Photo by HPP AKSE

Advocacy to improve protection for children, women, and sexual minorities

HPP AKSE strengthened the advocacy capacity of partners, which led to increased political and financial support for the protection of children and women (against gender-based violence) and for protection against human rights violations in general:

- Four new human rights laws on trafficking in persons, responsible parenting, adoption, and SGBV
- Stronger multisectoral response to violence against children
- Enhanced leadership of Haitian institutions

Overview

Over the last decade in Haiti, children, women, and sexual minorities have become increasingly vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), trafficking, sexual exploitation, child labor, domestic violence, and recruitment into crime or violence. Lack of multisectoral coordination, information gaps, and lack of human and financial resources are challenges faced by human rights protection actors.

In Haiti, the Health Policy Project (HPP) AKSE[1] program improved the safety and security of women, children, and youth by helping to decrease the incidence of human rights abuses and expand access to treatment and care. In collaboration with government institutions and local nongovernmental organizations, HPP developed and strengthened strategic, systemic multisectoral and multilevel responses to child protection and SGBV. The project used state-of-the-art technology to maximize the use of available resources and ensure the sustainability of networks and prevention, response, and monitoring services.

Stronger Advocacy Advances Human Rights

HPP enhanced the capacity of government counterparts and partners, thereby increasing political support for human rights.

- Raised the profile for child protection, SGBV, and human rights by providing technical direction and financial support for the establishment of four key laws: (1) Trafficking in Persons, (2) Responsible Parenthood, (3) Adoption, and (4) SGBV.
- Helped establish the National Counter-Trafficking Committee, which will oversee and coordinate implementation of the Trafficking in Persons law and its related programs aiming to protect victims of trafficking and prosecute traffickers.
- Increased the capacity of civil society, magistrates, and government to interpret and use legal tools for social protection laws and regulations.

Multisectoral Collaboration Fosters Action

HPP fostered multisectoral collaboration at the national and local levels.

- Helped form a national multisectoral committee to support development of the National Multisectoral Response Plan to Violence Against Children.
- Convened local authorities from multiple sectors to strengthen local government's leadership capacity and facilitate multisectoral coordination of social protection interventions at the local level.
- Assisted the Institute of Social Welfare and Research (IBESR) with holding a multisectoral workshop to finalize the action plan against trafficking and to initiate establishment of the Fight Against Trafficking Committee.

Enhanced Capacity of Civil Society Fosters Sustainable Leadership

HPP built the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and local networks to develop strategies and expand child protection and SGBV protection networks.

- Strengthened and expanded child protection and SGBV monitoring, prevention, and response services by supporting the creation of four department-level protection networks and 18 commune-level protection networks.

- Helped develop terms of reference, referral protocols, and action plans for multisectoral, multilevel child protection and SGBV protection responses.

- Mapped child protection and SGBV services to facilitate the creation of multisectoral networks for related legal, medical, and social services.

- Supported the development and implementation of targeted capacity development plans by applying and using results from the Organizational Capacity Assessment Suite of Tools.[2]

- Enhanced the capacity of government partners to improve the referral system by applying and using results from the Referral Systems Assessment and Monitoring Toolkit.[3]

The Way Forward

Achieving Haiti's development goals requires continued effort to increase political and financial support for monitoring, prevention, and response services for children, women, and sexual minorities. Next steps should leverage the project's achievements:

- Assist the IBESR and Ministry of Women's Affairs and Women's Rights with scaling up child protection and SGBV protection networks, including the use of mapping services.

- Develop and implement micro-plans under the National Strategy for Child Protection and the National Multisectoral Response Plan to Violence Against Children.

- Provide technical support to the National Counter-Trafficking Committee.

- Continue to build capacity and awareness around social protection laws among legal actors, magistrates, and CSOs.

- Support advocacy for the dissemination and implementation of the new law against violence against women.

[1] *Aksyon Kolektif pou Sekirite kont Eksplwatasyon* (AKSE) means "collective action for security against exploitation" in Creole. HPP ASKE was an expansion of a previous program and aimed to improve the policy environment to strengthen human rights protections and expand access to services for vulnerable groups.

[2] HPP's Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) Suite of Tools helps organizations or institutions along the path to becoming organizations capable of fulfilling the functions necessary to achieve health policy objectives in low- and middle-income countries. For more information, see www.healthpolicyproject.com/index.cfm?id=OCAtool.

[3] MEASURE Evaluation's Referral Systems Assessment and Monitoring Toolkit assists health and program managers in obtaining and using information regarding the performance of referral systems. For more information, see www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/publications/ms-13-60.