



A FUTURE OF EMPOWERMENT: CREATING A SUPPORTIVE, ENRICHING ENVIRONMENT FOR HAITIAN GIRLS AND YOUTH

Brief Description

The Haiti Adolescent Girls Network (HAGN), established in the wake of the 2010 earthquake, is a local organization that fosters collective local and international partnership for the empowerment, safety, health, and well-being of girls and youth (10-24 years of age) in Haiti through the creation of safe spaces where girls can regularly meet to build their social, economic, cognitive, and health-related assets. Thus, the Network seeks to craft a sustainable partnership with and among these organizations, laying the foundation for long-term capacity building in Haiti. The network is designed for collaborative learning and draws on the expertise of its members to create girl-centered programming rooted in local contexts.

The Haiti Adolescent Girls Network has as its goal, mission, and vision the following:

- **Goal:** Out of the earthquake and cholera emergencies as experienced by girls, to foster a well-resourced public-private network of places where girls can regularly meet to build their health-related, social, economic, and cognitive assets.
- **Mission:** The Haiti Adolescent Girls Network is dedicated to the empowerment, safety, health, and well-being of girls in Haiti.
- **Vision:** The Haiti Adolescent Girls Network envisions a world where adolescent girls are free of violence, discrimination and ill health, a world where girls feel supported, heard and safe, and have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Approach: Evidence-Based Girl Programming

The approach to girl programming is evidence-based, targeted, and scalable. Two key features distinguish the approach:

1. a focus on girls and youth (10-24 years of age) representing a key segment of Haiti's population's pyramid with priority to the most off-track and under-served girls in vulnerable and low-income settings, who are identified via a community survey method and
2. the leadership of older community-based female leaders (mentors), who receive training and financial support to work with younger girls in their communities. They also link the girls with existing community resources in order to increase their access to help them further exercise their rights

The Basic Step-by-Step Approach to implementation includes:

1. Holding community and key stakeholders' consultations
2. Selecting and establishing the boundaries of the intervention areas
3. Enumerating the universe of girls (through the girl roster tool that helps categorize girls by age, schooling, marital, childbearing, and living arrangement status)
4. Identifying the right subpopulations (segments) from the survey for priority programming as well as female leadership potential
5. Inventorying community assets and assessing the current coverage of different segments and the potential future role of such programs in protection and mitigation strategies

6. Identifying venues for girl groups to meet at least weekly over two years
7. Building the female infrastructure: recruiting and training mentors to guide and deliver content, provide accompaniment, engage community stakeholders, and sustain results
8. Identifying meaningful content keyed to their real lives: positive, achievable health and protection-related metrics
9. Delivering protective assets (health, social, economic, cognitive) through segment specific platforms.
10. Monitoring and evaluating and adjusting activities to increase impact

The community-based mentorship offers girls safe access to programs, increases regular participation, especially among the vulnerable, strengthens the learning environment, provides a foundation for community engagement, and delivers sustainability through cascading leadership.

HAGN currently comprises 14 member organizations receiving ongoing technical assistance and support and a platform of over 100 mentors-leaders working with over 5,800 adolescent girls and youth in five geographic departments (West, Southeast, North, South, and Nippes).

The Network is an important part of the social fabric of Haiti, where girls face high rates of discrimination and violence, and all citizens contend with recurring natural disasters and political turmoil. The safe space model features weekly gatherings, known as Espas Pa Mwen (“My Space” in Creole), in which girls and youth learn about sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence, build financial literacy, receive support for increased access to community resources, and create friendships with peers and female mentors (18-35 years of age) from the same communities as their mentees, who also act as community leaders to engage other community groups and key stakeholders in furthering girls’ health and rights. In this way, the EPM model develops the current and next generation of Haitian leaders.

