

Health System Strengthening through Global Health Initiatives – A Mixed Methods Case Study from Haiti



Ivers LC ¹⁻³, Jerome JG ⁴, Sullivan E ^{5,6}, Talbot JR ¹, Dhavan N ¹, St. Louis M ⁴, Lambert W ⁴, Rhatigan J ¹, Kim JY ¹⁻³, Mukherjee JS ¹⁻³



¹Brigham and Women's Hospital Division of Global Health Equity, Boston, MA, ²Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, ³Partners In Health, Boston, MA, ⁴Zanmi Lasante, Cange, Haiti, ⁵Harvard School of Public Health, FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Boston, MA, ⁶Global Health Delivery Project, Harvard University, Boston, MA

Background

- International funding for HIV care has increased in the last five years due to new Global Health Initiatives (GHI) such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM) and the United States President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).
- Though these GHI are targeted to specific disease entities, increasing attention is being paid to the impact that such initiatives have on the health system as a whole.

Aim

To evaluate the impact of GFATM and PEPFAR on the health system in Haiti since their introductions in 2003 and 2004 respectively.

Methods

- Mixed qualitative and quantitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, observation, examination of documentary material, and collection of quantitative data.
- Twelve key informants from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations and the Ministry of Health (MOH) participated in semi-structured interviews.
- NVivo8 software was used to analyze the transcripts. Quantitative data from 1998-2008 from five representative health facilities triangulated the qualitative findings.

Partners In Health / Zanmi Lasante

- PIH is a non-profit organization which has been working with its Haitian sister organization, Zanmi Lasante (ZL), for over 20 years.
- Provides quality medical care and socio-economic support in the impoverished Central Plateau and Artibonite regions of Haiti.
- 1.9 million patient visits recorded in 2007.
- 4,026 patients currently on antiretroviral therapy.
- 4,000 patients currently being treated for TB.
- Care is offered free of charge to patients in collaboration with the Ministry of Health at 9 clinics/hospitals.
- This study includes PIH clinical sites in Lascahobas, St. Marc, Hinche, and Boucan Carré.

Results

We found that there were key nodes of interaction between the health system in Haiti and the GHI studied, including:

- Human Resources/Health Workforce
- Financing
- Service Delivery
- Governance
- Health Technologies
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Community/Civil Society

• Analysis demonstrated a complex interaction between GFATM/PEPFAR and Haiti's health system as a whole.

• GFATM /PEPFAR were largely associated with strengthening of the health system, particularly in geographic areas and in programs where NGO leaders and/or MOH officials specifically designed and coordinated their interventions to have such an impact.

• Where deliberate planning and coordination did not exist, the GHI had a more 'vertical' effect, impacting primarily the targeted diseases.

• GFATM/PEPFAR were associated with overall improvement in human resources capacity and retention, but the influx of funding did cause some tensions due to salary inequities.

• GFATM/PEPFAR funds were not received directly by the government of Haiti, often empowering NGOs to work independently of the MOH.

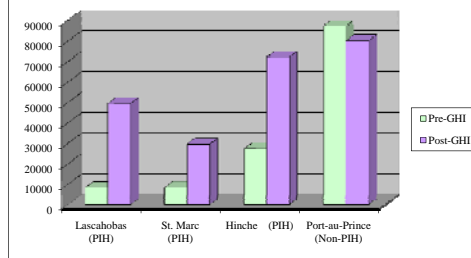


Boucan Carré clinic pre-GHI funding January 2003

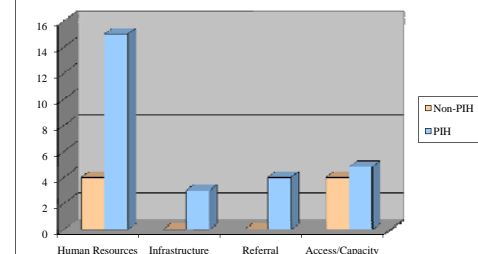


Boucan Carré clinic post-GHI funding July 2004

Average number of facility visits before and after GHI funding in 5 facilities in Haiti



Average scores in key health systems domains before and after GHI funding in 5 facilities in Haiti



• **Human resources score:** one point each for increases in 16 categories of workers (max score 16).

• **Access/ capacity score:** one point each for the following: improvement in number of total facility visits, children seen, pregnant women seen, and the availability of nine essential laboratory tests (max score 12).

• **Infrastructure score:** one point each for increase in physical infrastructure, increase in water availability, increase in electricity availability (max score 3).

• **Referral score:** one point each for increases in 7 variables evaluating facility's ability to function within a health network.

Conclusions

Targeted GHI such as GFATM and PEPFAR can successfully strengthen health systems if this objective is deliberately included in planning and design, and if leadership and coordination are ensured.

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