

Haiti

Haiti continues to be among the poorest countries in the world, and the coronavirus pandemic made the socio-economic and health conditions even worse, in a country where the public health system was already failing. The country is also subject to great risks of natural disasters, like hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, landslides and droughts.

In 2020, the Haitian currency Gourde was devaluated, which caused serious concerns in the households by decreasing the purchasing power for families, more families were impoverished. More than 40 percent of Haiti's 11 million population suffers from acute hunger, unemployment and inflation are sky-high.

During last year crime and insecurity have been spreading throughout Haiti following the deep economic crisis and adding to the political tensions in the country. Protection systems are weak, and authorities are failing to protect citizens. There is almost no safe zone, as cases of violence, armed robbery, crime, and kidnapping for ransom are recorded throughout the country, with a significant incidence in Port-au-Prince. The human rights group Fondasyon Je Klere says there are more than 150 gangs in Haiti involved in kidnappings. In addition, sexual violence is increasing and according to UNICEF, children and women in Haiti are no longer merely the victims of criminal gangs—they are becoming their targets.

SOS Children's Villages has a continuous dialogue with the police, and they are patrolling the area of the SOS Children's Village of Santo (Croix-des-Bouquets) and the security company has been requested to strengthen the vigilance. Meanwhile, the MA is working on contingency and security plans to map risks and identify mitigation actions in the face of possible scenarios. Likewise, co-workers have been alerted about the increasing insecurity and encouraged to take preventive measures for their protection and their families. SOS Haiti has put in place a security committee formed of several colleagues from different areas of intervention including the President of the Board to assure the follow-up of that matter.

Despite the difficult situation, the programmes have maintained their services in primary education, family-based care, day-care, and family strengthening. Field colleagues are advised to remain vigilant and avoid attracting attention.

"Bandits are taking possession of increasingly larger territories. Not a day goes by without violence in the streets of the capital," says SOS Children's Villages National Director, Faimy Loiseau. "We are taking measures to ensure the safety of participants and collaborators, strengthening the vigilance, as unrest and violence are increasing and getting unpredictable, sparing no one. As the situation is rapidly deteriorating, we are putting on strategies to reinforce the security of our different structures mostly the SOS Children's Villages. The possibility of an emergency evacuation and or temporary relocation of the participants of alternative care is not our first option since there are no particularly safe areas in the country but if needed this will be assessed."

Programme information

The Children's Village in Les Cayes

The SOS Children's Village of Les Cayes is situated in the southern part of Haiti and provides a safe environment in loving family-like care homes for children who have been abandoned or have lived in extremely vulnerable situations. They get a new chance in life with education, social activities and all the support that they need to grow up to be self-sufficient adults.

When the Haitian government declared a national health emergency and containment throughout Haiti in March due to the pandemic, the Children's Village Cayes took the necessary measures and confined the whole village. Unfortunately, that meant that many of the activities that were planned for the year could not be executed since the pedagogic staff could not be present. School activities were managed through digital platforms and social networks to ensure that the children could still access education.

An awareness raising and information plan was established to make programme participants both in the Children's village and in the communities aware of the pandemic and take actions to prevent contamination. As part of this, families and children received training in how to protect themselves, and others, from the spread of Covid-19.

During the year games and activities to promote and stimulate learning and psychosocial skills such as respect for others and established rules, tolerance, and non-violence has been conducted. Thereto, caregivers have been given training in positive to equip them with the right knowledge and skill to care for children in their different stages of development.

To facilitate a possible return and re-integration of children in alternative care into their biological families a response plan was developed to strengthen the biological families. Such a re-integration process is always handled with great care and is only done if it is safe and in the best interest of the child.

To protect children during this difficult time, with both the pandemic and political turmoil and increasing violence and insecurity, SOS Haiti has focused its work on strengthening the security and safety of children, youth and families as well as staff. In line with work, an audit of child safeguarding in the programmes was conducted as well as a national campaign along with workshops and dialogue forums, all to put the spotlight on child safeguarding and to strengthen the work.

The year in numbers Les Cayes:

- Children in the villages **87**
- Family houses **14**



Fabian in his home. Photo: SOS archive

Fabien's big heart

Fabien, 15, has lived at the SOS Children's Village in Santo for eleven years. As he is getting ready to graduate from school and start building his independence, he stands out for his kindness.

Fabien lives with his SOS caregiver Juorcine Charitable and has six SOS siblings; two sisters who are 11 and 18, and four brothers, 6, 10, 11 and 19. Juorcine describes him as a kind child with a huge heart. He is cooperative, conciliatory, and respectful at home, and this young man is an example and a counsellor for his siblings.

– Whenever we have arguments at home, he is always willing to accept his mistake and apologize, if necessary, says the SOS mother. – He also makes the siblings come to their senses when something is not right.

Fabien loves spending time with his brothers and sisters, he especially likes drawing and joking and eating together. In his free time, he likes to spend time at home reading. He also enjoys doing housework and plays football with his peers from the SOS Children's Village. – He regularly participates in the various educational activities organized by the SOS team, and everyone here cherishes his humbleness.

When Fabien was four, he was found alone in a public park in Port-au-Prince by a distant cousin, who decided to take him to SOS Children's Villages. He had never been to school and didn't know how to speak properly. After some years, the SOS team found his biological mother, but unfortunately, she couldn't offer him proper care. But Fabien calls this encounter one of the happiest moments of his life. – I know and understand I can't live with her, but I was just joyful to see her and talk to her, he says.

Fabien is in the ninth grade at the Hermann Gmeiner School in Les Cayes. Besides his gentleness, he stands out for his behavior in class and excellent academic performance. Fabien says his favorite courses are Physics and Mathematics and he is passionate about computers. But his biggest dream is to become a doctor and to specialize in pediatrics. – We need more doctors in Haiti, he says. – I want to help children to be healthy.

Financial report

Donated by Akelius University Foundation, EUR	2020 Budget	2020 Actuals	2021 Budget
CV Les Cayes	429 981	368 664	373 832
Total	429 981	368 664	373 832
SEK (using exchange rate at the time of payment)	4 665 294	4 000 004	4 000 002
Average exchange rate	10,85	10,85	10,70
Total budget/actuals, all facilities above, EUR	2020 Budget	2020 Actuals	2021 Budget
Investments/maintenance	4 276	7 738	8 140
Current working expenditures	195 666	204 842	290 875
Personnel expenditures	213 416	193 731	347 621
Other expenditures	16 623	10 784	21 990
Total	429 981	417 095	668 626 *
Share covered by Akelius	100%	88%	56%

*Higher costs 2021 due to feasibility study of Les Cayes programs, salary adjustments and inflation.