

The Right to Water in Haiti

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Haiti: Demographics

- **Poorest country in the W. Hemisphere**
 - **Per capita GNP approximately \$450; less in rural areas**
 - **More than two-thirds of Haitian workforce do not have steady wage employment**
- **Life expectancy: 59.1 y for men and 62.5 y for women**



Haiti: vital statistics

• Population	~10 million
• Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	60
• Under 5 Child mortality (per 1,000 live births)	72
• Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births)	520
• Births attended by skilled health staff	24.2%
• Literacy rate	52.9%
• Population w/ access to adequate sanitation	30%
• Population with access to essential drugs	0-49%
• Children underweight for age (% under age 5)	28%
• National health expenditure per capita	US \$84
• National health expenditure (public) as % of GDP	7.5%



Human Development Index

Haiti ranks **149th** of the **182**
countries indexed







Infectious Disease in Haiti

- One of the highest HIV prevalence in the W. Hemisphere
 - 2 percent prevalence overall
 - > 10 percent in asymptomatic women attending antenatal clinics in urban slums
- After HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) is the leading cause of mortality
- Directly observed therapy coverage for TB (70%), can be as low as 13% in densely populated areas of Port au Prince
- Poor water quality is a significant contributor to infectious disease (e.g. cholera epidemic)



Key Historical Facts on Haiti

- In 1517, the trafficking of slaves from Africa to the island of Hispaniola begins. By 1540 there are 30,000 Africans brought to the island
- Between 1784 and 1791 an average of 29,000 slaves were forcibly taken to Haiti (then called Saint-Domingue) and by 1789 they supplied 75% of the world's sugar



Deforestation across the Central Plateau



Key Historical Facts on Haiti

- In 1791, the slaves revolted and independence was achieved in 1804
- The U.S. did not recognize Haiti as a nation-state until after slavery was abolished in the U.S.- over 60 years after Haitian independence
- U.S. occupied Haiti 1915-34
- 1957-1986: Duvalier regime, receiving \$40.4 million in aid from the U.S.
- By 1976, 75% of Haitians live in absolute poverty



Embargo on Haiti

- **Loans through the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) totaling \$146 million for road rehabilitation, education, potable water, and healthcare were blocked in 2001**
- **Other international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF followed suit**



Embargo on Haiti

- **The humanitarian situation worsened during the embargo— in a March 2003 report published by the UN, Haiti was regarded as a “silent emergency”**
- **The embargo also weakened the government, leaving it vulnerable to political instability and regime change in 2004**



Right to Water study

- In 2007, Partners In Health in collaboration with NYU and the RFK Center for Justice and Human Rights conducted a study to investigate the violations in the right to water linked with the blocking of the IDB loan
- Port-de-Paix, Haiti, was one municipality slated to receive funding for water rehabilitation



Right to Water study

- **We utilized qualitative and quantitative methods**
- **For the quantitative methods we carried out a survey in Port-de-Paix in areas that would have benefitted from the funds (water infrastructure)**
- **Water quality was also assessed (for bacterial content)**



Right to Water study

- A random sample of households in Port-de-Paix were selected for participation in the survey (n=45)
- 80% - water quantity declined or stayed the same in previous five years, with 56% reporting a decline
- On average, only 9.2 liters of water was used per person per day (far below WHO minimum requirement of 20 liters)



Right to Water study

- **89% - water quality declined or stayed the same, with 53% indicating that it had gotten worse**
- **33% reported that their water was never treated at the point of use**
- **Nearly 20% indicated that they never had consistent access to water treatment materials**
- **Findings corroborated by water testing; out of 19 samples, 74% were contaminated with coliform bacteria**



Right to Water study

- **Very limited access to improved water sources:**
 - **Only 4% with household connection**
 - **9% access to protected well**
 - **7% access to public connection**
 - **4% bottled water**
- **Overall, only 27% had access to at least one improved water source**
- **82% purchased water from a private basin, distributed by trucks (testing – not potable)**



Right to Water study

- **For water affordability, 60% of participants indicated that the price of water had increased in the past 5 years**
- **Challenge – since the cost of 15 gallons of water for a typical household was more than 10% of the median household expenditure for basic needs**
- **Overall, findings indicated that the availability, quality, and accessibility (three factors reflecting the right to water) were compromised**



Right to Water study

Nou achte dlo pou lajan, men se maladi nou achte. Nou depansé plis lajan toujou. Menm yon sèkèy vann milyon nan Pòdépè.

We buy water for money, but its sickness that we're really buying. We spend more money still. Even a casket costs thousands in Port-de-Paix.

-From a focus group of fathers in Port-de-Paix, Haiti.



Water collection site



Haiti's Recent History

- January 12, 2010 a major earthquake struck Port au Prince, devastating the capitol and surrounding areas, having a direct impact on one-third of Haiti's population
- 300,000 deaths, 200,000 injured, 1.3 million internally displaced
- Subsequent cholera epidemic has threatened Haiti's water security
- Advances have been made to contain cholera, however, more work needs to be done to fulfill the right to water in Haiti



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Yes, all human beings are people. It is we, the afflicted who are speaking... The right to health is the right to life.

Everyone has the right to live.

-Declaration of Cange, World AIDS Day, 2001



www.standwithhaiti.org/haiti

