

## Grantmaking+ to Address Human Trafficking in Haiti

### Problem

Human trafficking is both systemic and endemic in Haiti. Haiti continues to dominate headlines not only as a country of origin but also as a transit and destination country for human trafficking. In 2014, Haiti passed an anti-trafficking law to prevent, criminalize and sanction such acts. Subsequently, an inter-ministerial committee was created to coordinate actions in this sphere and build partnerships with civil actors. Article 7 of the anti-trafficking law calls for the creation of a Fund to finance anti-trafficking work and support the committee's work. To date, the fund has not been created and the committee has not been funded. This committee remains dormant. In April 2018, a national strategy and plan was drafted setting forth goals, objectives, benchmarks and roles of actors in the fight against human trafficking in Haiti. But due to the current state of affairs in the country, inadequate effort is being made to implement this strategy and attack this problem. It is clear that the state lacks the logistical and financial capacity to combat trafficking, within the country as well as at the 96 unofficial border posts along the Dominican border.

As you can imagine, this vacuum, combined with Haiti's chronically exclusionary society and entrenched system of *Restaveks*, leaves children and other vulnerable groups at high risk.

### About HDI

The Haiti Development Institute (HDI) was created to build communities where children can thrive by supporting local leaders, strengthening organizations, advising and connecting philanthropists, and convening stakeholders, increasing civic engagement and leading communities to take part in and lead their own development. HDI fills critical gaps by acting as a:

- 1) **Capacity Builder.** We invest in nonprofits through organizational capacity building programming for leaders and mission-driven Haitian-led organizations;
- 2) **Philanthropic Intermediary and Advisor.** We create mechanisms for philanthropy to reach resource-poor communities; we support effective giving by providing advice, connecting funders to impactful local giving opportunities and grant making;
- 3) **Civic leader and convener.** We bring stakeholders together, catalyze networks, facilitate collaboration, and generate research and data to promote strategic investments and viable communities.

HDI grew out of The Haiti Fund at the Boston Foundation, which was established to provide relief to communities affected by the devastating 2010 earthquake while also supporting long term development efforts through grant making to local organizations. From this work, we concluded that Haiti needs an independent, mission-driven institution committed to increasing the capacity of community-based organizations and Haitian-led development efforts. HDI was registered as a Haitian nonprofit

organization in 2017 and certified as a 501(c)(3) equivalent since 2018 with NGO Source. HDI has made 190 grants totaling over \$3 million and provided training and non-profit accompaniment support to over 60 community groups and nonprofits. As a convener, HDI has organized four Haiti Funders Conferences.

In 2016, Haiti Development Institute partnered with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and The Philanthropic Initiative to provide a strategic response to the statelessness crisis created by the Dominican Republic's Constitutional Court decision to deprive thousands of Dominicans of Haitian descent of citizenship and legal status. As with trafficking, marginalized people like women and children are especially adversely affected. In 2020, HDI is partnering with the Dunn Family Charitable Foundation to learn more about the state of human trafficking in Haiti.

## Proposed Action

While HDI has supported and made grants to organizations in this field before, we are leveraging this current effort to learn, build partnerships and consider the most catalytic role for philanthropy in this area. Through research and convenings, we will identify the stakeholders, share the actions underway and make recommendations to strategically address this issue. Development assistance in Haiti requires concerted efforts that both bridge gaps and pursue systemic results. We believe effective assistance is also cross-sectoral, ideally generating synergy among private, philanthropic, civil society and public actors. HDI is proposing to partner with key institutions to jointly mobilize a comprehensive response.

We will undertake the following:

- **Grantmaking**

- **Small Grants** – HDI will make several grants to Haitian organizations working in this field in the coming months. This will be a closed-universe grants round, as HDI will invite applicants based on areas of work, credibility and proven record in this field.

- **Field Building**

- **Convene the Field** – HDI will host a small gathering of implementers as an opportunity to network, share and learn from each other about emerging practices and trends; and identify actions toward executing existing strategy. The first convening will help set a baseline, followed by one-year grants. A second meeting will be scheduled toward the end of the year, to present findings and share reporting from the field.
  - **Produce a Report** – We will capture and disseminate the knowledge generated through the grantmaking, convening and research in a document to help strengthen the sector. This knowledge product can help educate the public generally but will also serve to provide specific insights and recommendations for philanthropic investments.

## Impact/Long-Term Vision

The immediate goal of the proposed activities is to help bring about a structured approach to the response to trafficking in Haiti. This effort is an introduction for us to learn and help shape the field. Trafficking and *Restaveks* is a systemic issue and change will take time. Success lies in strategic investment in local leaders, local institutions, inclusion and consistency. Philanthropy can be a first mover as well as a catalyst to spur action. This is one such opportunity to lead the way.