again, below the figure in early 2009.

In their October 2011 bulletin ("Rapport – Bilan XI") SOFA reported a total of 1513 clients reporting violence through October 2011, with a cumulative 2010-11 caseload of 2370 cases. When one compares the data by either a half year or a similar 12-month period, the picture shows a decrease of clients reporting violence than before 2010.

SOFA GBV Cases 2008-2011*

Period:	Overall No. GBV Clients	only Port-au-Prince centers (2)
July- Dec 2008 ^{lxxxix}	752	517
Jan-June 2009 ^{xc}	1020	732
Jan-June 2010	718	405
July-Dec 2010	857	612
Jan-June 2011	945	593

Sources: SOFA bulletins VIII-XII.

GBV vs. Rape cases

What about rapes? Looking back, SOFA reports a modest increase of sexual aggression (rape) cases before the earthquake, from 76 cases in the first part of 2008, to 107 in the latter half of 2009. In the earthquake period, there were 114 sexual aggression cases, including 65 rapes, 4 gang rapes, 6 repeated rapes, 10 attempted rapes, and 5 pregnancies from rape. That's just 8% of the total 1398 "acts of aggression" documented by June, among the 718 clients who reported violence. By mid-2011, SOFA had documented 201 reported rapes out of 246 cases of sexual aggression -- roughly 6% of a total 4,063 acts of aggressions during a 12-month period, from July 2010 to June 2011. That's a *drop* of two percentage points compared to late 2008.

SOFA also presented a monthly breakdown of referrals from the shelters. The data show a modest increase of clients, from 23 in July 2010 to 33 in December. The six-month total was 166 client referrals, the majority from IDP camps.^{xcii} Six months later, another 101 cases were referred, but now the pattern was changing. It charted a monthly *decline*, from 15 shelter referrals in January to only 6 in October 2011. The cumulative comparison was 166 cases by December 2010 versus 101 in July 2011 – again, a slight decline.^{xcii}

A Comparative View: SOFA Rape Cases 2008-11*

Year	Rapes	GBV incidents	% Rapes Minors
2 nd Half 2008 (6 mos)	76	1051.	68%
First half 2009 (6 mos)	107	1961	64%
March-June 2010 (2 mos)	8	107	
1 st half 2010 (6 mos)	114	1398	62%
2 nd half 2010 thru October 2011 (16 mos)	246 (16 mos)	4063	62%

*Source: SOFA Bulletins VIII, IX, X, and XI (July 2008-June 2011)

Some advocates noted that clients were turning up in 2010 and 2011 that are past victims of rape. SOFA's numbers do not reflect an increase of clients reporting repeat or serial rapes. Instead, they have

stayed much as they were before 2010. Repeat rapes made up 2% of sexual aggression cases in the second half of 2008, and went up one percentage point in the next six month period.^{xciii} For the post-quake period of July 2010-October 2011, repeat rapes made up 3.35% -- virtually the same as in 2009.

The Overlooked Crises

Before 2010, adolescent cases made up many of the rape cases in Haiti. This trend has also continued. AT SOFA centers, minors make up over 60% of the reported post-quake rape cases (*see table*). While this remains a sobering statistic, it also represents a statistical *decline* from fall 2008, when minors made up 68% of rape cases. The high percentage of rapes against minors also includes family violence or incest cases. In SOFA's logs, these cases rose from zero percent in late 2008 to 15% of rape cases reported by mid-2011 (*see table*). This data supports the observation by providers of increased reports of incest since the earthquake (*see later discussion of incest*).

Year	Total	Conjugal	Civil	Family	Public
July-Dec 2008		90%	8%	0%	
Jan.-June 2009		13%	85%	2%	0%
Jan-June 2010		0%	94%	5%	1%
July 2010-Oct 2011		13%	72%	15%	0%

Data from SOFA's bulletins VIII, IX, X and XI (7.08-12.31.11).

The SOFA data shows that rapes classified as *public* – perpetrated by authorities, including soldiers and police – made up 1% of rapes in the January-June 2010 period. That figure then fell back to zero percent in mid-2011, matching the pre-quake picture. While a great deal of international and national media attention and outrage has been directed at MINUSTAH soldiers involved recent rape scandals, these cases still represent a tiny percentage of reported cases compared to civilian assailants. But here, too, cases may be under-reported. Advocates say rape victims may not report violence or abuses at the hands of police or other authorities, fearing arrest and retribution. Police corruption is another factor (*see MINUSTAH box and Legal Justice section*).

Regional Patterns

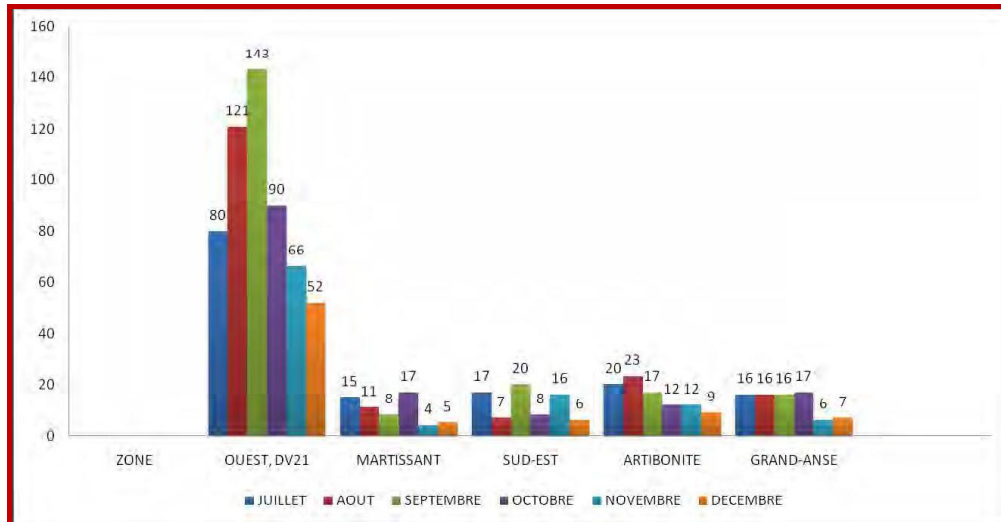
Given that the earthquake affected the capital and small urban cities in western Haiti, what can we learn from cases reported outside these areas since 2010? In the Artibonite, GBV cases registered at SOFA's centers rose from 93 cases in the second half of 2010 to 120 by June 2011, up by 27 cases. This was after the emergency period. Compare that with a pre-quake picture of 56 cases in the second half of 2008 and 137 cases by mid-2009, when cases had already doubled *before* the earthquake.^{xciv} The 2011 figure falls below the total for same period in 2009.

In the Southeast, SOFA registered 74 clients in the second half of 2010 and 127 in the first half of 2011 – an increase of 53 clients. That compares to 79 clients for the second part of 2008^{xcv} and 60 in first half of 2009. In the Grand-Anse, SOFA clients increased from 78 in the second half of 2010 to 105 by mid-2011, an increase of 23 clients. While more women and girls reported violence there, there were fewer seen in October 2011 than in early 2009.^{xcvi}

Graph of number of declared cases at the 21 Sant Douvanjou SOFA Centers.

July-Dec. 2010

(Graphiques démontrant l'échelle du nombre de cas déclarés dans les 21 Centres d'Accueil de la SOFA)



Zanmi Lasante (Partners in Health) has also been an active health provider to victims of sexual violence in the Port-au-Prince camps, as well as in the Artibonite and Central Plateau regions of Haiti. It began expanding rural services for sexual violence victims within public hospitals and clinics in 2011 working with the Haitian Ministry of Health. An initial overview of quarterly GBV data for the period April to June 2012 collected from PIH's 11 sites suggests a far higher percentage of sexual violence in the urban sites – 78% -- than rural sites --22%.

Among cities in the provinces, Hinche and St. Marc saw a higher share of spring 2012 GBV cases. Regionally, more GBV cases were recorded in the lower Artibonite – 83% --versus the Central Plateau -- 17%.^{xcvii} Without pre-quake data, it's hard to compare PIH and SOFA cases. But it's safe to say that as groups expand services, more cases are registered. "There's a growing awareness in the community and a result of the campaigns that we are doing to educate people," stated Dr. Christophe Milien, a physician to expand GBV services in the Artibonite, alongside Dr. Raymonville Maxi, ZL/PIH's GBV program director.^{xcviii}

In the rural areas, the hurdles of distance and lack of health services are that much greater than in urban centers. As discussed earlier, the rate of illiteracy and poverty is higher among rural residents. Health services are lacking, and rape victims often help from midwives, traditional healers and voodoo priests. These cases remain unreported. For now, Port-au-Prince cases represent the majority, official and unofficial. While rural reporting has grown, it appears to be only a glimpse of the real picture.

The Unofficial Picture

While the official picture for rape appears to have plateaued at some organizations, the unofficial picture is reportedly still rising, based on reports by researchers, human rights groups, and the media.

Unofficially, by far the most alarming 2010 data – and a real departure from other studies — comes from the Small Arms Survey (SAS), led by veteran crime researchers Athena Kolbe and Robert Muggah. Based on their prior 2009 work and a comparative survey of 1800 households in greater Port-au-Prince, they estimated that 10,813 individuals had been sexually assaulted at the six-week mark after the earthquake, the great majority female.^{xcix}

The SAS researchers also found that 4,645 individuals were physically assaulted in the same period – a reflection of domestic violence that spiraled. Finally, their study captured the link of rising violence to homelessness and hunger: a quarter of their 2010 respondents (24.4 percent) saw their homes completely destroyed, while 18.6 percent were experiencing severe food insecurity six weeks after the disaster. The Small Arms Survey team has focused its ongoing research of violence in slum areas of the capital where overall violence is high. It can be argued that their estimates of sexual violence and crime skew higher for that reason. It's still a far cry from the 114 official cases reported by SOFA in early 2010.

Survivor Led Outreach

In 2010, KOFVIV helped organize a grassroots GBV survivor's outreach and referral network, with funding from MINUSTAH. Many 2010 cases were identified by local field *ajans* (lay outreach workers) who lived in the IDP camps where they did their outreach. Other agencies including AFASDA, a longtime leader in the GBV field, opened up welcome tents and reception sites near camps. Local *ajans* for a new GBV organization, CAFVAS – the Center for Sexual Abuse Victims (*see box*) registered 45 rape cases right after the earthquake in the Martissant IDP camps and local zone. Two years later, that figure was up to 780 registered rape cases. Many of the crimes remain unsolved.

Since that time, both GBV and rape cases have steadily risen at some centers, but not others. Fanm Deside's case registry, which also reflects official "verified" cases, resembles the pattern of increase and later plateau reported its sister KONAP organizations in Port-au-Prince. Partners in Health issued alarming reports in mid-2010 of the cases of early pregnancy, some linked to sexual violence and transactional sex in Port-au-Prince camps where PIH set up clinics (*see PIH box, Health section*). They continue to register new cases.

Moving into 2011, KOFVIV documented 269 cases of rape in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area last year. They reported a still-high number of new cases: 49 in January 2011 alone – more than half of them minors.^c Some KOFVIV clients in 2010 and 2011 arrived too late to seek a medical certificate or weren't emotionally ready to pursue a legal case (*see BAI box, legal sector for a review of KOFVIV's cases*). Also, their post-quake case registry wasn't initially included in the official database, but that has changed.

While the debate over hard data and official vs. unofficial reports continues, there *is* a real consensus among many providers of a direct link between increased reports and increased outreach, and the role that peer outreach has played. "It's certain that more people are reporting rape and are aware of the

services that are available. So that can be seen as a good thing,” said SOFA’s Pierre-Paul Jacob in 2010. “That means women feel more confident to report.”

Hurdles to Reporting

Compared to newcomer CAFVAS, AFASDA is a long-established actor in the GBV field. The group is allied with V-Day (see box).^{ci} Pre-quake, it managed V-Day sponsored safe houses in the north and in Port-au-Prince; the latter was damaged in the earthquake (see *Safe House* section). In mid-2010, AFASDA-V-Day set up four initial GBV “listening posts” next to IDP camps to provide counseling and referrals to residents from nearby camps. According to AFASDA’s director, Elverie Eugene, the listening posts received many clients. *Most arrived an average of three to four days after an incident of domestic or sexual violence* (italics emphasized)— outside the 72-hour legal reporting window – too late to officially report the case or access preventive health services).

Many were domestic violence victims or knew their attackers – a neighbor or acquaintance in the camp. They had nowhere to go and would have to return to live there. Few opted to report the incidents to the police or pursue a legal claim, said Eugene, who explained that many women came to AFSADA primarily to seek emotional support and counseling, or mediation with an abusive partner or relative. “They don’t want to seek legal help,” said Elverie. “They speak out but they go no further.” That’s one reason such cases don’t show up in the official record books.



Photo Credit: ©Harriet Hirshorn 2011.

There are also other well-known hurdles to accessing timely medical care. “You’ll still find a lot of women who, for different reasons, aren’t able to report the rape and get the medical certificate,” stated Jocie Philistin, Director of Advocacy at KOFIV. “There are a lot of obstacles, including the distance of camps from hospitals and the lack of money for transport.” And, she admits, “There are a lot of women who never report it at all. There’s still so much stigma, and they’re afraid. Why? Because after they come here they still have to go back to the same situation.” Post-quake, the few safe houses in the capital were destroyed, and even now, few exist (see *Safe Shelter* section). Unreported cases, she suggests, “could even be the real majority.” Added Philistin, “We have no way of knowing. It’s very difficult.”

Advocates also pointed out that, with the collapse of health centers and services in the earthquake, residents of the capital and other hard-hit zones did not know where to go for emergency services. Lack of knowledge about services continues to limit timely reporting and access to care.

Serial and Gang Rapes

It's not surprising to find that cases of repeat (multiple or serial) rapes and gang rapes occurred in 2010. Moving from camp to camp in search of safety, some victims have been repeatedly assaulted, say advocates.^{cii} Some have been raped more than once in gang rapes, adding further layers of trauma to each horrific attack (see *Security and Child Protection* section).^{ciii} Such cases are harder to track, too, since gang rapes have often involved masked perpetrators, say lawyers at BAI.^{civ} This has added to the pain of victims who have little recourse to justice. Officially, SOFA recorded 3.25 % repeat rapes in its 21 centers, and a figure of 14.23% for gang rapes in the July 2010-October 2011 period.^{cv}

To date, little has been published or discussed about the distinct aspects of repeat rapes and gang rapes in Haiti. Looking ahead, more research into cases of repeat and gang rape would help inform providers of their additional needs for protection and other services.

Known Attackers

In interviews from July to September 2011, representatives of women's, police, and legal organizations PotoFanm+FI spoke to — including the Haitian and UN police and MINUSTAH — confirmed that in many cases, the victim knew or could identify the attacker(s). Even in cases of multiple and gang rapes, individuals could often identify at least one of the rapists, as these were often acquaintances or from their local camp. While gang rapes have often involved armed and masked attackers (covering their faces with handkerchiefs is common), in the assailants in non-gang-related reports of rape are not masked. They use of physical force and sometimes knives rather than guns in these rapes.^{cvi} (see *Medical section for details of injuries reported*).

It's also true that while rape has continued to capture the lion's share of advocacy and media attention, physical sexual attacks and domestic violence represent the far greater crime pool. That's been the pattern for a long time. In 2003, Kay Fanm reported that over half its reported GBV cases involved domestic partners, while SOFA had a figure of almost 70 percent. Just before the earthquake, that figure had increased to 79 percent for Kay Fanm and 80 percent for SOFA — a steady rise. Post-quake, the figures jumped up to 91 percent in 2010 and 94 percent in 2011, respectively. As SOFA's Pierre-Paul Jacob put it, "It's in the family. It's a problem that exists in the heart of Haitian society."

In November 2011, the National Dialogue noted that, since 2002, its main partners had documented 19,658 cases of violence against women in four Haitian geographic departments. Like pre-quake reports, almost 70 percent of rapes occurred in a home (or tent); only 25 percent took place in a public setting. The home belonged to either the perpetrator (44 percent) or the victim (42 percent), or it was another person's home (14 percent). The majority were victims of gender-based violence (60 percent) and had suffered from physical aggression. That figure represents two times the percentage of women who had suffered sexual violence (30 percent), and ten times more than those reporting "economic" and "psychological" aggressions. Meanwhile, among cases of "sexual aggression," rape made up 90 percent of cases, while touching and attempted rape made up the remaining 10 percent.



These figures mirror the 2011 data reported by some of the individual organizations whose statistics are included in the national registry. Data from the police support this trend. In 2009, the Haitian National Police created a special unit within its Women's Affairs division, the Combat Unit for Women Victims of Violence (UCL FVV in French; see box, *Security and Child Protection* section) and set up a tent to receive cases in the Fort Dimanche area. As of August 2011, most of their cases involved domestic violence marked by physical battery (aggression) – far more than rapes.^{cvii}

“We live in a society where men believe that, no matter what, they can still beat up on women,” stated the UCL FVV's Inspector Alain Clauvel Desforges, who directs their program, adding that Haiti “lacks a culture of fighting against violence against women.”

Late Disclosures: Missed Cases

According to maternal care providers, an undocumented, but important, number of women disclose their rapes late: when they are experiencing complications from street abortions or delivering babies (see *Reproductive Health* section).^{cviii} Such cases are often disclosed to *matwon* (traditional birth attendants) or *fansaj yo* (local midwives) and nurses assisting with emergency and home deliveries. Interviews with doctors at MSF-France's CRUO center confirmed that women arriving for emergency obstetric care (EmOC) services may disclose rape as the source of a pregnancy, but this information remains confidential.

“You have to understand that the woman coming here doesn't even know to say this is a case of rape. It's only in talking to her they we will discover it was forced (sex),” stated an MSF CRUO workers. “This is the mentality in the society.”^{cxix} While Haitian feminists have worked hard to raise women's and public awareness of marital rape and push for laws to outlaw it, Haiti remains a traditionally patriarchal society, one that has historically viewed it as a wife's “duty” to sexually satisfy her husband and turned a blind eye to husbands who beat their wives.

Judging from the observations of staff at the CRUO and institutions offering PACS services, women who disclose rapes during prenatal or delivery visits are likely to be counseled and referred to services for victims. But the CRUO centers don't follow up case management of their clients to that degree.

Making Sense of an Evolving Picture

On paper, then, it appears that the official and unofficial pictures for sexual violence have evolved in opposite directions. But perhaps the pictures are linked, like two sides of a Janus coin, reflecting an underlying dynamic? That's one way to interpret the numbers.

The data since 2010 shows that GBV referral networks have improved their services to clients. That helps explain why medical providers like GHESKIO and Partners in Health show a steady improvement in the percentage of referred clients who reach their medical centers within the 72 hour window. Increased outreach also explains why PIH is documenting more cases in the rural Plateau Central as it extends services there. But enormous hurdles to health access were created by the earthquake, which

destroyed health centers, displaced people and left them homeless. Rape victims in IDP camps tell advocates they won't report the rape to authorities because they have children to care for and no where else to go. This reality may explain why the unofficial numbers are rising, while the official numbers have declined or plateaued at agencies that tend to document cases referred from the police or authorities – cases in which women chose to report the crime.

The Pioneer – SOFA

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SOFA, the Haitian Women's Solidarity organization, was launched in 1987 by leading feminists with a broad women's rights and empowerment mission. The organization has been at the forefront of gender policy and programmatic advances since that time. It began providing services via a decentralized program to sexual violence victims in 2002. Pre-quake it operated 21 welcome centers -- "Sant Douvanjou" -- in four departments and Grand-Anse, Southeast, West, and Artibonite covering eight communes, 15 sections and four towns) and reached a broad population. Last year, 75% of SOFA's clients sought services from their two Sant Douvanjou centers in Port-au-Prince, including many women and girls living in the IDP camps.^{cx}

The Sant Douvanjou centers offer a Welcome and Support (*Accompagnement*) GBV program that includes counseling, medico-legal, and social services, sometimes via referral to outside providers. SOFA is also a member of the KONAP leftist coalition of women's and rights groups and closely allied with Kay Fanm, Fanm Deside, and members of the National Dialogue advisory body.

Like other groups, SOFA suffered major losses in the earthquake including the death of founder Anne Marie Coriolan and other members. Coriolan also served as a top advisor to the women's rights ministry, MCFDF and was a force behind gender advocacy in Haiti. Other SOFA members were injured and made homeless. SOFA women's clinic was also affected.

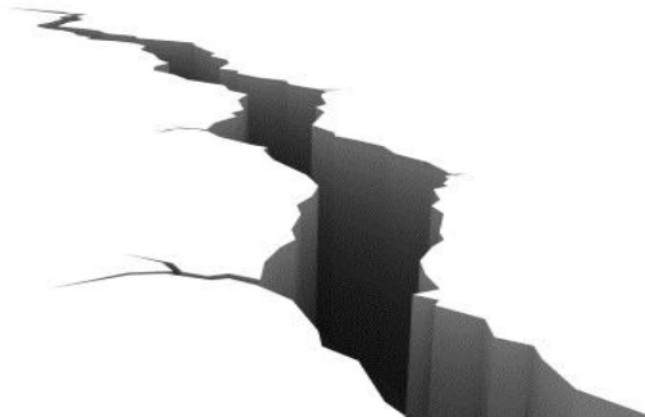
The organization moved quickly to recover, under the leadership of longtime member and current director Carol Pierre-Paul. Her immediate priorities included locating and helping SOFA members find emergency lodging, restoring the organization's activities and program, and doing outreach and emergency relief to women and displaced communities in camps. In an interview a few days after the earthquake, Pierre-Paul said, "It's completely overwhelming. We have lost our leader (Coriolan) so we are in mourning. There's so much to do in any direction I turn. Where do we even begin?" Months later, the picture had improved, but the emotional demands were still exhausting. "I spend all my time going to funerals," stated Pierre-Paul. "We all do. You can't imagine it." (See *Portraits in Leadership: Carole Pierre-Paul Jacob for more*).

Like other KONAP partners, SOFA chapters began targeted outreach to displaced women and girls in camps in different cities, distributing hygiene kits, water, and information, with funds and supplies from UN Women and other donors, including Canadian and Caribbean women's groups. This included an updated GBV reference card ('Kat Referans') with emergency contacts of providers for sexual violence victims (see *Annex II, 'Kat Referans'*). SOFA also collaborated with staff at the women's ministry and KONAP members to organize women to participate and monitor the elections, and later, to address the cholera crisis. In the Cap Rouge rural region, SOFA Sud-Est leaders helped women refugees from Port-au-Prince resettle and find housing and services, and access help to rebuild fallen homes.

Early on, Pierre-Paul and other SOFA members also began advocating for women's rights within the national recovery effort, demanding a greater presence for women on the national advisory committee and more support for community-based leaders and organizations in the planning and reconstruction of a new Haiti. They have remained very active in the recent debates and effort to reform Haiti's paternity laws and other legal reforms. SOFA's 21 Dawn Centers remain hubs of service, education, and empowerment for women and girls. Across Haiti, SOFA leaders remain at the forefront of the battle.[∞]

Rape by 'Unknowns'

In the days and weeks after the earthquake, media stories blamed the rising reports of rapes on some of the 5000 escaped criminals, particularly gang leaders and several convicted rapists, from the collapsed National Penitentiary. This suggested a narrative of rape by strangers in a lawless environment. While it's true that gang rapes and assaults by ex-criminals were documented then — and continue to be — they do *not* represent the majority of reported rapes, according to Haitian advocates and police sources.^{cxix} That said, rape as a category of crime represented a significant crime among all violence reported shortly after the earthquake. For the period February through April 2010, the Haitian human rights group RNDDH tracked 2250 arrests, of which 534 (23.7 percent) were for sexual violence.^{cxii}



Research

A number of academic groups, including the Haitian Interuniversity Institute for Research (INURED), led by director HERNS Marcelin, a social scientist, began collaborative research shortly after the earthquake. INURED began collecting data on the humanitarian response to the needs of residents in camps, among other topics. In March 2010, they initiated one of the first field studies of the impact of displacement on residents in Cite Soleil, a popular shantytown area where some 300,000-350,000 people lived before the earthquake. They compared it to prior February 2010 data from nearly 1000 Cite Soleil residents. Their team employed a similar method of research, using a research team, and students trained to do field research and relying on interviews with residents, household, and tent-to-tent visits.^{cxiii} Not surprisingly, sexual violence was among the top concerns voiced by Cite Soleil residents. INURED found that:

“Approximately 14% of residents witnessed or experienced threats of violence or actual attacks where they are currently living. The leading forms of violence experienced included beating (27%), fighting (24%), rape (20%), and theft (18%). “Sex-for-food” trade is not uncommon in the relief camps where young women often have to negotiate sexually for shelter from rain and food aid. The current loosely coordinated security efforts by the Haitian National Police (PNH) and United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) have therefore proven ineffectual against organized local criminal elements that act with impunity.”

Today, INURED is collaborating with the US Centers for Disease Control and the Haitian government on a new Violence Against Children Study (VACS) that has started a national field survey of 1000 boys and girls. I will look at cases of violence, including sexual violence, and try to learn more about the familial and environmental factors that foster sexual violence (*see box below*). The study reflects a growing awareness in and outside Haiti of the importance of Haitian-led research and the need to collect solid data and evidence to help establish what researchers consider *baseline data* – a solid reference point for comparing future studies or data. Many researchers belong to the Haitian Studies Association (HSA), an academic group with members in Haiti and the diaspora.

While INURED (and its partners) design and conduct studies following “best-practice” standards of ethical research, it remains a research group, not a service provider like Kay Fanm or KOFIV. There are different advantages to using academic or professional researchers versus members of local community groups. For example, INURED can offer expertise in implementing well-designed research that generates solid data and partnerships with the US CDC that can bring funds and resources needed to carry out large or national studies. At the same time, local groups such as KOFIV or FAVILEK who represent survivors bring a first-hand knowledge and understanding of sexual violence to the task of interviewing others. They gain the trust of other survivors to speak out, and provide counseling and referrals, too.

Community-based Research

Participatory research engages members of a given community to help design and implement research about its own members and community. Who better than a survivor of incest or trafficking to interview and help another survivor? Such research also

strengthens the capacity of local organizations to document and monitor the impact of their programs and to hold others accountable, too. (see *CHRIG box and Annex III for PotoFi's participatory research model*). On the downside, some worry that sexual violence survivors may not be able to separate their experience from another person's, creating a bias in the research. Pairing researchers with survivors and locals recruited and trained in basic research methods can improve the design and implementation of research studies. This approach helps assure the research is relevant, ethical, and addresses community needs, while also building the capacity of local groups to undertake research that informs their monitoring and advocacy of local issues.∞

Studying Abuse in Children

Organization: VACS – Violence Against Children Research Study, INURED/CDC/ Gov. Haiti

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Primary Target Group: Children

The Violence Against Children Study (VACS) is a joint national research survey that's just been launched to better document and systematically measure the prevalence of violence in children: physical, sexual and emotional. A joint project of the US CDC and Haitian research partner INURED (see discussion, section Research), it is fully backed by the Haitian government and has engaged a range of multisector partners to help with the field work and referral of children victims to services. "One of our main goals is to develop a real baseline that will serve as a national reference, because we know a lot of studies have been done but we can't rely on these reports or compare them easily," explained INURED founder and director Herns Marcelin, who is leading the field research, working with the CDC's Avid Reza. In separate interviews, the co-principal researchers explained that VACS grew out of the many reports showing the children are increasingly targets of violence, including sexual violence – rapes, incest, child kidnappings and trafficking, and the long-known abuse of children working as *restaveks*, or domestics.

"One of the things we plan to do is go deeper and look at the various environmental factors in the child's life that may be contributing to the violence," stated Marcelin. "We need to have a better picture of what they are facing, and also the risk factors. That can help guide efforts in prevention, too." As Reza explained, the VACS represents a serious effort to gain a national picture of violence affecting children, and understand this in the context of their families and communities, as well as the post-quake conditions of insecurity, poverty, and displacement. "We know girls are being very impacted... [But] we know less about violence in boys. This study should help us fill in some important gaps.

The VACS came about partly in response to increased advocacy by advocates and agencies who work with children, including members of the new Haiti Adolescent Girls Network. The network includes Save the Children, UNICEF, the IRC, and the IPPF – all groups actively helping children in Haiti now, and expanding their programs around sexual violence. "One of the things that have been difficult for all of us is that we really don't know what the national picture is like," explained HAGN member Catherine Maternowska in a spring 2011 interview. Maternowska is a veteran gender advocate who helped develop HAGN's signature "girl's safe space" model and served as a GBV consultant for UNICEF in Haiti after the earthquake. "Members of HAGN have been pushing for a national study of this kind in children and we're delighted the VACS is going to start and that the CDC has committed itself to this research. It's really a great step."

The VACS is targeting 1000 children – 500 girls, 500 boys – in departments across Haiti. Last fall, a VACS Steering Committee moved quickly through the preparatory steps for the field research including developing and getting institutional and ethical approval of the survey instrument; completing review of proposed protocols and consent forms; recruiting field interviewers and student volunteers, including young INURED graduate school students, to help; and networking with a range of potential referral service providers.

The VACS has also reached out to community organizations, including women's groups helping GBV survivors and others doing research. Discussions are underway, for example, for VACS to collaborate in the future with the PotoFi Haiti Girls Initiative, with a goal of looking more deeply at the early data on rape, pregnancy and prostitution (see Annex III). While PotoFi's field study is primarily quantitative – capturing rough numbers and looking at a few aspects of sexual violence, the VACS represents a deeper inquiry designed to generate qualitative and quantitative data – to document and describe the "narrative" of sexual violence in children and the stories behind the numbers. "We're excited," said Marcelin in January, on the eve of the VACS field

launch. “We hope it’s the start of a lot more research that can ultimately result in helping the victims of violence. The more we know about the roots of this violence, the better we can design programs.”

“The CDC has done a lot of research on sexual violence, and we have lessons from other countries that will also allow us to compare what we find in Haiti,” added Reza. “At the end of the day what matters is helping the children access services and care.” While the VACS is starting its focus on the western part of Haiti, there are plans to extend the research to the rest of the country later.

“We see a great potential in working with community groups to do this type of research,” said Marcelin, who says INURED is reaching out to community groups for collaboration on research. “We are hoping to share what we know with others, and also to learn from the communities. To me it’s a win-win situation.” ∞

Addressing Research Gaps

After two years and many reports, it’s well-documented that sexual violence reports have increased. But a lot more needs to be learned about, and from, the current picture and the emerging trends. More documentation is needed about the impact of rape on the lives of survivors to date, including factors that contribute to their recovery. There are many “hidden” issues that call for an urgent inquiry, including incest, post-rape pregnancies and subsequent abortions, sexual violence affecting girls, the situation now with restavek children, etc. Little research has been done about sexual violence directed at boys and men, or about the perpetrators of sexual violence. More research is needed to look at sexual violence affecting more vulnerable populations, including sex workers, disabled women and girls, the elderly, and the socially ostracized groups: transgendered women, lesbians, and men who have sex with men (MSM) (*see SeroVie box*).^{cxiv}

The relationship of poverty to sexual violence is an especially important issue to document, including the link of poverty to prostitution, to sexual abuse, and rape. So is the pressing issue of shelter – including housing for survivors. There are also issues that loom as the consequences of increased rape, including the reported wave of early pregnancies post-quake, and how this impacts the future of affected girls and families. There’s also the possible impact of rapes on acquisition of HIV and other STDs, including HPV that is linked to cervical cancer.

Finally, the big disparity between “official” and “unconfirmed” reports of rape warrants more research and analysis. Here, the efforts of groups like Digital Democracy, working with KOFAVIV to develop a better system for reporting and monitoring sexual violence is a positive step. (*see KOFAVIV and Digital Democracy boxes*).

Camp-Based Research

Name: CHRGI) Center for Human Rights and Global Justice and Global Justice Clinic (GJC),
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Primary zone: Haiti

Primary client: academics, Haitian and general public.

In the wake of the earthquake, academic researchers from outside Haiti also began field studies to take stock of the impact on survivors. They included a team from the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) at New York University School of Law, who began camp-based research in October 2010 to investigate any links between access to water and food, sanitation services, and reports of rising sexual violence. In February 2012, they issued a final joint CHRGJ-GJC report, entitled “Yon Je Louvri: Reducing Vulnerability to Sexual Violence in Haiti’s IDP Camps,”^{cxv} co-authored by CHRGJ faculty director Professor Margaret (Meg) Satterthwaite, Justin Simeone, a scholar-in-residence there; and two law students: Farrell Brody; and Nikki Reisch .

The 2012 report confirms preliminary findings released by the group in a March 2011 Briefing Paper.^{cxvi} It shows that 14 percent of survey respondents reported at least one member of their household had been a victim of rape or ‘unwanted touching’ during the one-year period following the earthquake. Nearly 70 percent of respondents said were more worried about sexual violence since the earthquake. The study also found that camp residents who were most vulnerable to sexual violence were: young and female; living in households with three or fewer members; had limited access to food, water, and sanitation; and lived in a camp without participatory and responsive governance structures. These findings confirm general observations made by advocates and camp outreach workers. Their Briefing Paper also provided limited evidence on the then-emergent problem of prostitution—showing that camp residents perceived increases in transactional sex following in the earthquake. “Collectively, these findings may suggest a relationship between resource deprivation, transactional sex, and sexual violence,” explain the authors.^{cxvii}

The group also adopted a rights-based approach in the design and implementation of their study, which collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The study included a detailed, multi-question household survey conducted with some 365 residents in January 2011 in four camps: Terrain de Golf, Champ de Mars, Place St. Pierre, and Parc Jean Marie Vincent. They also held eighteen focus group discussions in the same camps during April 2011, and met with key stakeholders in the Haitian government, United Nations bodies, international and local NGOs. After issuing their Briefing Paper, lead co-author Satterthwaite and her team also traveled to Haiti in July 2011 and November 2011 to review the results and methodology, and to conduct final research before releasing the final report.

As discussed in the earlier section on Reporting, the results reported by CHRGJ/GJC are based on self-reporting – what individuals say or claim. While Satterthwaite is a US researcher, her group hired a team of Haitian social science students and graduates with a background in field research who were supervised by a Haitian trainer with experience doing field research in camps to implement the survey in Kreyol. The study was carried out following ‘best practices’ of research, including informed consent and a variety of questions asked in a way to pick up discrepancies or conflicting statements – a standard research methodology. But the researchers did not require individuals who claimed rape to provide further evidence for their claim such as a police report or medical certificates or a consistent oral testimony – evidence used to legally certify cases. To some, the lack of follow up or investigation into these claims suggest these results should be interpreted with a degree of caution -- even though many rape claims do prove credible without police reports or medical exams, and on the basis of consistent, repeated oral statements by victims to legal advocates.

A close look at the study questions shows that the CHRGJ/GJC team developed their field questionnaire with a clear awareness of the then-current conditions in Haiti’s dangerous camps, and the growing reports of rape others had published, including colleagues at MADRE, the LERN legal network, and Haitian women’s organizations. They sought to look at the links between water and sanitation services and rape because they suspected many victims were being raped en route to the bathroom or latrines or in poorly lit areas. In that regard, their study appears pre-designated to examine the scope of what some groups were then observing, and to put some hard figures on these observations related to risk and vulnerability to rape and unwanted touching. The study does not provide a comparative picture with pre-quake results or findings related to access to water or food. In other words, it doesn’t really tell us how camp residents lived before the earthquake, and how much better or

worse off they are now. After all, a great majority of Haitians lived below the poverty level in 2009 and many didn't have much access to regular food or clean water.

But the study results do provide a base of statistics to compare and contrast with other camp-based studies, including the pre- and post-quake surveys by the INURED team led by Hens Marcelin, PhD. Both of those studies relied on trained students to conduct interviews and similar methodologies. The NYU team also benefited from consultation with a wide variety of Haitian and American researchers.

The CHRGJ/GJC academic team returned to Haiti in late January 2012 to meet again with camp residents and share their final results. This follow up work made it clear that conditions had not sufficiently improved in the surviving camps, and suggested that residents remained vulnerable to sexual assault and to sexual abuses linked to selling sex – informal prostitution. As their final report notes, access to adequate and safe food, water, and sanitation “remain physically and economically inaccessible for too many households.” The withdrawal of essential aid – in many cases after only six months – leaves a vacuum of basic services and a daily struggle to eat and drink for many residents. It also drives women and girls to sell themselves.

“Our report proves what Haitian women’s groups have been saying since shortly after the earthquake: that women who have difficulty accessing the basic necessities of life, such as clean water, functioning latrines, and adequate food, are especially vulnerable to sexual violence,” said Satterthwaite upon releasing the February report.

The NYU group offered these five broad priority recommendations for action by the Haitian government and international community: (1) provide IDPs who have been sexually assaulted in camps with free and immediate access to alternative shelter, medical services, and legal assistance; (2) expand security patrols in and around camps and install lighting and locks in sanitation facilities; (3) prioritize creation of income-generating activities for women; (4) ensure all IDPs have access to free or affordable clean water; and (5) stop forced evictions of IDPs.

“Humanitarian best practices for preventing and responding to sexual violence need to be implemented immediately in Haiti’s remaining IDP camps,” stressed Satterthwaite. “Simple measures like installing lighting in camps and locks in latrines must be coupled with long-term strategies for women’s economic empowerment.”

The NYU group plans to continue research related to sexual violence in Haiti, and continues to partner with MADRE and other LERN allies in their joint advocacy on behalf of Haitian survivors of rape. It is also sharing its findings with Haitian researchers. Director Satterthwaite hopes her group’s field research will help shape programs to address the economic plight of Haitian women and girls.∞

New Reporting Tools

Haiti's earthquake served as a call to arms for volunteers of all stripes, including technology innovators who were quick to team up with Haitian tech groups to help rebuild Haiti's broken communications grid and build mobile networks among humanitarian NGOs. They include Ushahidi, a "crisis mapping" project that introduced the successful SOS "4626" Text Campaign (see box); Inveneo,^{cxviii} whose engineers coordinated NetHope, a collaboration of 28 humanitarian groups providing relief aid to Haiti; Digital Democracy (see box), and SOS Connect. The latter two launched SMS-mobile phone-based systems for reporting and tracking sexual violence.

Mobile Tracking of Rape

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Digital Democracy is a woman-led technology-based training and partnership program that aims to empower individuals in less-resourced settings to use technology for social change, including the fight against sexual violence.^{cxix} DD was working on a digital literacy project in Haiti before the earthquake hit called "Women of Haiti" that focused on gender-based violence. It quickly noted how many Haitians were using their cell phones, texting to report emergencies, link providers, and map the damage, using an emergency "4636" (INFO) SOS hotline number set up by the global Ushahidi project.

Digital Democracy's focus on women's rights and empowerment also extends beyond gender-based violence. With support from the US Institute for Peace (USIP), the group came to Haiti to help some 50 women representing grassroots women's groups in Port-au-Prince prepare for then-national elections on November 28, 2010, a follow-up to two prior trainings.

As reports of rape cases grew, Digital Democracy quickly worked to help leading survivors' networks — including KOFIVIV, FAVILEK and KONAMAVID — recover their activities and improve their capacity to document their stories, as well as conditions facing displaced women and girls in IDP camps. Digital Democracy has steadily adapted its award-winning system, Handheld Human Rights, to better document, respond to, and prevent incidents of violence; to train and empower women to use technology; and to help local partners track sexual violence. Today, their linked Haiti tech initiatives (a GBV database and KOFIVIV SOF Call Center; new media projects with video, photography, and computer) are giving assault survivors new tools to report rape and fight gender-based violence.

The group's initial goals focused on three areas where it has made real advances to date in Haiti. Two staffers, Emily Jacobi and Emilie Reiser, led a pilot training for KOFIVIV members to use photography, video, and computers; their testimonies and reports helped push US Congressional and UN leaders to take actions around rape in Haiti. The visual testimony also helps legal advocates working to prosecute cases. Their stories and reports of this work are uploaded to a blog overseen by Digital Democracy. The group has also provided daily, free training workshops to other groups of women and girls via a partnership with Heartland Alliance's We Lead budding feminist center in Pacot, who are equipped with a bank of new computers and a small feminist library (see box, *Heartland Alliance*).

Early on, DD trained a pilot group of 60 women from KOFIVIV to use SMS texts for reporting rape cases and by September 2011, 150 women had been trained. Others were provided three-day trainings as operators and supervisors

for the emergency (Tel 572) call center in collaboration with a local call center. Topics included confidentiality, tele-counseling and referrals, and documentation. The project has introduced the use of high-tech “Live Scribe” smart pens – touted as a computer in a pen – that capture everything a user hears and writes down. The pen generates an audio and written record, allowing a phone operator to avoid asking a caller to repeat a detail of their often-painful story or a counselor to maintain eye contact with a client while taking notes].^{cxix}

As of June 2012, some 1700 calls had been logged by the Call Center, a number expected to increase with a June expansion to 24-hour service. The database has also generated a skeleton map of the hardest-hit areas that helps GBV advocates focus on advocacy and needed services to these areas. It also provides much-needed evidence of the crimes for legal cases. Digital Democracy now plans an analysis of its expanded database for trends and a clearer map of the shifting picture. It’s also sharing its progress with the Haitian women’s ministry and multisector actors, with an eye toward training other groups and extending the project’s mobile reach.^{cx}

The Live Scribe smart pen, invented by an Oakland, CA-based company in 2007, provides an accurate, interactive digital PDF transcript that syncs the audio and written interview. The user simply has to put the pen to any spot of ink on the paper – a letter, a diagram – and the pen will replay an audio of what was recorded that instant. The system allows users to store, share, organize, and send the information to others via a “Pen Cast” – a USB cord that links the smart pen to a computer for digital transfer of audio and written/visual files. The information from the intake form is also added into a cloud-based database system based on Drupal, a web-building technology that allows users to easily generate and compare data, reports, and maps – all the while maintaining confidentiality. Globally, use of the Live Scribe pen is taking off.^{cxxi}

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Spotlight on Girls

Throughout the post-quake period, many media reports failed to capture the percentage of adolescent and younger girls who make up the majority of rape cases. As the SOFA data showed, more girls are being raped than adult women, and since the earthquake, their age has gotten younger, based on the observations of advocates. While adult women continue to make up over 80% off domestic violence, and also make up some rape cases, the trend is consistent in urban and rural areas. As Kay Fanm’s Yolette Jeanty put it bluntly: “The women get beaten up; the younger ones get raped.”

In a fall 2011 interview, KOFAVIV’s Outreach Coordinator Jocie Philistin said that about 65 percent of reported cases to her group were girls. “Since the earthquake, we are seeing more children, minors and babies aged 1 to 17 months who have been raped,” Philistin reported to UNHCR in October 2011. Other groups have figures that are a bit higher or lower. Amnesty International published a report showing the 50 percent of rape victims they surveyed were young girls, some toddlers. GHESKIO’s youngest rape victims in 2010 was a one-year-old.

The rise in child and teen rape and sexual violence has also contributed to the wave of early pregnancies and subsequent “street abortions” in very young girls reported by medical providers (*see Reproductive Health section*).^{cxix}



Lack of locked latrines contributes to girls’ vulnerability to sexual violence. Photo Credit: © Harriet Hirshorn 2010.

At the legal group BAI, which is helping KOFAVIV and other survivor clients, 53 out of a total of 66 referrals in mid-2011 involved minors – almost 90 percent (*see BAI box*). Meena Jagannath, who ran BAI’s Rape Accountability and Prevention Project (RAPP) until recently, confirmed that minors made up

the majority of their rape cases. In an October 2011 update she reported, “The number of children’s cases outnumber the adult cases by a significant portion. Many victims are under the age of 12.”

At that time, adolescent girls represented a minority of clients at the AFASDA V-Day listening houses – a finding in contrast to other groups. That’s partly because Haiti’s protocol dictates that minors who are victims of violence be immediately referred to the Bureau for the Protection of Minors (*BPM – see box, Security section*) or the state Institute for Social Well Being and Research, IBESR (Institut du Bien-Etre Social et de Recherches) which has overall responsibility for children in Haiti. But AFASDA still sees cases, and always has. In July 2011, director Elverie Eugene said their Cap Haitian center had had a number of adolescent clients, from 11 to 18 years old. “Lately we had a girl of 16 who died; she’d been raped and mutilated,” said Eugenie at the time, referring to a case of adolescent rape in the north. It resulted in a conviction – a rare case of justice, she added.

The trend in “verified” (officially reported) at SOFA indicates that minors make up a steady over 60% of sexual aggression cases, and these include the 15% incest cases that were documented in the first ten months of 2011 (*see discussion of Incest*). For its part, the National Dialogue released a November 2011 summary of officially reported GBV cases reported by four groups -- MSF-France, SOFA, Kay Fanm and GHESKIO— over a 24 month period, from June 2009 to 2 June 2011 period. Out of 2,440 GBV cases, 29.80% involved sexual violence. A further breakdown showed 43 percent of victims of sexual aggression were young women under age 20, and young women aged 15-25 were “the most affected.” Moreover, 86% of sexual violence cases targeted single women and girls versus those formally married or in common-law unions. Rape made up 90% of the sexual aggression cases, including 21.4 percent gang rapes. The age of sexual violence victims ranged from 1 to 84.

The high prevalence of young girls among rape victims prompted GHESKIO to open its adolescent center partly several years ago. At the time of the earthquake, it was among the only health providers with specialized services for adolescents, including assault survivors. There’s still a major lack of adolescent-friendly and pediatric health and other services tailored to sexual violence victims, including the lack of teen group homes and holistic programs for those recovering from rape who drop of school. (*see Safe Shelter section*). Partners in Health is also focusing on adolescents within its push to expand maternal health services in rural areas.



Girls in the *Espas Pa Mwen* (My Space) Haiti Adolescent Girls Network. Photo Credit: © Nadia Todres/HAGN 2011.

'Espas Pa Mwen': A Safe Space for Girls

Organization: Haiti Adolescent Girls Network (HAGN)

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Primary Zone: Port-au-Prince; Jacmel, Leogane

Primary Target Group: Adolescent Girls

Primary Service Focus: Girls-only Space, Training, Mentoring for Girls

Photo Credit: Nadia Todres 2011

The Haiti Adolescent Girl Network is a working collaborative of individuals and organizations that began meeting in mid-2010 in response to the rising reports of sexual violence and the limited programming available for adolescent girls in Haiti's post-earthquake environment. HAGN members share a commitment to develop, implement, and document programs to build "protective assets" – social, economic, and health-related – through regular gatherings of girls aged 10-18 in dedicated safe spaces. There, girls are provided with adult and peer mentoring, education, skills-building, and creative activities – within a focus on girl's empowerment and women's rights.

Pre-earthquake, an estimated 42 percent of Haitian girls in urban areas lived without parents, many in conditions of unpaid domestic servitude as *restaveks*. Post-quake, more girls are now living alone or with strangers in dangerous camps; they are subject to sexual violence, hungry, out of school, and they have limited economic livelihood. Shortly after the quake, reports began emerging about the rise of informal sex work among younger girls – a survival means to access food, shelter, or other essential needs.

Several US women advocates –Judith Bruce, Senior Associate and Policy Analyst at the Population Council, and Ella Gudwin, Vice-President of the Emergency Response division of AmeriCares (HAGN's co-founders), and Catherine Maternowska, a longtime Haiti veteran and UNICEF consultant, teamed up to spearhead HAGN and bring other major players onboard. Maternowska doubled as a trainer to introduce HAGN's signature *Espas Pa Mwen* (My Space in Kreyol) program, modeled after an innovative pilot program for girls in East Africa. "We are empowering adolescent girls to secure their rights and health,

receive psychological support, continue their education, and find safe and productive livelihoods,” Bruce stated about HAGN’s launch. “As their future is reconfigured, so are the families they support and the communities in which they live.”

HAGN’s pilot goals were to recruit and train 80 local “mentors” and work with local associations to establish girls-only *espas* for 1000 girls by year one. The program would offer girls emotional support and mentoring and girl-centered education in a protective space. The peer-led program modules center on financial literacy, sexual and reproductive health, psycho-social support, and hygiene and cholera prevention and are segmented to be age appropriate. HAGN members are free to share and contribute to the evolving curriculum. Creative therapeutic programming – photography, theatre, song, art – is also on the menu.

Aside from the Population Council and AmeriCares, HAGN’s initial members included eight “Generation I” Haiti groups: APROSIFA, BRAC, GCFV, IPPF/PROFAMIL, IRC, St. Boniface, Save the Children, and YWCA, plus Making Cents and PotoFanm+Fi. Photographer Nadia Todres, an individual member, started a documentary project on girls in Haiti’s camps to promote their needs and HAGN’s efforts (see photo above). At the international level, co-founders Bruce and Gudwin used the Clinton Global Initiative meeting in New York in fall 2010 to help launch HAGN and push world leaders to focus on girls’ needs.

HAGN initially set up a small office within the AmeriCares headquarters near the Port-au-Prince airport and hired Haitian coordinator Sandra Jean Gilles to do outreach to local groups and identify training materials in Kreyol. With sexual violence cases and transactional sex rising among girls, HAGN made safe space, reproductive health education, and economic skills building high priorities. Over the last several months, Making Cents and Save the Children created a robust financial literacy module used to train girls that has been shared with all HAGN members. PROFAMIL also provide girls in its *Espas* program with reproductive and sexual health trainings.

Gilles held one-on-one sessions with Gen I groups in January and February of 2011. That July, she and Maternowska offered *Espas Pa Mwen* workshops for the Gen I groups. Gen II groups include CARE; three groups directly helping GBV survivors: Kay Fanm, SOFA, and KOFIV; the Haitian research institute INURED; ANAPFEH, which helps sex workers; and the International Medical Corps (IMC). HAGN also distributed hygiene “dignity” kits to 450 adolescents in Gen I groups. While all the groups focused on girls’ empowerment and mentoring, each has offered different activities.

Many of these girls are not in school – a noted post-quake trend that reflects poverty and the ongoing lack of security and schools for many displaced families. “I used to go to school but my mother no longer has the money,” said Kathiana, 14, who attends a PROFAMIL *Espas* group. “Instead I stay home and do housework. I cook, I crochet. Sometimes I just lie down.” Added Lesly, 15, “If I were not in the program I would teach girls in my neighborhood how to sing and dance – things that I’ve learned in the program.”

HAGN members are encouraged by the interest of older girls and adults women to become mentors for adolescent girls – a key component of the initiative. “When they come here they feel they belong somewhere, with people who understand them and don’t criticize them for the things they want to know,” said Melissa Coupaud, Executive Director of YWCA and coordinator of their *Espas* program, last fall. “They feel they are worth something now.” The YWCA’s Coupaud is currently the key Haiti contact person for HAGN; Lodz Joseph is the NY-based coordinator.^{cxiii}

For now, demand for girls-only safe spaces and programming far outstrips supply. “Many girls who come to the program ask if they can bring more girls with them to the program,” stated Anne Marie Dieudonne, Program Manager at PROFAMIL, in late 2011. “Parents call me four or five times a day and ask if their daughters can come to the program.” On a positive note, local groups are keen to integrate girls programming, though many lack physical spaces for a program – and funds.

Looking ahead, HAGN members remain sobered by the difficulties facing girls and the challenges for advocates, but they are excited by the potential of the *Espas* program. “I am so amazed by these girls,” said photographer Todres, whose portraits capture the creative spirit, courage, and daily life of girls in Haiti’s camps (see photo essay, this report). “They are incredibly strong and brave, they’re creative, and there is so much they want to do. Everybody – all of us -- need to do everything we can to help them.”^{cxiv}

Healing Through Arts: Lidè

Organization: Lidè (formerly associated with Girls United: Haiti)

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Primary Zone: Siloe and JP HRO Camp in Port-au-Prince

Primary Target Group: Girls in underserved areas of Haiti (rural populations, Port-au-Prince)

Web: facebook.com/lide.org (former sites www.girlup.org/blog and <http://girlsunited.info/about>)

The recently launched Lidè program is an educational enrichment program using creative arts to empower and teach adolescent girls in Haiti. The project began under the organizational umbrella of Girls United, an international NGO, and is led by a group of US volunteers who piloted arts-based healing workshops in the J/P HRO camp in the capital in 2010. Co-founders include Kathryn Adams, a US clinical psychologist; Holiday Reinhorn, a writer; Rainn Wilson, a drama teacher; and Nadia Todres, a photographer (see box, *HAGN*, and photo essay, this report). They teamed up with Haitian social workers at J/P HRO and colleagues who launching girls programming.

The newly minted Lidè (“leader” in Kreyol) program teaches writing, photography, and drama “so girls can find positive ways to express themselves, recognize their inner strength and their human dignity, gain tangible skills, and discover a path toward leadership, healing, and self-esteem,” states Adams. With a goal of sustainability, the co-founders are now establishing a Haitian staff to lead the program. They will use Haitian teachers and mentors for adolescent girls and champion the work of female Haitian artists to serve as role models for young women. Lidè hopes to have its revamped program running year-round by summer 2013.

Adams, who holds a doctorate in education and is also a university professor, made four trips to Haiti in 2010 through 2011 to work with teams that provided peer-to-peer counseling training, psychological first aid, and training for teachers on the effects of trauma on children and their learning processes. These trips shaped her views on what girls needed to cope with during the recent traumas of the earthquake period and their new challenges as they transition to lives outside camps and continue to face difficult conditions. Adams also piloted trauma-related trainings for a select group of individuals at the J/P HRO camp to become facilitators for girls.

In its pilot phase, the prior Girls United project was co-sponsored by both J/P HRO and the Haiti Adolescent Girls Network. Girls United was established by Full Circle Learning and the Meridian Health Foundation and co-funded by the United Nations Foundation. In 2010, the group conducted the first of two 10-day pilot creative arts therapy workshops for girls involving “participatory photography,” poetry and theater arts/improvisation with 60 young women aged 12 to 24. Thirty were participants of a YWCA HAGN program in Petionville; the remainder lived in the Cite Maxo area of the J/P HRO camp community. Few were attending school at the time. In the fall of 2011, Adams offered the expressive arts program at J/P HRO one day a week as the group re-tooled a longer-term vision for their work.

In December 2011, the program shifted its base to J/P HRO’s new Community Center in Delmas 32 and refocused on the transition of girls lives outside the camp. Lidè plans a special focus on girls living with HIV, those working as *restaveks*, sexual violence survivors, and those who have had to drop out of school. It hopes to recruit local Haitians and international volunteers, artists, and filmmakers to expand programming and has an eye on a parallel program for young men in the future. In May 2012 Adams was also helping Todres with the launch of her new Center for the Arts in Siloe, a place they hope will provide a more permanent home for this work.∞

Emerging from the Shadows: Incest Victims

Advocates at Kay Fanm, SOFA, KOFAVIV, ANAPFEH, and GHESKIO, which has a special health unit for adolescents, offered their general observations that more cases of incest were being reported since the earthquake. Overall, the organizations do not have a lot of data on incest, though all have seen cases.



Children remain very vulnerable in post-quake Haiti.

Photo credit @Harriet Hirshorn 2011.

In Haiti, incest remains a socially hidden crime, making it harder to do outreach. Cases are often reported late – via early pregnancies in adolescents, or a child’s sudden emotional withdrawal and other known signs of abuse. On the positive side, increased reports since 2010 suggest more families and Haitians are denouncing familial crime – a possible silver lining (*see box in security section, BPM*). The newly reported cases don’t necessarily mean more incest is occurring now than in the past, but that it’s more out in the open. On the other hand, some advocates do feel more incest has occurred as a result of the breakdown of family and social nets, with many children sent to live with distant relatives and friends. Child rights advocates remain very concerned about *restavek* children who have been quite affected by the earthquake. (*see related subsection on Restavek children and box, Limye Lavi*).

As noted earlier, SOFA saw a rise of post-quake rise of “familial” or incest cases to 15% as of fall 2011. At that time, Kay Fanm’s director Jeanty had observed an increase of reporting of incest cases, but lacked hard data to compare with prior periods. “We don’t have many statistics on these cases, but we do see it,” she stated in October 2011. “It’s not a new issue – we’ve always seen this in Haiti. But it’s hard for us to know about these cases. People hide it. Even the mothers – they are ashamed.”

Haiti’s child protection bureau, the BPM, does track incest cases, but officials there faced the same challenge. “Usually a friend of the family will come and report this to us, or accompany the child, or

sometimes the mother,” said agency head Inspector Jean Gardy Muscadin in mid-2011. “We know there are more of these cases than are being reported to us. We try to investigate but I have to admit, it’s not easy, not at all.” The situation, confirmed Kay Fanm’s Jeanty, is definitely “one that merits our serious attention.”

At AFASDA-V-Day staff also said they have seen a fair share of incest cases, though more in Cap Haitien. “In the north there are a lot of incest cases,” said their General Director Elverie. She cited a past AFASDA study that estimated 15 percent to 20 percent of rapes in Haiti were due to incest (see box, *AFASDA in the Safe Shelter* section). At their Canape Vert site, staffer Sabrina Joseph could only recall a single case: a 10-year-old girl raped by her father-in-law. “She was brought in by the mother and couldn’t say who the perpetrator was. But we know who the perpetrator was,” said Joseph.

Lost Childhoods

Guerda Constant is the director of the Limye Lavi (Light of Life) organization, based in Jacmel, that focuses on helping children, and has programs that address gender-based violence. (see box, *this section*) A well-respected leader, Constant agreed with other Haitian leaders that rising poverty and the breakdown of social structures in the wake of the earthquake are the real culprits behind the sexual violence that impacts girls “who are the most vulnerable,” she said. “We have children who are alone, and have been abandoned. They have no family to help them. There are many of these children.”

Regarding incest, she said, though common to hear rumors of cases but harder to identify them. Advocates often discover these cases late —after a girl has become pregnant or the child has suffered for years. “In Haiti it’s not discussed,” she said of incest, though she’s encountered cases over the years.

How many abandoned children have turned to prostitution — or survival sex — is anyone’s guess, but Constant believes the situation is grave. In the capital zone of Bel-Air, she said. “You’ll find a lot of very, very young girls — aged 11, 12, and 13 -- who are being sexually active to respond to their economic needs.” She doesn’t have pre-quake data to back up this observation, but added, “Now a lot of them are engaging in prostitution. I can guarantee you that at night you’ll find them on the sidewalks. They are children who’ve lost their childhood.”

The other topic that’s quite taboo is abortion, because it’s illegal. “It’s complex,” admitted Constant. “Women seek abortions even if the law forbids this practice.” Based on her experience, she said frankly. “I would say that a woman who is pregnant (from rape) is probably going to seek an abortion.” So will parents and families in cases of pregnancy linked to incest, she felt. But in terms of documenting cases of abortions linked to rape, or learning more about what may be happening in her area, she said, shaking her head, “It’s the complete blackout.”

Looking beyond the cities, Constant also suggested that the trends being observed in the urban areas of Jacmel and Port-au-Prince are likely to be as bad — or worse — in the countryside. “These kinds of problems are often worse in the rural areas where there are fewer groups who are doing outreach and few health services. It would be good to find out.”

What about boys? They are also impacted — being both perpetrators and victims of sexual violence, agreed Constant. The plight of young boys who are abused remains a delicate topic in Haiti, even for advocacy groups. She feels. “There is no one taking charge of helping them,” stated Constant. “It’s as if we leave the little boys and only deal with the girls,” she said, speaking broadly of the GBV and women’s movement. At Project SASA, a male-

female team co-facilitates discussions among youth, as well as sessions just for boys and men. “There will be a different discussion then,” said Constant.

Female-female rape

There is so little documentation about female-on-female rape that some advocates interviewed for this report questioned if it takes place. It does, and like incest, some cases have emerged since early 2010, suggesting that GBV advocacy may also be lifting the invisibility of what appears to represent rarer cases that merit particular attention. Several cases of female rape reported after 2010 have involved adult female child care workers who have abused minors, according to legal sources investigating the cases.

Other cases appear to have involved cases of sexual transactions gone wrong – when women or girls selling sex agreed to have sex with another female, possibly with a male involved as well, leading to later charges of rape against the females. Advocates also urge caution about such cases, since same-sex among females is socially stigmatized, sometimes leading parents or partners to declare a case of female rape that involved consensual relations.^{cxixiv} More significant is the active or passive role played by women in cases of rape by male attackers of other women or girls.

Regarding lesbians, there are more reports of male “corrective” rape of perceived lesbians who remain targets of homophobic sexual violence, contend LGBT advocates at FACSDIS, a lesbian advocacy group, and SEROVie, which helps gay and transgendered clients. (*See and FACSDIS box*)

Inside Women’s Prisons

Cases of female rape in women’s prisons are a stereotype in the global literature on prison life, much of it fiction. It is linked to a social fear of lesbianism that associates female rape with lesbians as a predatory sexual activity. What’s overlooked is that rape of females in prison often involves male guards and that women in prison will exchange company and sex with another female for protection – a transactional exchange on the par with prostitution. Still, there is little public documentation of this picture in Haiti’s prisons. Cases emerge when one discusses life in prison with prison advocates and lawyers. But hard documentation is skimpy.

At the RAPP project of BAI, Meena Jagaanath and lawyer colleagues are continuing to investigate reports of female-female rape. Given social intolerance for homosexuality, victims of same-sex rapes face that dual stigma. It’s also important to look carefully at reports of same-sex abuse or sexual violence to assure that attitudes or fears of homosexuality, including lesbianism, are not behind the accusations of rape. For now, the emergence of such cases also reveals the need for programs to help female victims and perpetrators.

Sex Work: The new (old) currency

Many groups began to report an observed increase of cases of transactional sex – vs. commercial prostitution -- in the months after the earthquake, including UNFPA, HRW, Amnesty International, UNHCR, NYU-CHRGJ, and MADRE- KOFVIV-IJDH. In their October 2010 survey of 2,391 women and girls, UNFPA found that 1 percent reported having been subjected to sexual violence. They also reported a threefold increase of pregnancy cases in the camps over the prior 10 months. Two-thirds of the respondents indicated these were “undesired pregnancies” (see *Reproductive Health* section). How many were caused by sexual violence linked to prostitution is unknown. But in 2011, UNICEF reported that rape, sexual assault, and the exploitation of children in the sex industry had reached its highest level in Haiti since 2006.^{cxxv}

The post-quake picture has raised concerns of girls’ exposure to STDs as well as HIV, as well as unwanted and dangerous early pregnancies in younger adolescents. Pre-quake an estimated 10% of female sex workers (FSWs) were estimated to be HIV-positive.^{cxxvi} It’s unclear if and how this estimate has changed since 2010, but a January 2011 survey of 150 female sex workers in the capital by the sex worker agency group ANAPFEH should worry officials. It found that women and girls who engage in transactional sex have a low rate of condom use vs. commercial sex workers – formal prostitutes – with a high rate.^{cxxvii}

The cumulative data on post-quake prostitution suggests that many who have taken up selling sex fall into the first category. They don’t consider themselves prostitutes and aren’t protected. Their multivariate analysis also suggests a link between use of soft drugs like marijuana and non-condom use among clients who began sex work after the earthquake.

“Non-Prostitutes”

Like rape itself, prostitution was commonplace in Haiti before the earthquake, which reflects the country’s crushing poverty. It’s also illegal, and police randomly crack down on sex workers, often extorting a sex act in exchange for releasing a woman they have detained.^{cxxviii} What advocates fear is that a generation of girls is becoming not-so-hidden casualties of the earthquake. “We are seeing more of them all the time and they are so young, all the time getting younger,” said ANAPFEH’s Alysee.^{cxxix} (see *box, ANAPFEH*)

She lives near the Petionville area and regularly checks in on clients working the streets of the zone. At dusk, as people drive home from downtown, the clusters of young and older girls who rush to flag down cars thickens in the grid of streets close to the public square of Place Boyer. “It’s purely survival,” said Alysee. “They have nothing to eat and no money. They are alone. They are out selling themselves to much older men and getting abused. Often it’s the little girls who are the most abused. It’s tragic – honestly, it’s heartbreaking.” Citing recent examples of gang rape and kidnapping, she added, “The girls

can't defend themselves as easily. Some of them aren't even old enough to get pregnant. But those who can, well, we are seeing this too, and there we have to think about the risk of HIV and other STDs."

In a poster presentation at the recent International AIDS Conference 2012 in Washington, D.C., Alysee and colleague Carole Fleurantin presented a summary of their surveys of 150 sex worker clients. The profile of these women and girls shows that 6 percent are under age 15, and those below 20 are 37 percent of the total. Over 80 percent lived alone and 71 percent had elementary school education. Ninety percent had a child at home, with an average of 1.6 dependent children per household. In other words, ANAPFEH's clients fit the profile of young, unmarried, mothers with dependent children. A third had sexual partners who were not their clients. In terms of risk of STDs and HIV, women who are established commercial sex workers were using protection: 94% used condoms with clients, and half used the Female Condom when clients refused to use male condoms.

By comparison, women and girls who traded sex for something other than money – termed “non-Commercial Sex Workers” by ANAPFEH, were not using condoms, raising concerns about their potential exposure to STIs and HIV.^{cxxx}

Pre-quake, 42 percent of Haitian girls in urban areas lived without parents, many in conditions of unpaid domestic service as *restaveks*. How many have turned to prostitution after being abandoned in the wake of the quake is an open question.^{cxxxi} So is the less-visible participation of boys and young men who also need to survive.

Official Reactions

The Haitian government's response to prostitution has traditionally blended official legal punishment and moralism, tempered by a historic social tolerance of the oldest profession by Haitian society. But the spike in prostitution has spurred bursts of police muscle. In September 2010, the Haitian police raided an area next to sprawling IDP camp of Champs de Mars very close to the collapsed presidential Palace.^{cxxxii} That camp had become notorious for open prostitution occurring in full day light, upsetting camp residents, particularly parents.^{cxxxiii} Forty women were arrested for engaging in sex work, generating radio and newspaper headlines. It also prompted local women's organizations to complain about the police camping down on mothers and other women with little other means to feed their families. But the issue is complicated, because other parents also felt jeopardized by the open sale of sex in areas visible to their children.

Defending Sex Workers : ANAPFEH

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ANAPFEH is a small NGO with eight paid and two volunteer staff members that operate an outreach program and small clinic for sex workers in Port-au-Prince. Most clients are adults and include transgendered women who remain especially vulnerable to abuse, said Alysee. Since 2010, she has encountered more and ever-younger girls selling themselves in the street. In 2009, ANAPFEH had 300 regular women clients in 2009, and many are self-identified as commercial sex workers who sell sex daily or nightly in the streets, or in homes and hotel rooms that double as brothels. As of October 2010, ANAPFEH had recorded 100 additional clients and the number was steadily rising.

Many selling sex in camps and the street are women and teenagers who don't identify as sex workers or prostitutes, as well as pre-teens. They compete with women who are commercial sex workers.

ANAPFEH provides counseling and health services for clients, including education and prevention materials. This includes making condoms and contraceptives available and pushing STD and HIV counseling, prevention and testing. But the economic situation is crushing. Clients will refuse to use condoms, though and competition is now stiff with so many desperate girls and women needing to eat and find shelter. "The price of sex was already ridiculously low in Haiti," says ANAPFEH. "The value placed on the woman has fallen even more if that can be possible."

In early 2010, ANAPFEH struggled to compete with larger and international NGOs for funding, but secured some support from UNFPA and European agencies to keep its clinic going. For now, funding remains a struggle given the increasing demand. "The situation for these girls is really bad," she said in a July 2010 update. "There are not a lot of programs for prostitutes. We still encounter a lot of moralism, even us who are trying to help them."

For now, despite increased GBV and gender trainings for police, Alysee says clients continue to complain that the police randomly arrest and harass them, demand sex services or bribes to release those they detain, or arrest them and lock them up. The illegality of prostitution makes it harder for victims of sexual violence to report the crime and get help, she contends. "The police blame them for what they are doing," stated Alysee. "Some people have this mentality: 'She is selling herself. How can it be rape?' But they are just trying to get something to eat. So we have a lot of education to do."

ANAPFEH, she said, has many clients who have been repeatedly raped. "Of all the women I think these are the women who remain very vulnerable to rape and all sorts of abuses, and we need programs for them," said Alysee. "Apart from when they come to see us or go maybe to another NGO, they get no help from anyone. The police are not protecting them – they hide from the police."

Aside from job training, education and food for girls, Alysee cites shelter and housing as key services and programs missing for those who are entering sex work, including adolescents. "They are alone. People don't understand that. They need housing and a means to live." Alysee is hoping to secure funding and help to refurbish an existing house into a possible group home/shelter for girls who are being helped by ANAPFEH. With funds, she's ready to extend ANAPFEH's mission. "We are looking for partners. Can you tell people that. We're here, ready to work with them."∞

Sex for Food

Several groups have conducted camp-based research to look at the links between the reported rise of prostitution and difficult economic conditions. While these studies primarily looked at adults, they included older teenagers. In February 2011, a UNCHR team used local *ajans* (called "community mobilizers" in their study) to survey 124 men and 50 women aged 15 year to 60 to determine the role of transactional sex (or "survival sex") in their lives after the earthquake. In a May 2011 summary report, ^{cxxxiv} UNCHR found that:

"100% of the 15 focus groups consulted reported survival sex in their camps, portraying it as an invisible but common (and mainly as a new, post-earthquake) practice." Moreover, "...the more food insecure the

women and girls are, the more they are inclined to engage in extreme coping mechanisms, including survival sex.”

The UNHRC report also found that prostitution was a new activity for the women and girls who did not consider themselves “occasional commercial sex workers.” They expressed resignation but not judgment about their coping strategies, “although all expressed distaste for what they were doing,” researchers found.

The report also noted another trend reported early by the IOM and IDP camp managers: the establishment of tents and areas for prostitution, often overseen by criminal gangs. This has made it hard to protect their families.^{CXXXV} The same is true for rapes. “Sexual crimes are largely under reported because perpetrators threaten the survivors and their relatives. The few women that do have the courage to report their crime are frequently met with indifference by the authorities,” reported UNHCR. The October 2011 PotoFi Haiti Girls Initiative study of pregnant adolescents found a high correlation of early pregnancy and survival sex, along with sexual violence. Often, pregnant teenagers reported both experiences. Out of 1251 adolescents who responded to questions about transactional sex, 37% (463 girls) acknowledged selling sex. Of these, a majority exchanged sex for shelter as well as food. (see *Annex III for details of the study*).

Men and Boys

While girls have shown up on the radar, less is documented about sexual violence directed at men, adolescent and younger boys. There remains a real gap in documentation and institutional attention to male rape, which is regarded to date as a rare event compared to female rape. The recent media attention to several MINUSTAH rape scandals has shed fresh light on this hidden picture. (see *MINUSTAH box, security section*). But there are no targeted programs to date aimed at finding and helping male victims of sexual violence. Nor are GBV programs focused on targeting perpetrators – either men or younger boys. (see *box this section*).

According to officials at the Bureau of Protection of Minors, the stigma surrounding male rape prevents families from reporting the crime. Boys are afraid of being labeled as homosexuals or AIDS carriers – two common stigmas. Male rape victims hide the crime from their families. According to BPM officials, some parents report rape when the boy child is very young, but older boys and adolescent cases tend to remain hidden. “Here, we tend to see the girls,” said BPM head Jean-Gardy Muscadin in August 2011, referring to cases referred to his agency. “We have not seen so many boys.”^{CXXXVI} As with incest, families hide such crimes to avoid subjecting their sons to further pain and humiliation.^{CXXXVII}

To date, there is one group in Jacmel, AHDESE (see box below) that is targeting GBV education, prevention and training to men and boys, and discussion groups exist in Cap Haitian, the Plateau Central and newly, Port-au-Prince. They represent the seeds of a Haitian men’s movement, though their focus is primarily on addressing men’s role as actors in violence against women, not victims.

Hidden Victims

When male rape cases are made public, they tend to be treated as scandals – shocking vs. common. But advocates at SEROVIE and ANAPFEH question if that picture is correct. Given the intense poverty, high crime, and impunity for sex crimes in Haiti, boys like girls are subjected to daily abuses, and also engage in transactional sex to survive. Reports of boys and young men engaged in sex tourism pop up in the literature on Haiti. “We don’t know what’s going on because we don’t see them,” said ANAPFEH’s Alysee. But she noted, boys are among Haiti’s large population of street children and remains very vulnerable to violence.



Survival in Haiti's IDP camps. Photo Credit: © Harriet Hirshorn. 2010.

To date, the local agencies that help victims of sexual violence like SOFA and Kay Fanm and KOFAVIV have only documented a few cases of male rape compared to the high number of female cases. “We know, we hear, but we don’t see them,” explained SOFA’s director Pierre-Paul. “The families are even more unwilling to talk about this.” She confirmed that the dual stigmas of homosexuality and HIV/AIDS impede disclosure of male sexual violence victims. There is often a delay in discovering such cases in boys, too, contend advocates. They may be identified by a teacher or parent or social workers after a boy or young man has shown signs of a behavioral or emotional problem. For now, reported cases are few. “We hear about them. People talk. But we don’t see them,” said Alysee.

Transforming Men: ADHESE

Organization: Association des Hommes Devoues du Sud-Est (ADHESE)

Association of Devoted Men

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Target Group: Men and Boys

Target Zone: South East

Eight years ago, a group of male friends formed the first men’s group against sexual violence, based in Jacmel. The group has long been affiliated with Fanm Deside, who helped train the men in topics related to women’s empowerment and GBV. “We realized that this problem of violence against women was caused by men, by male behavior, and that we had to educate other men,” said Jean Oplan, current Coordinator of ADHESE. A dynamic male feminist, Oplan says the group remains quite active, doing outreach and trainings sessions for other men in the southeast region around Jacmel, Belance, and Les Cayes and slowly extending their reach to other areas.

Today, the Association of Devoted Men (ADHESE) represents the growing kernel of a men’s movement against GBV, with 40 active members in Jacmel and many more men who have been educated by the group over the past eight years. Two groups of 25 men in Cap Haitian and the Plateau Central are among the many beneficiaries of trainings that take place via forums and group discussions.

“We sensitize and train the men and engage them to talk about many subjects that relate to violence done to women,” stated Jean Oplan, Coordinator of ADHESE. “We talk to men about the need to respect women, that they should not regard women only as a sexual object, and, for example, if there is a conflict with the wife, that she is not to be beaten... things like that.” Haitian men need to be re-educated, stresses Oplan, to redress a social education that teaches them “bad attitudes about women and to dominate and respond with violence with women,” said Oplan. “They are not taught how to deal with women and how to talk to them, how to help them. These are all the things we talk about in our trainings.”

The age of ADHESE members ranges from 18 and up and includes men with very different backgrounds, as well as men who have been violent to women. Some are early members who were trained by women in Fanm Deside and transformed, said Oplan. “The men have changed; they are no longer being violent with women.” These men in particular serve as role models for other men, and help other men to open up about their views about women and their behavior with women in intimate and casual relationships, the workplace, etc.

The group holds meetings every month in different areas. Discussion topics and trainings range according to the group being targeted – whether rural men in a peasant association or young men or boys in school. So do the outreach strategies. “We use music, especially with the young men,” explained Oplan. “The basic message is teaching them to respect women and to become aware of their own behavior as men. That’s what has to change.”

The messages are being well received, he said. Citing an example, he recalling a meeting days earlier when a young girl of 16 – a daughter – testified before a men’s group about her father’s lack of visible affection for his wife. “Since her childhood, not once had she heard her father say the word *dear* to her mother or bring her flowers – things like that,” said Oplan. “But after [the training], the first thing her father did – he went to bring his wife a flower when he went home.” Such trainings trickle down to benefit daughters – and sons, too. The need to reeducate younger boys is part of ADHESE’s expanding work, he added.

When asked what response women have had to ADHESE’s work, Oplan said, “Oh – you can’t even know... the women receive this with open hearts.”

Looking ahead, and pending new funding, the group has also outlined plans to expand outreach to perpetrators – a group Oplan agrees has been left out of the prevention equation to date. “We have learned from the men in our own group so we are hoping to do something there,” stated Oplan.

While ADHESE has yet to target male prisoners convicted of sexual violence or activities to address the lack of rehabilitation or community re-entry programs for sex offenders, Oplan said his group was open to all possibilities. That included a proposed collaboration with PotoFanm+Fi to work together on a 2013 program to focus on adolescents and to target perpetrators and their families and released offenders. There’s also the possibility of sharing experiences with men and boys who have participated in IDP camp GBV patrols since 2010. The latter include some 25 men in the Champ de Mars camp who have formed a new men’s GBV group with support from KOFIVIV and represent another critical link in Haiti’s nascent men’s movement. “∞

Boys in Prison and Juvenile Centers

There is a similar dearth of solid documentation of rapes and sexual abuses by and against boys and younger men in juvenile detention centers and prisons. But advocates say the risks of this type of violence are well known and that violence is common in penal facilities. Haiti’s prison system is severely under-resourced and overcrowded. Boys are still sometimes locked up with adult men; babies are kept with imprisoned mothers, particularly in rural jails or areas without enough detention centers. Rights groups including IJDH-BAI and RNDDH have issued post-quake reports showing little improvement in the inhumane conditions within Haiti’s prisons, though efforts by authorities to improve conditions have increased (*see related box, Missing: Sex Offender Programs*).

Younger Victims – and Attackers

In interviews, GBV advocates at SOFA, Kay Fanm and APROSIFA shared their observations that even very young boys were engaging in sex with young girls.^{cxxxviii} “All these young boys are left with nothing to do in the camps,” stated SOFA’s Pierre-Paul in mid-2010. “No one supervises them and their adults are out trying to find work. So abuses are getting committed.” She added, “There are children who rape each other. Little boys raping little girls. More and more we have seen it.”

Groups like ProDev (*see box below*) do address violence and the lack of education and male role models for boys who have been educated on the streets, absent of modeling and parenting. The existing literature on the gang activity in Haiti shows that “street boys” – neighborhood children in urban slums - - are recruited and given protection and a “family” in exchange for joining in gang criminal activities. Often, they are abused first, too, to assure their loyalty to an older gang member. To date, there is limited research on degree of rape and sexual abuses that occur by and among gang members, but in the very violent milieu of urban gang life, it’s part of the daily picture, alongside murder and shootings during turf wars with rival gangs leaders and efforts to extort money from residents.

To cite one example, a week after the 2010 earthquake, veteran Haiti reporter Jonathan Katz of the Associated Press filed a story about returning gang members who attacked UN security forces in Cite Soleil even as they tried to dig out bodies – part of a turf war between two gangs that also led to the murdered of three locals and the rapes of several women.^{cxxxix}

A variety of small NGOs and local associations as well as churches have programs to engage youth in the urban slums, and to offer alternative to gang life. Sports – including soccer – are offered by several programs to engage boys and offer education, too. They include a Haitian-led Athletics for Haiti program, and Mercy Corps’ new Moving Forward program in Cite Soleil^{cxl} Hip hop superstar Wyclef Jean’s Yele Foundation has focused on helping to build schools in poorer neighborhoods and to target programs for urban youth. The rapper serves as a role model for boys. So does “Tet Kale” (Bald One) -- the public nickname for President Martelly, a musician-turned-president who captured the youth vote.

Child Protection

The high vulnerability of children to sexual violence has long been documented in Haiti, and again, is a reflection of acute poverty that forces destitute families to leave children home alone while they seek food or work elsewhere, and to put very young children to work in settings where they are vulnerable to abuse. Many reports have documented the problem of child prostitution, homeless street children, and child trafficking that were a crisis before the earthquake further displaced so many children.

Pre-quake, estimates of the number of orphaned and street children – those living alone who may have living parents – varied greatly. One oft-cited figure was 380,000 – a statistic put forth in 2007 by UNICEF, which acknowledge that figure was a very rough number, according to UNICEF spokesman Christopher de Bono.^{cxli} Some 50,000 children lived in institutions – often orphanages – some of them having parent, both parents or no parents – but left alone regardless.^{cxlii} The agency also estimated some 2000 Haitian children a year were being trafficked to the Dominican Republic, many of them girls assumed to have been trafficked into brothels and some form of sexual slavery, as well as forced servitude as unpaid domestics or *restaveks* (see *Restavek section*). A high level of corruption exists in both countries, along with criminal drug gang activity, that contributes to child trafficking.^{cxliii}

The earthquake greatly compounded this picture. Initial media reports put the number of “orphaned” children at up to a million – a figure later challenged by reports suggesting far fewer children were actually orphaned.^{cxliv} Shortly after the disaster, UNICEF estimated 500,000 children were “extremely vulnerable and in need of child protection with an unknown number having lost one or both parents.”^{cxlv} Since mid-2011, child protection agencies have reported an increase in children being left in hospitals and at the doors of institutions by families unable to provide food for their children – a heartbreaking gesture by parents who hope to save the child’s life.

An International Adoption Crisis

The plight of many injured and homeless children spurred an international response by adoption agencies – as well as private and religious groups with little experience in the adoption arena. In the midst of chaos, many groups took actions to assist and move children from unsafe settings into orphanages, while raising public awareness of the great risk of trafficking facing vulnerable children. Haitian and Dominican officials moved to set up safe centers for children along Haiti’s porous border, and called for beefing up the staff at key agencies including the BPM, IBESR, and Ministry of Social Affairs and Work (MAST in French). In Fond Parisien, close to a border crossing, the Love-A-Child compound was set up as a field hospital and recovery center for child quake survivors, staffed by volunteers from the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. In Port-au-Prince, many groups set up spaces within hospitals to assist injured children and keep them safe until appropriate referrals could be made to other agencies.^{cxlvi}

The orphan crisis gained global public attention when, shortly after the earthquake, officials at Catholic Charities and other South Florida immigrant rights organizations moved to revive Operation “Pedro Pan” (Peter Pan) in order to airlift Haiti quake orphans to the US and into adoption by US families. Some US

Congressional officials led by Mary Landrieu (D-LA) moved to introduce a US “Families for Orphans Act” in support of the plan. Supporters claimed the plan was a life-saving gesture by charitable Americans, but critics said it was a thinly-veiled effort by evangelical groups with ties to US legislators to illegally gain custody of Haitian children.^{cxlvii} One main criticism was that the Haitian children might have living parents and that insufficient time had been given to look for possible parents in the chaos. An incensed Haitian public charged US church groups of “kidnapping” Haitian children and demanded the Haitian government act to protect its most vulnerable citizens.

The issue exploded the week of January 25th, when a Baptist group led by Laura Silsby was arrested after twice attempting to cross the Dominican border with children the group had picked up from Port-au-Prince orphanages – after having been warned their actions were illegal.^{cxlviii} The Silsby affair, as it was dubbed by the media, gave new muscle to the state agency IBESR, which has historically opened global eyes to the plight of Haiti’s children and the threat of trafficking that increased in the aftermath of the disaster. The plethora of media stories and calls for action pushed stakeholders to increase anti-trafficking efforts, and linked child’s rights advocates with groups fighting rape with common purpose.

Among agencies, the IOM, UNICEF and Save the Children, were vocal advocates for increased funding and support for child protection and family reunification programs, particularly along Haiti’s border.

Tracking and Supporting Children

In response, Haitian and international agencies engaged in child protection formed a Child Protection Sub-Cluster^{cxlix} with groups focused on Family Tracing and Reunification (FTR) efforts, and moved to increase strengthen child protection and anti-trafficking activities along Haiti’s porous border with the Dominican Republic. UNICEF, IRC and Save the Children, among lead agencies, collaborated to maintain an Inter-Agency Child Protection Database that was launched with the government’s active leadership. The global repository represents an important step—and tool -- to monitor vulnerable children and fight trafficking.



Let’s Protect Children Against All Forms of Abuse (2011)
MINUSTAH-sponsored child protection campaign

Post-Quake Progress

Given the pre- and post-quake situations, consider progress has been made in the area of child protection, though less action has been taken to provide youth-friendly sexual violence services, including needed group homes with holistic services tailed to children. But this is changing, too.

At a national level, government leaders began by strengthening the lead agency responsible for helping children, IBESR. The agency has long been a target of criticism by child advocates and families of child victims who, truth be told, remain vocal in their criticism of the agency. But several recent steps were taken to shake things up at IBESR, including the appointment of a dynamic child rights advocate, Arielle Jeanty Villedrouin. One of her stated goals has been to de-institutionalize children, and support government efforts to improve family reunification and return of children into homes and out of orphanages. IBESR has made progress in a long-needed assessment of residential centers and orphanages, and closed several after inspection. The agency launched the first Directory of Residential Care Facilities and had assessed 336 centers and over 134,000 children in residential care by the second anniversary of the earthquake – a very positive step.

The Martelly government also supported a renewed call made by child advocates in 2010 for the Haitian Senate to pass a viable adoption law and a year later, signed the Hague Convention on International Adoption. That move is a direct response to the Baptist Silsby adoption scandal.^{ci}

As of 2012, a statistical assessment of progress made to help children showed that out of 317,000 affected children, 283,635 registered children had benefited from inter-agency interventions, including 143,635 girls and 140,000 girls. 100% of 53,000 children separated or without parents (orphans) had also been helped.

The UN inter-agency Haiti CAP 2012 – a review of progress and monies needed by sector for Haiti’s recovery – also found that it had become harder and harder to place children with families, including host families, including for restaveks, due to the falling economy. As of fall 2011, 8,780 children had been registered, including 54% girls. A third were children under age 10. Over half the children had become separate from their families after the earthquake. Despite myriad efforts at family reunification, 70% of unaccompanied children remained without parents or family caretakers in early 2012– many in the 700 residential centers for children that exist in the country.^{cli} Meanwhile, restavek children in the cities had returned to poorer neighborhoods and rural villages. As the CAP study found, “While the exploitation of restaveks is decreasing among richer families, it is steadily increasing among the poorest.”^{clii}

As noted earlier, more restavek and other girls are engaging in survival sex. The CAP document found an increase of 55% (or 1,251 children) in the population of street children compared to a prior survey in 2006. A rough estimate put the increase after the earthquake at 731 children – roughly 60 a month. Of this number, two of ten were girls. Dramatically, 65% of the new street children were younger than 14.

As was detailed earlier, more girls are engaging in survival sex, while youth gang activity is on the rise, and agencies say youngsters of both sexes are joining gangs to secure protection and a sense of family.

At the start of 2012, some 250,000 illegal arms were circulating. In Martissant, some 30 children belonged to one armed group – a snapshot of the evolving picture. While the children do gain social bonds, it is a high price. The CAP report also cited NGO reports showing that 60% of registered cases of rape involved girls.

RESTAVEK domestics

In Haiti, poorer and rural children have long been sent to work and live as unpaid *restavek* domestic servants in homes of other families. They do daily chores in exchange for room and board and schooling. In reality, many are badly abused – a litany of horror that includes rape and forced pregnancies. Former *restavecs* now lead a grassroots child’s rights movement to help free *restavek* children who are considered child slaves. Robert Cadet, a former *restavek* and author, is among the well-known leaders who have detailed the horror and daily abuses heaped upon often very young children in his 2004 book, *Restavek*.^{cliii}

Heartland Alliance and UNICEF, for example, have worked to beef up security along Haiti’s border in Ouanaminthe, a major crossing point to the Dominican Republic and a long-known route for traffickers.^{cliv}

Helping Restavek Children

Name: Fondation Limye Lavi (Light of Life Foundation)

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Primary Zone: Jacmel, Port-au-Prince, La Gonave and rural outreach.

Target Group: Restavek children, ‘modern slaves’

Main Sponsors: Free the Slaves; Beyond Borders; International Rescue Committee (IRC); Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC); Save The Children.

Primary Zone: Jacmel, Port-au-Prince, La Gonave and rural outreach.

Target Group: Restavek children, ‘modern slaves’

Fondation Limye Lavi, launched in Haiti in 1992, is a long-established community –based organization working on child protection and trafficking issues that opened its Jacmel program in 2006. The foundation has a specific mission of helping children working in domestic servitude as *restaveks* – live-in household servants -- that some consider modern slaves. The foundation is backed by the international Free The Slaves network, headed by renowned US anti-child slavery activist, Kevin Bales. Limye Lavi’s primary catchment area is the Jacmel urban and semi-urban zone, but it provides services to rural groups, and prepares radio programs to reach remote communities high above Jacmel.

Prior to the earthquake, Limye Lavi, which maintains an active office in Port-au-Prince, too, provided a variety of community education and advocacy programs aimed at reaching children in servitude, and women. It works with women’s groups in the island of La Gonave, and collaborates with Kofaviv and Jacmel allies like Fanm Deside, as well as child protection groups.

Limye Lavi’s unique approach is to foster a dialogue in communities to develop locally-driven solutions to the problems facing youth and women in communities. Its primary focus is prevention and protection of children, but it focuses on education on children’s and women’s rights, including sexual violence and HIV/AIDS. This approach seeks to first break the taboo and social silence surrounding issues like the *restavek* system and examine the economic and cultural aspects of the problem. One of its programs, Project SASA is modeled after an innovative program in Uganda and works to train youth and rural leaders. The foundation also has a community radio discussion program that reaches distant communities. Local authorities are invited to participate in radio and other activities.

Limye Lavi’s small staff responded quickly to the earthquake. Its sister organization, Beyond Borders, sent several doctors to Jacmel to respond to the needs of quake survivors there. Staff from the foundation’s Child Protection program also worked in Port-au-Prince camps with women and children, focusing particularly on helping children orphaned from the earthquake and

restavek children. The foundation also teamed with Beyond Borders to provide Family Tracing and Reunification training to various organizations.

Director Guerda Constant has overseen the organization's recovery from the earthquake. A dynamic leader, she confirmed trends and field observations reported by groups and women's organizations in Port-au-Prince and Jacmel regarding 2011 trends in sexual violence. Like them, Limye Lavi staff has noted increase of reports in overall violence and sexual violence shortly, primarily affecting displaced survivors and camp residents. Over time, the sexual violence has leveled, said Constant in mid-2011.

Like other leaders, she is uncertain if there are true increases compared to the past, given that the issue has received a lot of media attention. "Are people feeling more confident to report? Maybe.... I don't know... but it could be," she speculated then. "This is my personal opinion. I think women are becoming more conscious of how to defend their rights."

Constant says lack of education and empowerment for women and girls is the basic problem. "Women that we work with talk about how their husbands act with them. We know it's a case of rape, but these women don't see this situation as a case of rape. They say, 'It's because I'm a woman (his wife, or a partner) so I have to give this (sex) to him.' It's due to a lack of education." That factor, coupled with the economic situation in Haiti, "continues to slow the fight against sexual violence," she feels.

Still, she notes some progress, particularly local women's awareness of rape. "I see in the meetings that now the women ask questions, and there is more interest in knowing their capacities, and their power, for example, to defend their rights. It's really interesting. Women are better able to communicate with their partners and confront them about issues of sexuality and violence they face," she said Constant attributes this advance to the work of many women's groups in Haiti before and now.

Despite this progress, she feels, most women still remain too afraid to report rape because they fear retaliation. Her group has also observed trends seen by groups in Port-au-Prince. Post-quake, the majority of rape cases registered by Limye Lavi have involved individual, vs. collective attacks by more than one person. Many of the rapes have occurred after dark. Sexual violence cases of adult women typically involve domestic violence. Constant has also observed an overall increase of sexual violence affecting adolescent girls and young girls.

The other topic that's quite taboo is abortion, because it's illegal. "It's complex," admits Constant. "Women seek abortions even if the law forbids this practice." Based on her experience, she said frankly. "I would say that a woman who is pregnant (from rape) is probably going to seek an abortion. So will parents and families in cases of pregnancy linked to incest. But in terms of documenting cases of abortions linked to rape, or learning more about what may be happening in her area, she said, shaking her head, "It's the complete blackout."

"We have a lot to do," Constant summed up. On the positive side, she is also encouraged by the energy of Haiti's youth. "They're very active, very engaged," she said. "They are going to help us advance."∞