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| **Haiti** | **Population** * **Sex Disaggregation: 50.4% female and 49.6% male[[1]](#endnote-1)**
* **Population Age Disaggregation: 35.9% Under 15yrs, 60.1% between 15-64yrs, 3.9% over 65yrs**
* **IDP Households – 62,560[[2]](#endnote-2)**
* **Female-headed households – 42%[[3]](#endnote-3)**
* **Literacy rates – Male (15-24yrs) – 74.4%, Female (15-24yrs) – 70.5%[[4]](#endnote-4)**
* **Infant Mortality Rates – 55 per 1000 live births[[5]](#endnote-5)**
* **Maternal Mortality Rates – 380 per 100,000 live births[[6]](#endnote-6)**
* **Child Marriage – 3% girls married by 15yrs, 18% girls married by 18yrs[[7]](#endnote-7)**
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# Gender in Brief

**Gender roles and responsibilities**

Haitian society is largely patriarchal society with low representation of women in decision-making roles. Even before the 2010 earthquake, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights reported, “forms of discrimination against women have been a fixture in the history of Haiti, both in times of peace and in times of unrest and violence.”[[8]](#endnote-8) It has been reported that gender-based exclusion, cultural and legal discrimination and gender-based violence (GBV) have been long-term problems in Haiti and even though women often serve as heads of households and have relative independence, they are generally considered socially inferior.[[9]](#endnote-9) The rise in female headed households could be attributed partly to men leaving Haiti after the 2010 earthquake for jobs in the Dominican Republic. However at the end of 2015 many men were forced to return to Haiti due to the Dominican Republic’s government’s crackdown on illegal immigrants and tensions with host communities.[[10]](#endnote-10). The earthquake in 2010 led to increased chronic poverty and crime which, along with political instability, has exacerbated inequalities and led to a high prevalence of GBV and discrimination against women and girls. Women are more likely to suffer poor health outcomes and are less likely to own land than men.[[11]](#endnote-11)

**Education and economic empowerment**

It is estimated that the average girl in Haiti only attends school for an average of 7 years[[12]](#endnote-12). Due to tuition fees, girls are often pulled out of school to help with domestic chores at home. One study found that there was inappropriate, exploitative and abusive behaviour of mostly male teachers towards girls in schools.[[13]](#endnote-13) Women face high levels of unemployment and often have no access to formal banking systems. Many women who were engaged in small commerce lost their resources during the earthquake, and therefore also their financial independence. Some lost husbands or family breadwinners. CARE and USAID have been working with Haitian women since 2013 to establish Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and creating safe spaces for discussions on sexual and reproductive health, GBV and family planning.

**Gender-based Violence and Protection**

According to a recent review[[14]](#endnote-14), there are more reports of GBV occurring in urban areas. However this increased reporting does not mean that prevalence is not equally high in rural areas. Available evidence suggests that a significant proportion of victims of sexual violence in Haiti are children and minors. There is widespread consensus that GBV increased since the 2010 earthquake, including a rise in the number of women and girls engaging in sex work. Although rape has been a focus of concern, some reports suggest that physical aggression is actually a more common form of violence against women overall. One survey found that outside Port-au-Prince, most sexual attacks occur in the home whereas in Port-au-Prince the streets are more dangerous. Domestic violence is a significant concern and is seen to be worse in rural areas, where access to healthcare is inadequate and survivors are left to ‘fend for themselves’. It has also been reported by UNHCR that the living conditions in IDP camps in 2011 can exacerbate women’s vulnerability to violence, whereby women formed relationships with men for economic security or to engage in transactional sex. However it should be noted that many Haitian women’s organisations reject gender stereotyping of men in IDP camps as criminal gang members and women as prostitutes and there is a general call for greater support for women’s networks who play critical roles in organising, networking, caretaking and ensuring basic survival.

**Women’s participation**

Haiti has a strong women’s civil society movement. However in terms of participation, a Human Rights Watch report found that 18 months after the earthquake, women directly affected by the earthquake had been excluded from the reconstruction process.[[15]](#endnote-15) Women and girls expressed frustration that they lacked basic information that would allow them to access basic health services, many funded by international actors. They described serious obstacles in accessing prenatal and obstetric care, leading some to deliver babies in their muddy tents or en route to hospital. Most women and girls did not know which organisations worked where and who to complain to when they had a problem.

**Water and sanitation**

There have been serious issues regarding women and girls’ access to water and sanitation. This includes fears of verbal and sexual attacks from men in camps while accessing bathing areas. With rising cases of cholera many women and girls get vaginal infections and cannot manage their personal hygiene during menstruation. This will be a particular concern in disasters where access to water and sanitation is restricted. A lack of clean water also had an impact on children’s access to schools and a study in 2014 found that 60% of schools lack toilets.[[16]](#endnote-16)

**Gender in emergencies**

Hurricane Matthew is likely to exacerbate gendered inequalities and protection risks and it is important to understand the different needs and capacities of women, men, boys and girls. According to aid workers on the ground, the biggest needs so far are food and clean water[[17]](#endnote-17), and many people have lost their homes. Some have also lost family members. It is important for humanitarian programming to learn from previous humanitarian responses particularly in ensuring that women and girls in particular have access to relevant information on services available (particularly regarding cholera and WASH), and to reduce likelihood of exploitation in exchange for food and water. Women and girls should be specifically targeted with relevant information. WASH, shelter, food and nutrition assistance emergency responses should include a region-specific understanding of basic protection risks and include risk mitigation strategies (Further information in IASC GBV mitigation guidelines). Emergency response should also ensure grassroots/local women’s groups are involved particularly in information dissemination and in GBV prevention/response mechanisms.

1. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. IOM, DTM, March 2016 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. UN WOMEN 2011 <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2011/1/un-women-on-the-ground-haiti-s-women-a-year-after-the-earthquake> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. UNICEF Data: Monitoring the Situation for Women and Children [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. UNICEF Data: Monitoring the Situation for Women and Children [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank 2014 Trends in maternal mortality: 1990 to 2013 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. UNICEF State of the World’s Children 2016 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Human Rights Brief <http://hrbrief.org/2012/02/the-situation-of-women-and-girls-in-haiti-exemplifies-the-difficulties-of-post-natural-disaster-protection-of-human-rights/> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Governance and Social Development Resource Centre Helpdesk Research Report 2013: VAWG in Haiti [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. New York Times 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/world/americas/fearful-haitian-migrants-flee-dominican-republic-for-camps.html?_r=0> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. USAID Women & Gender Factsheet January 2016 [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Save the Children statistics <http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.6151435/k.B1C9/Haiti.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Overview of underlying causes of girls’ marginalisation in the Haitian education system 2013, Jane Kellum, CARE Haiti [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Governance and Social Development Resource Centre Helpdesk Research Report 2013: VAWG in Haiti [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Human Rights Watch Written Statement of Amanda Klasing 2014 [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Human Rights Watch Written Statement of Amanda Klasing 2014 [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. CARE Haiti Hurricane Quotes from the Field 7th October 2016 [↑](#endnote-ref-17)