

H.I.P.Y.:

HAITIAN INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR YOUTH



PREPARED BY

Emily Braun
Mohamed Robleh
Allyson Rail
Jeff Brandys

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1) Project Introduction

Executive Summary

Gang violence, fueled by corrupt and elite oligarchs has exacerbated the already declining human development situation in Haiti with a great deal of Haitians now experiencing alarming levels of food insecurity. Additionally, as gang violence expands from the occupied capital of Port-au-Prince into neighbouring areas like Cité Soleil, many youths with no other viable opportunities are being recruited and exploited by gang forces. The Haitian Intervention Program for Youth (H.I.P.Y) is a project aimed to work with local NGOs within the Cité Soleil neighbourhood to strengthen food security with gardening knowledge and skills production. This program will also create a youth soccer league, aimed to deter youth away from the violence that surrounds them, and instead provide safe and community-oriented environments. This project proposal will begin by addressing the logistical description of the project, including stakeholders and project timeline, then will provide a pre-project risk assessment before highlighting the monitoring process and concluding with a summary of how the post-project impact will be measured. In collaboration with GAC and local NGOs, this project hopes to address food insecurity while also providing opportunities for disaffected youth amid a complex and dangerous conflict.

Description of Project

H.I.P.Y is a collaborative track two initiative where GAC will work with partners on the ground to address the deteriorating human security situation in Haiti. This program will establish a soccer league and develop a community garden project for youth in Cité Soleil.

The overarching objective of this program is to increase protective factors for youth i.e., activities or skills which reduce the likelihood of being victimized or victimizing others.ⁱ The protective factors developed in this project would be teamwork and gardening skills. Though this objective lacks the immediate capacity to eradicate gang violence in Haiti it offers a path forward for policymakers beyond security sector reform to empower Haitians.

The second objective of this program is focused on reducing youth risk factors i.e., aspects present within a community that may increase the risk of criminality or victimization such as poverty or violence.ⁱⁱ H.I.P.Y will combat these factors by providing certain social/cultural services such as organized youth sports and community gardening.

H.I.P.Y's third objective is to increase youth food security in Cité Soleil. Haiti has been suffering from an acute food crisis. The area's food security problem is particularly exacerbated in Cité Soleil where gang violence disrupts the local economy detrimentally impacting community access to food.ⁱⁱⁱ This initiative's community garden will address this issue by producing nutritious crops which participants will be allowed to take home.

Stakeholders

This project will involve the collaboration of GAC with NGOs who have years of hand on experience developing community gardens and youth soccer leagues within Cité Soleil. This program therefore will rely extensively on this existing local and international civil society expertise in its implementation and planning. This project is committed to empowering these civil society actors and to ensuring that their voices are critical in this initiative's progress.

Global Affairs Canada (GAC): GAC with its prior experience in providing services and programs to Haitians is the best Federal government department to spearhead H.I.P.Y. It has implemented numerous projects in Haiti within the past decade that directly correlate with this initiative's objectives. In 2019 GAC began a project focused on increasing food/economic security for women and youth in Haiti's Sud department through fruit and vegetable cultivation.^{iv} GAC's experiences make it well-suited to carry out this youth programming in Haiti.

Sakala: Sakala is a youth center in Cité Soleil that provides a multitude of different programs such as soccer training and a community garden project.^v This locally-led project also has the infrastructure to support a community garden.^{vi} Their initiative also supplements the diets of participants since

they can take home their crops^{vii} Sakala with its ongoing community garden project and local knowledge will be a valuable partner to carry out H.I.P.Y.

Viva Rio: Viva Rio is a Brazilian NGO that has operated in Port-Au-Prince since 2004.^{viii} Viva Rio has extensive experience running youth programming with support from major international actors such as the UN and the EU.^{ix} Viva Rio has also worked with GAC in the past on two projects in Port-Au-Prince focused on providing activities for youth in e gang-afflicted communities.^x This existing working relationship with GAC and its expertise in youth sports ensures that Viva Rio will be an instrumental stakeholder in this initiative.

Project Timeline

Phase 1: Consultation and Planning of Project — 6 months

This first phase is centred on laying the groundwork for this project's deployment. This process will involve GAC collaborating with Viva Rio and Sakala to determine key aspects of the project such as the details of the youth programming and how to ensure the safety of participants and volunteers. This will first take place remotely, to ensure the safety of GAC staff. However, after these details have been agreed upon a GAC representative will travel to Haiti to meet with these partners. During this process, GAC will simultaneously be in contact with the Haitian Government to ensure their support for the project.

Phase 2: Initiative Implementation and Monitoring — 24 months

The second phase of H.I.P.Y consists of running the garden community project and youth soccer league. This initiative's day-to-day operations will be overseen by Viva Rio and Sakala. H.I.P.Y will be carrying out these programs in existing spaces already owned by Viva Rio and Sakala. This project may expand on these preexisting resources by acquiring additional land or building more infrastructure. GAC will constantly keep on tabs and help with any troubleshooting. GAC will also put into place a formal monitoring process to collect data to measure the project's progress.

2) Pre-Project Risk Assessment

The most significant risk to effectively implementing and carrying out H.I.P.Y is guaranteeing the security of both workers and participants of the program in Cité Soleil. There exist significant factors that threaten the viability of this project such as the lack of legitimately elected government officials, the significant breakdown of the capacity of the Haitian National Police (HNP), and the dramatic increase of organized gang activity. In this context, it will be vital to pay close attention to the spread of violent gang activity from Port-au-Prince into more rural areas of Cité Soleil where the project will be operating. This program will rely on guaranteed safety assurances for local organizers from potential international intervention forces and rehabilitated Haitian security forces. For this program to curtail the worst-case scenario from being realized in Haiti, it needs to combat increased gang participation and recruitment of youth. However, for this to occur there need to be basic security guarantees for programming to operate successfully.

Pre-Conditions and Project Operation Risks for Implementation

Project implementation will require entry into the rural areas of Cité Soleil and agreement with the HNP regarding the project's implementation and personnel protection. It will also be important to seek a partnership with the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) to ensure align H.I.P.Y works in harmony with BINUH'S goals of focusing on armed groups' violence and accountability for crimes. Taking into consideration recent gang activity overflow into Cité Soleil it will be necessary to operate away from the key gang-occupied environments of Port-au-Prince and instead promote safe zones in Cité Soleil where the garden project and youth soccer can be run.^{xi} It will be crucial to consider hurricane season as Haiti is vulnerable to these storms which could impact the effectiveness and overall safety needed for the program to operate.^{xii}

Anticipated Project Goals

Currently, 65% of Cité Soleil's population is experiencing high levels of food security and many residents are losing access to work, markets and the already limited health and nutrition services.^{xiii} Additionally, with the increased gang violence activity following the assassination of President Moïse, the plethora of gangs operating and based in Port-au-Prince are increasingly rounding up homeless and at-risk teens and used as 'foot soldiers' in gang wars.^{xiv} Additionally, with the deteriorating situation, not only have employment opportunities ceased to exist, but educational opportunities have as well with over 1,500 schools being forcefully closed with increased violence.^{xv} Thus, with internally displaced families making their way toward more vulnerable rural areas, it is imperative to respond to the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in these areas. H.I.P.Y is dedicated to tackling the lack of institutional legitimacy in providing basic needs to those most vulnerable in Haiti, especially food security. Empowering youth to engage in a program that builds agricultural capacity and knowledge through local gardening projects, also will provide a positive safe space for youth to engage with their community through sport, hopefully decreasing the availability of disengaged youth with few other opportunities deterring them from gang activities.

3) Operational Impact Monitoring

For this project, various processes will be designed to ensure the involvement of actors and stakeholders in operational decision-making, and impact monitoring will include various levels of impact. To monitor the program, there will be monthly meetings with actors on the ground to assess and analyze baseline safety. These check-ins will include representatives from local communities, partner NGOs and GAC. There will also be daily risk assessments conducted, including a process to report incidents where participants or volunteers are physically harmed.

A database accessible to actors in this project will be established to monitor safety concerns and hazards for local actors. This will allow transnational actors to monitor and analyze the ongoing conflict in Cité Soleil. This database will combine the daily risk assessments, monthly meetings, and reports from local actors to establish an early conflict warning system. If local actors are harmed, or if there is an increased safety risk, the procedure outlined by this program emphasizes pausing the program to protect involved actors. It is crucial to consider "...the effects that third-party constituencies might have on the activities of intermediaries and, hence, upon the probability of achieving a satisfactory resolution of complex and protracted conflicts."^{xvi} This initiative also emphasizes protecting the anonymity and safety of participants involved in this project.

The NGOs selected to work with this project have been specifically chosen for their ability to work within conflict zones and their preexisting relationships with the local community. This integrated approach to intervention and localized peacebuilding is relatively new in the field. This project also aims to ensure local needs are prioritized by establishing a clear accountability framework for deviations from the guidelines outlined by all parties involved.

This project is ultimately aimed at uplifting local populations, with a specific focus on youth, so this project will be directly accountable to representatives of those communities. This process of accountability will aim to be accessible to local actors and connected to the previously mentioned database so that operations can be monitored at all levels. Within this context, it will be beneficial to include local stakeholders and partners in an accountability framework that applies to the operational mandates and goals of this project. The overall success of the project will also be dependent on the perceptions of local actors and stakeholders, which will include an integrative process of qualitative and quantitative data collection from previously mentioned sources.

4) Post-Project Impact

H.I.P.Y will aim to immediately increase youth engagement, leadership development and community-building activities. In the long term, the project may foster stronger community ties, prevent conflicts from arising, and develop conflict resolution and communication skills among the participating youth. That said, H.I.P.Y is not a solution to the complex challenges facing Haiti. The project is a complement to other conflict resolution efforts.

The impacts of H.I.P.Y can be observed at two levels: (1) participant level and (2) community level. At the participant level, H.I.P.Y activities target participant behaviour, attitudes, knowledge, and skills. At the community level, the project enhances community resilience and food security. With SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) key performance indicators (KPIs), H.I.P.Y activities will be evaluated for outcome and impact. The project indicators are closely tied to the activities and goals of the project.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

1. *Positive engagement with the community*
 - Number of youth participants in the project.
 - Frequency of participation in soccer games and community gardening activities.
 - Number of positive interactions between youth participants and community members.
 - Levels of reported feelings of belonging and connection to the community.
2. *Increased resiliency*
 - Levels of reported self-confidence and self-efficacy among youth participants
 - Number of instances of participants demonstrating problem-solving skills in activities.
 - Community perception of the project's impact on increasing youth resiliency
3. *Increased food security*
 - Amount of food produced and distributed through the community garden.
 - Number of community members who have access to fresh food because of the project.
 - Levels of reported improved nutrition among participants and their families.

H.I.P.Y takes a unique approach by building youth protective factors through youth soccer and gardening. The strategy is to use these activities to establish rapport and improve skills. Additionally, the project aims to address large problems at the local level including food security and improved community resilience. H.I.P.Y is making a concerted effort on local ownership and participation to ensure trust and sustainability are at the center of the project.

The performance of H.I.P.Y activities in Haiti will be assessed using a variety of methods, including both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The following approaches will be used to assess performance:

1. Surveys: Surveys will be conducted before and after the project to measure Changes.
2. Interviews: Interviews with youth and community members will be conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the impacts of the project.
3. Monitoring and evaluation: A monitoring and evaluation plan will be developed to ensure that the project is being implemented as intended and to assess progress toward goals.

As with any project, all stakeholders must have a sense of effectiveness. H.I.P.Y intends to implement a robust monitoring system to support staff and inform funders. The following monitoring activities will be undertaken throughout the project:

1. Progress reports: Regular progress reports from the project team to track the implementation of activities and progress toward goals.
2. Site visits: Bi-annual site visits to observe the project activities and interactions between youth and community members.
3. Impact assessment: An impact assessment is to be conducted at the end of the project to evaluate its overall effectiveness.
4. Ad-hoc meeting/phone calls: Planning for every situation is difficult, therefore key stakeholders must be available for ad-hoc meetings.

5) Notes

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- ^{xiii} UN Humanitarian Aid, "'Catastrophic' Hunger Recorded in Haiti for First Time, UN Warns," United Nations - UN News Global Perspective Human stories, October 14, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129537#:~:text=Currently%2C%2065%20percent%20of%20Cit%3%A9,urgent%20need%20of%20humanitarian%20assistance>.
- ^{xiv} Alessandro Ford, "Haiti Gangs Recruiting, Arming More Children," June 3, 2022, <https://insightcrime.org/news/haiti-gangs-recruiting-arming-more-children/>.
- ^{xv} Alessandro Ford, "Haiti Gangs Recruiting, Arming More Children," June 3, 2022, <https://insightcrime.org/news/haiti-gangs-recruiting-arming-more-children/>.
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