

Haiti: Can the cycle of crisis be ended, and how?

Project Terms of Reference

Haiti is trapped in a cycle of crises affecting every aspect of the national, community, and personal lives of the vast majority of citizens. The country needs to set itself on a long-term course toward gradual healing and improvement. There is no magic, quick solution; the underlying drivers of the country's problems have deep social, political, and economic roots, and so must the solutions. The country has human capital that, within a better social and institutional framework, can be developed to begin addressing underlying problems.



International players – governments, NGOs, and international organizations – have lessons to learn from the mixed results of their past efforts to “help.” Their unwillingness to challenge the power of Haitian elites, for example, has undercut many noble efforts. U.S. administrations have traditionally been inconsistent in their perceptions of their role, failing to find the right balance between “assisting” and “intervening”; ignoring opportunities for action before situations get too grave; and often neglecting possible roles for diaspora groups. Migration pressures are a legitimate wakeup call that Washington must heed, but they are a delayed indicator of the need for policy – i.e., it is already too late when migrant flows start.

KEY QUESTIONS

The Team has formed five subteams (members listed below) to research, analyze, and explore policies in five key areas: Local Economy; Personal and Family Security; Nationwide Security Challenges; Community Organizing; and International Institutions.

Local Economy

- Agricultural Micro-Financing
 - What microfinancing practices are in place and how can they be improved to better benefit the needs of small rural farmers in Northeast Haiti?
- Agricultural Insurance
 - How can small farmers in the Northeast increase access to affordable disaster insurance?
- Access to Agro-Technology
 - How can we expand rural community access to electricity in ways that empower local decision-makers and prevent further environmental degradation?

- Local Markets from Improved Agricultural Technology
 - What agricultural technologies can be used to increase production in ways that expand markets and increase citizens' access to food ?

Personal and Family Security

- Intimate Context & Gender Violence
 - What can local organizations and individuals do to reduce gender-based violence and other manifestations of hypermasculinity that hinder women's role and prevent community development?
- Violence in Border Areas
 - How does structural violence push the cycle of alienation and discrimination between Haitians and Dominicans, and is it possible to decrease the tension between the two parties?
- Violence against Children
 - How does violence witnessed in-home and in the community impact children's view of relationships, their community, and the world at large?

Nationwide Security Challenges

- Arms Flow
 - What are some of the strong drivers of arms flow into Haiti and in what ways can we stem the flow of arms to gangs?
- Gang Expansion
 - What are the primary drivers of organized gang expansion and how can Haitian-led programs reduce gang membership and influence?
- Political Function of Gangs
 - How will gangs' political engagement in community affairs serve to enhance community development via nonstate and state partnerships?

Community Organizing

- Technology in Electoral Security and Representation
 - How can technology facilitate electoral security and guarantee communal representation and cohesion?
- Environmental Cooperation
 - How can environmental cooperation produce synergies to promote institutional building at the local level?

International Institutions

- Aid Interventions
 - How can organizations help Haitians take ownership of the aid they receive to build institutions, improve education, and create better jobs, eventually ending their dependence on foreign aid?

- Anti-Corruption Efforts
 - What would be needed for an externally led anti-corruption mission to succeed in Haiti?

GOALS

Produce concise analysis and actionable recommendations to assist you in understanding and formulating policy positions in each of the aforementioned policy areas. Based on an understanding of OPODNE’s interests and an analysis of ongoing policies and programs, the Team hopes to identify ways that these five topic areas can be improved and augmented within Haiti. This analysis hopes to empower and support Haitian civil society and local communities, a key goal of Faith in Action International’s work.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In addition to researching published material, the Team will consult with government and non-government experts on Haiti and U.S. policy. They will also conduct research using published academic papers, policy memos, NGO knowledge products, think tank articles, and speeches from key figures, among other sources including local social media groups.

PRODUCTS

The Team will develop and deliver products reflecting its agreement with you on the content defined in these Terms of Reference, including brief memos (1-2 pages), background papers, oral briefings, and presentations as appropriate.

TOPIC AREAS AND TEAM MEMBERS

Local Economy

- Zachary Jenkins
- TJ Kohler
- Emilio Urgteaga
- Giselle Coleman-Martinez

Personal and Family Security

- Chanel Calderon
- Karla Rios
- Elena Hoffman

Nationwide Security Challenges

- Lauren Ravekes
- Ashley Arellano
- Janice Flores Reyes

Community Organizing

- Jeffrey Vicente
- Wagner Mateus Ribeiro da Silva

International Institutions

- Elsa Case
- Sophia Skaff