



## **Haiti Transition Initiative:**

### ***Reflections on Program Strategy and Strengths 2004-2006***

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## ACRONYMS

|          |                                                        |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| CAMEP    | <i>Centrale Autonome Métropolitaine d'Eau Portable</i> |
| CEP      | Provisional Electoral Council                          |
| CGP      | Community Governance Program                           |
| CIMIC    | Civil-Military Cooperation                             |
| DDR      | Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration           |
| EDH      | <i>Electricité d'Haïti</i>                             |
| ESF      | Economic Support Funds                                 |
| FAd'H    | Forces Armées d'Haiti                                  |
| GOH      | Government of Haiti                                    |
| HNP      | Haïtien National Police                                |
| HTI      | Haiti Transition Initiative                            |
| IGOH     | Interim Government of Haiti                            |
| IMC      | Inter-Ministerial Commission                           |
| IOM      | International Organization for Migration               |
| MINUSTAH | United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti  |
| MoPW     | Ministry of Public Works                               |
| MOU      | Memorandum of Understanding                            |
| OTI      | Office of Transition Initiatives                       |
| PADF     | Pan-American Development Fund                          |
| PAP      | Port-au-Prince                                         |
| UNPOL    | United Nations Police                                  |
| USAID    | United States Agency for International Development     |

## INTRODUCTION

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives' (OTI) mission is to support U.S. foreign policy objectives by helping local partners advance peace and democracy in priority countries in crises. Seizing critical windows of opportunity, OTI works on the ground to provide fast flexible short-term assistance targeted at key political transition and stabilization needs. OTI launched a program in Haiti, the Haiti Transition Initiative (HTI), in May 2004 in response to the political turmoil surrounding the resignation of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on February 29, 2004. OTI's goal in Haiti was to "support a peaceful transition by helping volatile communities create stability and progress."

HTI was a collaborative partnership between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and OTI. The programs objectives were the following: 1) enhance citizen confidence and participation in a peaceful political transition; 2) empower citizens and the Haitian government to address priority community needs; 3) build cooperative frameworks between citizens and government entities at all levels; and 4) promote peaceful interaction among conflicted populations. The implementation of the program, which began after the ouster of Aristide and ended after the 2006 democratic elections and installation of the new government, was designed based on OTI's grant making mechanism.

To achieve the overarching goal of the program and the objectives and through the issuance of small grants, HTI aimed to create dialogue and generate momentum towards peace and democracy through quick-impact projects. With an initial mandate of eight months and a budget of \$3.2 million, HTI first opened offices in Port-au-Prince (PAP), Petit Goâve, and Saint Marc. These sites were selected based on their recent history and strategic importance in the Haitian political context, as well as the ability to physically work there.<sup>1</sup> When the program received additional funding in the summer of 2005, HTI was able to expand and open offices in Cap Haïtien and Les Cayes. All of the cities or neighborhoods in which HTI worked were considered "conflict zones" – or areas where violence was likely to be or easily incited. At the time of the Presidential inauguration in May 2006, program funding reached \$16.8 million in small grants funds with more than \$10 million committed to over 440 activities. OTI ultimately provided a total of \$22.25million to the program.

HTI is an example of a true partnership between OTI and an implementing partner, in this case IOM. There was substantial collaboration at every stage of the project, yet OTI allowed IOM enough space to be able to have the necessary flexibility to be responsive to program developments as they arose. OTI provided invaluable support, especially in galvanizing agencies of the United States Government to address critical issues that were impeding the ability of the program to achieve its objectives. This was particularly crucial in enhancing the coordination between IOM and MINUSTAH. Although the lack of a permanent OTI representative presented some challenges, the program greatly benefited from the variety of experience and expertise of the short-term OTI representatives.

### ***Report's Purpose***

Given the complexity of the Haitian context and the political and programmatic changes that took place during the first two years of the program, it is important for future programming to examine the evolution of HTI to help shape the way forward, and to consider the fundamental elements that may be applicable in similar initiatives. Hence, the purposes of this report are twofold: 1) to review the program strategy of HTI; and 2) to identify the strengths of the HTI program that could be applied to other OTI programs in similar contexts.

The first part of the report will provide information about the context within which HTI was implemented. Haiti has had a history of political turmoil and violence and was cycling through yet another highly unstable period when HTI began. The next section discusses the program strategy covering the four stages of HTI, and how and why HTI approached implementation differently in the provinces of Haiti versus PAP. The next section focuses on the strengths of HTI including IOM's approach of staying in the background rather than seeking attention; location selection; their insistence on community ownership of

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<sup>1</sup> For more detail on the events affecting each HTI site during the unrest of 2004, please refer to the Timeline in Annex 1.

the projects; the flexible and responsive nature of the program; the commitment to including multiple partners in the decision making process for projects; ensuring that the Interim Government of Haiti (IGOH) was involved; encouraging communities to implement multiple projects; and developing a visible and compelling message. The conclusion of the report illustrates the program's impact and outcomes including comments on the challenges of measuring the impact of HTI and some anecdotes from program participants and others.

### ***Program Design***

HTI was designed to contribute to the political process, as opposed to offering humanitarian assistance, through a high volume of targeted small grants that aimed to facilitate dialogue, build community cohesion, and diminish the powers of spoilers. Through this small grants mechanism, HTI was able to unite communities and the government around neighborhood improvement projects. The dialogue generated by the grants as a result of cooperatively developing and implementing projects with the communities was used as a conflict mitigation tactic.

Because each of the five cities in which HTI worked had unique local situations and the nature of the groups in conflict were different, the program design in each location was different. In PAP, the conflict was often between a community and the government so the programs focused on redefining the relationship between the communities and the government, such as trust building. While in Saint Marc, one of the Provinces in Haiti, the conflict was between communities (also known as neighborhoods). In cases of inter-community conflict, the government played a key role in HTI project management acting as an impartial mediator while at the same time gaining legitimacy as problem solvers responsive to community concerns. A critical element of the program design given these problems in the communities was to provide sufficient time for dialogue so that it would yield lasting positive change. Alternatively, the small grants were able to isolate spoilers so that the community and government could take back control of their communities.

The small grants mechanism was designed to fund locally identified projects. One of the ways this was possible was through a three-way grants decision making process split between the community, the government and HTI. With this design the community was able to not only identify projects that would benefit their areas but also approve projects that were proposed by outsiders. The government's role was to help identify projects at the request of the community but also to endorse the projects so the communities saw that the government was interested and invested in what was happening in marginalized neighborhoods. HTI did have official approval authority because it was in charge of allocating funds and resources, but would only do so if the community and government were in agreement on the project.

By in large, the project itself was of secondary importance to the process through which it was identified and implemented and the dialogue created around it. This emphasis on process over product was facilitated both by the distanced nature of IOM as implementer as well as a high degree of flexibility in the time for implementation. The ability to prolong a project enabled HTI to take a hands-off approach to problems, prompting the community to create local conflict resolution mechanisms or turn to the government as a mediator. This process often took time as communities had been trained by NGOs that if they wait, eventually the NGO will solve the problem for them so that the product can be finished. By leaving residents to create their own mechanism to solve the problem, the process provided a shared experience and a model for collective action that could be applied to other community problems.

## **PROGRAM CONTEXT**

The HTI program was implemented in a political environment fraught with violence, threatened by spoilers, and enveloped in insecurity. Hence, the communities in which HTI worked and the people whom they recruited for the projects were carefully chosen so that a momentum toward peace and stability could be developed.

## **HTI Program Backdrop: Violence, Spoilers and Working in Insecurity**

HTI was conceived as an urban assistance program with a specific focus to establish and/or maintain stability. For much of the first two years of the program, stabilization efforts took the form of violence prevention in the provinces and violence reduction in PAP. HTI concentrated only on preventing/reducing politically motivated violence, or violence that threatened the political transition. The program was not able to combat criminal violence such as the road banditry that plagued cities like Ouanaminthe, because it was the responsibility of law enforcement. Similarly, HTI had to focus on geographically concentrated rather than dispersed violence or threats, because it did not have the mandate or the ability to deal with violence on such a large scale. A primary example of this geographically dispersed threat was the ex-*Forces Armées d'Haiti* (FAd'H). For much of 2004, former members of the FAd'H were concentrated in urban centers and they would have been a part of the violence prevention/reduction strategy of HTI. However, when their leader, Ramissainthe Ravix, died in April 2005, the ex-soldiers dispersed throughout the country becoming difficult or impossible for HTI to track.

The violence that HTI had the mandate to address was characteristically perpetrated by “spoilers,” or individuals with the goal of inciting collective disorder to promote their own interests. HTI identified three types of spoilers that impacted or could impact the success of violence prevention or reduction: individuals with a political agenda but that were law abiding; members of armed “political” groups; and members of armed, criminal groups.

The political spoilers who operated within the law were easier for HTI to identify and deal with in program implementation. These types of spoilers were known to mobilize in areas where the population was visibly frustrated with the government or public processes. These frustrations were largely based on the lack of public services (water, electricity, etc) or the lack of dividends from the transition process. To defuse these tensions, HTI worked to bring the interim government to areas that were described as neglected by the government, enabling it to identify needs and provide basic services thereby removing the incentive for violence/unrest.

Addressing violence caused by armed groups, both political and criminal, was more complex for HTI to handle. Politically armed groups are known as *chimeres*, a term first used to describe the armed Lavalas youth but now refers to the thugs recruited by any political party. These groups are well integrated into the communities and appeared to have strong support. HTI projects provided leverage to more peaceful political elements in the communities to create pressure on the *chimeres* not to act violently and to “win back” those who were not fully integrated into the gangs by offering employment on projects and inviting them to participate in socio-cultural activities. The criminal armed groups often held a neighborhood hostage through fear and intimidation leaving peaceful community leaders powerless to act in the absence of law enforcement (which was usually the case in most HTI target communities). Occasionally, these groups assumed a political identity to justify their actions but they were not controlled by political actors. HTI addressed this problem similar to the way it dealt with political armed groups – working with peaceful leaders to provide leverage to oust the gangs from control, which required much stronger cooperation with law enforcement entities.

Because HTI was trying to sideline the spoilers, it was sometimes seen (by outsiders) as interfering with Haitian politics. This demonstrates the politically sensitive environment that existed during course of the HTI program. As a general rule, HTI did not hinder the staging of a well-intentioned, peaceful demonstration, but it did discourage burning voting centers or destroying property as an expression of political frustration. For example, HTI was accused by a member of the international press of trying to distract Haitians from politics. However, it was the spoilers that were trying to distract the Haitian people from peaceful discourse and political participation. In reality, the HTI program reduced the tensions created by spoilers by rapidly helping communities and government address urgent needs. It also reduced the availability of people to be mobilized by providing attractive alternatives to violence such as employment, sports activities, social events and other peaceful community activities.

Another challenge for HTI was the backdrop of insecurity that plagued Haiti during the period of implementation. While most of the insecurity was in PAP, the movement of spoilers and the presence of armed groups in the provinces perpetuated concern that the violence in PAP would spread to the rest of the country. For HTI, however, it was namely Port-au-Prince that presented a challenging security environment, particularly because of its unpredictability. Most of the security issues, with the exception of

kidnapping, were restricted to specific areas. By design, however, these areas were also targeted for HTI intervention, so the program had to develop a way of working in the area that would ensure the safety of staff and partners and enable the program to implement projects.

HTI chose predominantly small infrastructure projects in the neighborhoods experiencing high levels of violence for a variety of reasons. First, they were easy to monitor by making digital cameras available for partners to show progress. Second, it limited the possibility for money to be diverted since the cost was so small. If money went elsewhere, a fence would only go halfway around the field, for example. Also, the selection of projects was more careful, particularly with regard to any possible security threat to the community management committee. For example, clean-up programs were avoided because they left the management committee extremely vulnerable to pressure and intimidation to prolong activities and extend the number of working days.

As a cardinal rule, HTI staff maintained regular, open communication with community partners to assess the situation on a daily basis. Partners would phone the office each morning to relay whether or not it was safe to visit. It was also necessary to coordinate very closely with MINUSTAH to share information and stay current on the security threats and incidents. However, HTI did not appear in public with MINUSTAH military to avoid the possibility of staff or partners becoming soft targets.

### ***HTI Communities***

In general, HTI worked in poor communities and shantytowns that had very few, if any, public services and economic opportunities. These marginalized communities were susceptible to gang activity and political manipulation. As a result, they had high rates of crime and unemployment. Working with community groups and individuals, HTI identified that the needs of these areas were basic and included employment, infrastructure development and service provision, such as electricity and water. The lack of these basic services would continue to breed resentment and frustration toward the government, which is accused of either neglecting the community because of political identity (Lavalas supporters) or for not meeting the post-Aristide expectations of assistance. This resentment and the lack of employment provided fodder for spoilers who then convinced community members that their only option for earning money was to work for them. While there was an overabundance of poor, frustrated communities in both urban and rural areas, HTI intervened only in those locations where instability threatened to derail the transition process.

### **Social Inclusion**

One of the main issues that HTI had to deal with at the community level was social inclusion, which was demonstrated by the lack of public services in these areas. Residents of shantytowns were considered “*moun sa yo*” or “those people”, meaning people who do not belong to mainstream Haitian society. HTI decided to specifically address this issue because it reasoned that people who feel included in the political system would be less likely to destabilize that system. Therefore, in addition to extending public services and encouraging the government to include residents of shantytowns in community activities, HTI also supported efforts to bring social activities like summer camps and carnivals to these neighborhoods and to publicize the good works taking place through HTI support. While these efforts brought communities together and strengthened their cohesiveness, much remains to be done to change the broader public perception of residents from the marginalized areas.

Many of the zones that exploded into violence during the period of program implementation were Lavalas strongholds (Aristide supporters) because residents in these communities felt excluded from the transition by the interim government. Hence, HTI pursued a strategy to increase their sense of inclusion by extending public services and bringing government attention to neglected neighborhoods. However, because of this tendency to violence, Haitians outside of these communities assumed they were comprised only of gang members, kidnappers and criminals. Therefore, HTI decided that it was important to work to change this perception otherwise the exclusion of these populations would be exacerbated.

To refute the negative image and demonstrate that the people living in shantytowns were producing good works, HTI developed a variety of projects. Some were straightforward media projects involving a series of radio features and a calendar illustrating community efforts. HTI also sponsored high-profile sporting

events featuring teams from the conflict zones in national facilities co-implemented with the Inter-Ministerial Commission of the Prime Minister (IMC). These events raised the profile of their activities demonstrating that many youth from these areas were engaged in sports instead of violence.

Individually, these activities were successful, but as a whole they were insufficient to have significant impact on countering the negative images of people living in Haiti's urban slums. Changing these long-held negative images of HTI neighborhoods would require a dramatic increase in security to normalize the movement of people and goods in and out of these areas, improved basic services, and the dedication to a long-term fight against discrimination. It was beyond HTI's scope to address these issues.

### **The (Long) Lead up to Elections – Working with Youth and Focusing on Employment**

Elections for the new government were originally scheduled to begin in September 2005 with two additional rounds in October and November. However, the elections actually took place in 2006, except for local elections which had yet to take place at the time of this writing. In response to the original election schedule and the existence of significant destabilizing threats, in June 2005, HTI decided to focus on two main pillars of activities during the run-up to the elections: increasing employment and developing youth projects. This was facilitated by an influx of Economic Support Funds (ESF) that was re-directed to HTI from Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and the Supplemental Appropriations of 2005.

Increasing the number of employment projects was simply a matter of increasing the monthly expenditures on labor intensive infrastructure projects. These projects included road rehabilitation, construction of public spaces, and flood mitigation projects such as ravine reinforcement and canal rehabilitation. Youth activities were enhanced by a series of 26 summer camps that were part of a strategy submitted by the State Secretary for Youth and Sport and reinforced by technical assistance from HTI management. The camps were designed to occupy young children during the mornings and older youth in the afternoons with basketball and football tournaments, which also drew in area residents. Under the banner, "Play for Peace," these activities were highly effective at raising the profile of local sports associations as alternatives to gang activity in HTI areas, including nine particularly tense neighborhoods in PAP.

The two-pillar strategy during this timeframe was successful for both HTI staff operating in target areas,, (as demonstrated by high levels of participation in the projects), and for HTI management as it simplified project identification and implementation which in turn enabled a rapid increase in the program's monthly grant burn rate (from \$200,000 to \$800,000 in four months). The only negative aspect to this approach was the fact that the elections were delayed multiple times, finally occurring five months after they were originally scheduled.

## **PROGRAM STRATEGY**

During the first two years of the HTI program, the political situation was very dynamic. Key events changed the political landscape, new actors emerged and disappeared, and levels of violence changed dramatically in various neighborhoods. Facilitated by HTI's responsive design, the program strategy evolved with the changes in the political and social climate. However, because the context and circumstances facing each field office was unique, each had to modify its approach based on the local situation. This section discusses the four stages of HTI: 1) working with the Interim Government of Haiti (IGOH); 2) focusing on the community; 3) supporting MINUSTAH; and 4) the post-election. Next, the section covers HTI's different approaches to working in the provinces of Haiti – conflict prevention – as opposed to working in PAP, which concentrated on conflict reduction.

### ***Four Stages of HTI***

There were approximately four major shifts in the HTI strategy during the life of the project that corresponded to major changes in the political landscape as well as changes within the program itself. The four shifts can be categorized as follows: 1) Working with the IGOH; 2) Focusing on the Community; 3) Supporting MINUSTAH; and 4) Post Election.

## **Working with IGOH – Early 2004 to Early 2005**

Based on the pre-program assessment and lessons learned from the previous IOM-OTI collaboration in Haiti, HTI began program implementation with a strategic mandate to support the central government and help raise its visibility in the target locations.<sup>2</sup> HTI supported actions initiated by the interim government and worked to promote the democratic process in an apolitical, equitable, and transparent fashion with the objective of reducing the motivation for spoilers. The rationale was that a spoiler would be unable to mobilize people to burn a voting center, for example, if residents had direct contact with the government or had benefited from government involvement in some way. To this end, HTI established numerous partnerships with the main institutions of government at the national level, including the Ministry of Public Works, the State Secretary for Youth and Sport (Ministry of Education), the Ministry of Culture and Communications, and the Office of the Prime Minister. While HTI management built relationships at the ministerial level, staff in the field primarily worked with mayors, who were appointed by the interim government, and local representatives of the ministries and functional offices (i.e. the water authority, electrical utility, etc.). The government was expected to participate in project management committees and contribute resources to projects, such as heavy machinery or technical assistance.

Cooperating with the government was challenging, particularly given the size of the initial projects and the eventual dramatic increase in volume. Approaching the Ministry of Public Works with a small, \$30,000 project was not sufficient enough to motivate them to contribute supplementary resources to the project. However, within a year the Ministry was unable to keep its commitments for the provision of heavy machinery to work on HTI because ministerial representatives made promises that were either forgotten or that could not be fulfilled due to a lack of resources. During the first months of the program, HTI management negotiated a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Minister of Planning and External Cooperation in an effort to formalize cooperation and legitimize HTI as a government partner. It was perhaps indicative of future problems that both senior officials in the Ministry and the interim OTI representative agreed on the text, but the formal document was never signed because the Ministry never responded. HTI estimates that the difficulty of working with government could have been due to the disagreement between HTI and government on per diem rates, which were much lower than the IGOH representatives would accept. This was a point of contention in drafting the MOU.

Because there was no MOU, HTI management worked with the various ministries on an individual basis and had varying success. Success usually depended on the personalities of the people involved and their status in the ministry. HTI found that working with Director General-level staff yielded the most productive partnerships because these people were constant within the ministry whereas the ministers themselves held much less stable positions. At one point, it was suggested to use HTI to project funds to employ people to work in key ministries to serve as liaisons and create leverage for the program. However, it was ultimately determined that this approach would not be successful mainly due to the high level of centralization within the ministries themselves. In the Ministry of Public Works, for example, only the Director General could order trucks to be deployed on a project site.

In the fall of 2004, the Prime Minister quietly launched the Inter-ministerial Commission for Neglected Neighborhoods (IMC) to serve as a focal point for activities pertaining to conflict zones. Like the HTI program, the IMC was designed to be geographically focused, which brought representatives of all Ministries around the table to plan assistance for these areas. At first, attendance was motivated by the fact that the representatives received a fee for each meeting, and ministries saw the IMC as a potential source of revenue for their own individual projects. Recognizing its potential, HTI became a strong supporter of IMC activities, and provided a great deal of technical assistance to the group. However, the committee was limited by the lack of motivation of the ministries, the lack of authority of the Prime Minister, and the conflicting political agendas of certain ministries (particularly the Ministry of Health). On the other hand, there were some jointly implemented activities, which included the 2005 carnival celebrations for Cite Soleil, several national sporting events highlighting youth in HTI target neighborhoods, and the launch of the "Play for Peace" brand of HTI activities.

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<sup>2</sup> Previously, IOM and OTI implemented the Community Governance Program (CGP – 1994-1997), creating new community structures and then supporting these structures. The central government was not involved and, while the program was successful through democratic elections, the structures formed during the CGP were not sustainable. Returning to Haiti after 10 years of learning in other contexts, IOM and OTI designed the program to involve the central government more and use existing structures.

### **Focus on Community– Early 2005 to end of program**

In spite of the speeches it made throughout the transition process, the interim government actually did very little for the shantytown populations and even made numerous political mistakes which severely damaged its credibility.<sup>3</sup> Also, in many instances, HTI projects were delayed because the government was unable to meet its commitments, the most common of which were providing heavy machinery and sports equipment. For these reasons, HTI reduced the emphasis on interim government involvement and instead pursued a strategy of focusing more on community mobilization against violence and instability. However, ties with the interim government were not broken because working in the total absence of the interim government would have increased citizens' frustrations and prompted more discontent towards the government. Hence, the government was involved to the extent that it validated each project by verifying that the communities submitted their requests to the relevant government agencies or by signing the grant in the office of a ministry or sending a government representative to an inauguration ceremony for a project. While active engagement from each ministry was not possible, HTI endeavored to at least maintain the appearance of government involvement to achieve program objectives.

### **Supporting MINUSTAH – Spring 2005 to end of program**

The ESF funds provided to HTI in 2005 came with a mandate to actively support the activities of the UN Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTAH). HTI began working with MINUSTAH's DDR Unit on programming in gang-affected areas during the spring of 2005 and had already approved projects supporting voluntary disarmament efforts prior to the ESF mandate. However, this endeavor became problematic and yielded very little results because of the political landscape. Therefore, HTI moved to supporting more active peacebuilding efforts by concentrating activities in areas where there was a significant peacekeeping presence, namely Cap Haïtien, Les Cayes, and certain neighborhoods of PAP, specifically targeting urban communities. Field staff met regularly with MINUSTAH Civil Affairs officers or the local UN Police (UNPOL) contingent to coordinate activities and to work cooperatively on identifying projects and emerging threats to stability.

In PAP, a tragic double murder of two community members who had worked on the summer camps proved to be a pivotal point in the HTI-MINUSTAH relationship. A security guard and cook who had been working on the Play for Peace camp in Bel Air were brutally murdered after a gang attack at the camp. While this could have been a random gang murder in Bel Air, there is strong evidence that suggests the murders were connected to the summer camps.

Immediately following the murders, HTI management contacted MINUSTAH to share information so that MINUSTAH could respond appropriately. Unfortunately, the response did not come immediately and HTI was forced to appeal to the US State Department (via OTI) for assistance in getting MINUSTAH to address the situation. Pressure was applied on the UN in New York and soon afterwards, operations commenced in Bel Air to arrest the gang leaders implicated in the killings. MINUSTAH's response was absolutely critical at this time to provide communities in Bel Air evidence of the existence of law enforcement so they could be more confident in their fight against the gangs. This gave the community a boost of confidence that they could continue to work with HTI knowing there was some protection of law enforcement in the area.

While MINUSTAH did not officially recognize the connection between HTI activities in Bel Air and the killings, events facilitated the initiation of an important and ongoing dialogue between MINUSTAH and HTI resulting in mutual support on the ground. . Basically, the HTI programs facilitated MINUSTAH access to patrol areas it had not been able to go into before, and provided MINUSTAH information about security issues as they arose so they could react more quickly and build positive relationships with the communities. Because MINUSTAH was able to react quicker in more locations, HTI programs and their participants were more protected, allowing for high volumes of activities to take place throughout Bel Air, which resulted in substantially reduced instability in the area.

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<sup>3</sup> These mistakes included the detention of former Prime Minister Neptune without charge for a prolonged period of time, the lack of a resolution on the ex-FAd'H, the repeated delay of the elections, and the consistent poor communication throughout the transition.

## **Post Elections – Supporting and Working with the elected government**

The community focused strategy combined with attention to employment and youth activities in the pre-election period and supporting MINUSTAH was maintained through the February 2006 Presidential elections and the subsequent Parliamentary elections. Once the new leadership was installed, however, the strategy changed. HTI moved quickly to support the new government by enabling it to make high profile improvements in Cite Soleil, which emerged as one of the top priorities of the new administration because of its equal potential for peace or destabilization. The area had proven its capacity to destabilize the capital, but with a ceasefire declared by gangs after the election, it seemed that there was greater potential to make significant progress towards stability. These initial projects, consisting of 20 projects worth \$500,000, were intended to provide a breathing space of approximately six months during which residents of Cite Soleil would have employment and highly visible positive changes in their communities. The program would later implement a second phase of the same magnitude to magnify the program's impact and provide the new government time to address ongoing issues related to gangs, and the international community to direct additional, longer-term assistance into the area.

### ***Conflict Prevention and Conflict Reduction: Working in the Provinces and Port-au-Prince***

Because of the political and social circumstances of the provinces versus Port-au-Prince, HTI had to adopt two different strategies. In the provinces, the HTI approach reflected a conflict prevention strategy. Much of the violence had abated within a few months of the uprising in 2004, but tensions still existed that could have been exacerbated by gangs and other spoilers. In Port-au-Prince, where violence was still regularly occurring, HTI programming focused on conflict reduction.

### **Provincial Strategy – Conflict Prevention**

While the HTI cities outside of PAP experience much violence during the unrest of 2004, there were not periods of sustained violence during the transition process. This meant that the primary objective of HTI in these target areas, including Petit Goâve, Saint Marc, Cap Haïtien and Les Cayes, focused on conflict prevention, and, in some cases, reconciliation between communities that were previously in conflict prior to and during 2004. Each of these cities had unelected local governments consisting of three-person panels of mayors appointed by the interim government as well as holdover elements from the rebellion, which had the potential to act as spoilers. In most places, gangs were present but not as active in creating political havoc and criminal violence as the gangs in the capital. Hence, to reduce the possibility of conflict, HTI's provincial strategy revolved around projects that focused on creating space for peaceful dialogue, including the local authorities in decision making and management, bringing in national service delivery agencies, and insisting on community-driven public service delivery.

#### ***Creating Space for Dialogue***

A critical element of establishing dialogue, either between communities in conflict or between the citizens and government is having a designated, neutral space where people can meet. Early projects in Saint Marc, Petit Goâve and Les Cayes were renovations of rooms within City Hall to create physical space for dialogue. Locating these public spaces in City Hall also gave the government added visibility and the opportunity to demonstrate leadership for the good of the community.

However, dialogue requires not only physical space, but also a mechanism through which expression of needs and frustrations are allowed in a productive and non-threatening environment. HTI's approach in Saint Marc is a model for how to create this process successfully. HTI provided technical assistance to the municipality for the establishment of the Saint Marc Development Committee, a weekly forum during which citizens could express their needs to the municipal authorities, the local ministerial representatives, law enforcement officials, and donors, and where project proposals were considered. This model could be particularly useful if decentralization becomes a priority for both the newly elected government and the donor/development community.

However, it does have two serious limitations. First, it requires significant donor funds to meet the needs and/or fulfill the requests of the citizens. The Saint Marc committee encountered difficulties because it could not meet expressed needs due to a dearth of resources (HTI's resources were narrowly targeted to

violence- or gang-affected communities). The second limitation of the model is that it requires a dynamic and involved municipality. Toward the end of HTI's second year, the Saint Marc Development Committee stopped meeting because two of the three mayors left the city, leaving only one mayor with whom it was difficult to work. The City Manager attempted to keep the committee running but he lacked the political clout to motivate the others to participate. Unfortunately, HTI was not able to keep the momentum of the committee going as a result, but if there are fair municipal elections and HTI has an extended mandate in Haiti, it would be worth replicating this project in conjunction with other longer-term donor programs that target marginalized urban areas more broadly.

#### *Mayor as Mediator*

In areas where communities were in conflict, HTI worked to create or enhance a local mediation mechanism. Because mayors were unelected and were unable to run in the elections, they were relatively neutral figures, and therefore could be good mediators in terms of public perception. In many cases, the principal mayor was generally apolitical while one of the deputy mayors was affiliated with the main political group or party in the town and had been involved in the 2004 turmoil. Regardless, HTI provided technical assistance to the municipalities to help them conduct business in a neutral, balanced setting as would be suitable for an institution of government. HTI was able to facilitate this by bringing municipal representatives to work in the areas where it was not previously safe for them to work. This demonstrated to the citizens that the municipal authorities were committed to upholding their responsibilities to all residents.

Accompanying the principle of equity were efforts to reinforce the municipality's role as the primary authority by ensuring that community meetings, grant signings, tender openings, etc. occurred at City Hall rather than at the HTI offices. By doing this, HTI eventually helped build the credibility of the municipality so that when problems or conflicts arose, residents felt comfortable bringing the issues to the authorities before they escalated. This was illustrated in Saint Marc when youth from two warring neighborhoods wanted to hold a reconciliation football tournament. One of the local leaders (running for Parliament) declared that youth from Portail Guepes would not be permitted to play in La Scierie, the two opposing neighborhoods, so the youth appealed to the municipality for a solution. Although the mayor was not able to convince the local leader to permit the tournament in La Scierie, he was able to work with the youth to find a neutral third location. Not only did the tournament take place successfully, the youth overcame an obstacle together peacefully and in collaboration with the government, sending a powerful message to the broader community. In fact, a few months later, these two sports groups joined a third in holding a three-week, citywide tournament.

#### *Participation of the National Government*

In every HTI city, the program encouraged participation from the central government to work in neglected areas. In the provinces, this presented additional challenges because, typically, the influence of the central government did not extend that far outside of PAP. Therefore, local representatives of the ministries, particularly the Ministry of Public Works, lacked the resources to do much in their areas of responsibility. In some cases, HTI projects became a way to extend their resources, enabling local officials to meet community priorities in spite of their own lack of means.

The best example of this was in Petit Goâve where the local representative of the MoPW had been so vilified for his inability to meet urgent needs that he feared for his life every time he entered the city prior to the arrival of the HTI program. The first HTI project in Petit Goâve was the construction of a bridge. This program enabled the responsiveness of the MoPW representative who was at the project site nearly every day providing technical expertise. Although the ministry was unable to provide the heavy machinery it promised, a gap that was filled in by MINUSTAH, the positive role played by this representative did not go unnoticed. After several more projects, the representative was spending most of his days in Petit Goâve and enjoying positive relations with the citizens.

To support an increase in the visibility of the central government in the provinces, HTI considered bringing ministry officials to project sites and local public meetings. Due to the time-intensiveness of this type of endeavor, the idea was not aggressively pursued. Nevertheless, the idea has potential if additional human resources were to be added to HTI and could be revisited with the Preval government.

### *Community-Driven Public Service Delivery*

Due to the severe lack of government resources in the provinces, part of the HTI strategy was to create and reinforce participatory mechanisms for public service delivery. Using a successful model developed by the *Centrale Autonome Metropolitaine d'Eau Potable* (CAMEP – the national water authority for PAP), HTI worked with local representatives and communities to extend water and electricity service into neglected communities. The program helped to create a mechanism of dialogue with the service provider and shared responsibility for the service. In both Petit Goâve and Cap Haïtien, this model was highly successful for electricity. Residents of a single street or small neighborhood would organize with the representative from the local electricity utility, *Electricité d'Haïti* (EDH), to create an electricity management system. This would entail a single meter for which the community would select a committee responsible for collecting flat fees from users. This same committee would educate the community as to the dangers of illegal connections and monitor connections to ensure that the transformer would not overload. The committee would demand payment from people with illegal connections, which allowed the illegal connector leverage in terms of formalizing the system in their location. In return, EDH gave back roughly 10 percent of the fees collected to be saved by the committee to pay for maintenance. EDH provided the technical expertise to install equipment provided by HTI. The positive dialogue that took place through this project and process served to ease frustrations because community members were satisfied by the government's responsiveness to their needs which was done transparently and respectfully. This system brought the government and community together with both acknowledging the need for cooperation in order to have a sustainable structure. As in all work with the government, this model requires willingness on the part of government representatives. Unlike Cap Haïtien, Saint Marc was not successful in duplicating the electricity model because the local representative was not interested.

### **PAP – Conflict Reduction**

At the beginning of the HTI program, the situation in Port-au-Prince was very similar to that in the provinces, but by October 2004, it had radically changed. A sharp increase in violence turned downtown Port-au-Prince into a war zone. There was active gun-fighting in the streets and a palpable security threat to international and local staff and partners. Gangs, both criminal and quasi-political, had control of certain areas of the city, severely limiting access to many HTI target neighborhoods. Where possible, the HTI Port-au-Prince team pursued the same strategic fundamentals as the provinces. However, the persistent security threat necessitated other considerations, particularly the critical role of law enforcement.

### *Return to “Normalcy”*

The violence of 2004 significantly disrupted life throughout the main metropolitan areas. Moreover, the violence that ensued after the brutal beheading of police officers radically delayed the level of “normalcy” in PAP. Therefore, one objective of HTI's strategy was to accelerate the reduction of violence by encouraging “normal” activities, or activities that people were used to doing day-to-day before the violence escalated. One of the first of these types of activities was sponsoring Carnival celebrations with the IMC in Cite Soleil where consistent high levels of violence prevented residents from going to the national celebrations in downtown PAP. These projects simply extended activities available to residents of calmer areas to include shantytown residents. The Play for Peace summer youth activities similarly followed this strategy as did a series of public housing and latrine cleaning projects whereby payments of fees were restarted. By enabling a normal activity, like the annual latrine cleaning, residents also had to respond with normal behavior, i.e. paying their housing fees.

### *“Rule of Three” – Community Ownership, Development Assistance, and Rule of Law*

To reduce active conflict in the areas hardest hit by violence, HTI identified a necessary formula for stability known as the “Rule of Three” – community ownership, development assistance, and rule of law. All three aspects must be present to relieve conflict in the most violence-ridden locations. For example, HTI realized that in Haiti, law enforcement alone could not bring peace, nor could humanitarian assistance. Only the community could be the engine in peacebuilding, and they could not do it without support from law enforcement and incentives provided by the government or the international community. Rarely were communities able to stand up to gangs in the absence of some sort of law enforcement,

either police or peacekeepers, for fear of retaliation. This was evident in the Bel Air incident where an active community association had the support of HTI for their peaceful activities, but lacked the presence of a law enforcement entity to provide for their security. Nevertheless, law enforcement alone would not be sufficient since, in the absence of humanitarian or government resources, the community would not have a tangible, material incentive to disrupt the status quo.

### *"Tipping the Balance" – Community Empowerment*

In areas controlled by gangs, there was a natural tension between the gang leaders and the community. Local residents were the first victims of the gangs, often seeing part of whatever they earned extorted by the gangs. Nevertheless, the gangs were dependent on residents for protection to a certain degree because of the extent to which they were integrated into society. Gang leaders lived in known locations and could be turned over to police if not for the residents' fear of retribution due to the lack of an effective justice system.

HTI worked to tip the balance of power in gang controlled areas away from the gangs and into the hands of peaceful community groups. This was accomplished by identifying civic groups and supporting projects managed by a committee consisting of representatives of these organizations and government. It was expected that for a first project in an area, civic groups may have had to make arrangements with the gang in control to allow the project to take place in its territory. However, after a critical mass of projects had been achieved with more projects in the pipeline, the broader community recognized that the civic groups were bringing the jobs and improvement while the gangs were deterring progress. This shift could only occur if the change happens under the radar of the gangs, who could try to derail the process if they feel threatened by it early on. HTI accomplished this by implementing multiple projects in an area with multiple partners each with its own management committee so that no one person or group was seen as challenging the "power" of the gangs.

The "Rule of Three" and "Tipping the Balance" principles were most effectively demonstrated in Bel Air following the MINUSTAH operations in October 2005. Cite Soleil, on the other hand, illustrates the principles by their absence. Unlike in Bel Air, where there was a cohesive community supported by both a development assistance actor (HTI) and peacekeepers, Cite Soleil had neither a cohesive community nor rule of law, and consequently, HTI was not as successful. Although there were some active community groups in Cite Soleil, many of the residents, particularly the respected leaders, had fled the area when heavy fighting broke out, and only the people without social authority, i.e. the poorest of the poor and youth, remained. This left a very small 'community' toward which to tip the balance and a very large area in which the community was diffused. Additionally, MINUSTAH troops in Cite Soleil did not have the same level of control of the area, nor did they employ the same approach to stabilization. Consequently, they did not have the same level of success. HTI remained as active as possible in Cite Soleil in spite of this lack of the Rule of Three because it was necessary to position the program for future work by building the credibility of HTI with residents.

### *Working with MINUSTAH*

HTI worked extensively with MINUSTAH, particularly in the second year, given both the ESF mandate and the partnerships required by the "Rule of Three." Ideally, the Haitian National Police (HNP) would have formed the third piece of the puzzle, but rampant corruption and its politically-affiliated personnel made the HNP an impossible partner. Following the deaths of the two Bel Air residents, HTI established a mechanism of communication that strengthened the relationship between HTI and MINUSTAH and enabled HTI to more fully support MINUSTAH stabilization efforts. Specifically, HTI provided information sheets by location with maps that marked project sites, which gave patrols a reason to go to certain areas. HTI community partners appealed to HTI staff to request additional patrols in project areas, which signaled to MINUSTAH that their troops would be welcomed at the location. This was particularly important because MINUSTAH suffered from a very poor public image and was not well liked. At one project site, the patrol leader exchanged phone numbers with a member of the project oversight committee so that they could stay in contact throughout the duration of the project. On a later occasion, the same community group invited MINUSTAH patrols to participate in an HTI-sponsored reconciliation football tournament.

In addition to facilitating patrols, HTI also opened the door to MINUSTAH Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) to propose projects to maximize their own efforts. For example, HTI supported two projects proposed by the troop contingent in the section of Bel Air that borders Cite Soleil in an effort to extend the effects of Bel Air's community improvement projects. To avoid conflict with their much less effective counterparts in Cite Soleil, they used their own funds to support projects on the edge of their area of responsibility in Bel Air while HTI covered a section of neighborhood across the road from their activities in Cite Soleil.

Throughout this collaboration, HTI was very careful to maintain a safe distance from MINUSTAH and to never appear together in public. This was necessary to ensure the ongoing safety of HTI staff. Although the public opinion of MINUSTAH improved dramatically in Bel Air, there was always the risk that good relations could deteriorate. If the public had perceived HTI staff (as well as the members of the community committees) as an unarmed and unprotected extension of MINUSTAH, they could easily have become soft targets.

As successful as the collaboration was with the peacekeepers in Bel Air, the relationship with MINUSTAH was generally problematic and high-maintenance. It was only possible because of pressure applied by the US State Department on the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the New York level (thanks to a request by OTI). In Port-au-Prince, IOM lacked the leverage to influence MINUSTAH to acknowledge problems and react and was unsuccessful in obtaining responsiveness on a continual basis. Staff within the civil-military coordination unit generally rotated every six months, requiring HTI staff to start over developing relationships each time. Moreover, while peacekeepers in Bel Air seemed to recognize that HTI could be a useful tool, the program struggled to establish the same relationship with MINUSTAH in other PAP areas. In general, MINUSTAH was not skilled in humanitarian operations and displayed very little political will to stabilize certain areas, specifically Cite Soleil. The nature of the UN force was itself problematic since it was primarily a military force rather than a police force, which would have been arguably more appropriate.

HTI also recognized several severe strategic mistakes on the part of MINUSTAH. For example, the reaction to the two murders in Bel Air was first suspicion, denial, and inaction rather than an investigation into the incident followed by action. That would have sent a strong signal to gangs that those perpetrating violence would face dire consequences.

Before HTI began working with the military side of MINUSTAH, it had an extensive history of collaboration with its DDR unit. This unit was established to address the problem of the ex-FAd'H and other armed groups, but later shifted its focus to address the problem of gangs. Due to differences in approach, the unit's inability to respond quickly to changing conditions the ground, and the challenge of targeting different groups (HTI targeted peaceful civic groups while DDR targeted gang members), this collaboration proved difficult.

#### *Program Initiatives – Bel Air and Martissant*

Because of the high level of violence in PAP, HTI implemented particular initiatives in Bel Air and Martissant, which experienced positive results. Nowhere was the plausible association between HTI and improved stability more evident than in these two locations where the neighborhoods underwent dramatic changes while HTI was present.

Following the police beheadings that took place in October 2004, Bel Air became too violent to enter because of daily, spontaneous shooting in the streets. Bel Air was also the stronghold of Lavalas militants who had no interest in working with the interim government. In fact, the area was so volatile that MINUSTAH had been unable to establish a permanent base in the neighborhood. In spite of these challenges, HTI was able to start a few projects and become known in the community as a credible partner. By August 2005, MINUSTAH was able to establish a durable base of operations in Fort National at which point HTI met with a group of civic organizations to identify priorities. To reach a critical mass of activities, HTI immediately signed six grants for high-visibility, labor-intensive infrastructure projects like paving corridors and constructing public parks.

Fort National is on one end of Bel Air, on the opposite side from the very hot zones. Nevertheless, the impact of that first intervention started a ripple effect that eventually reached the most violent and militant

areas. After the start of activities in Fort National, civic groups from adjacent Ti Chery approached the HTI partners seeking assistance in duplicating the process in their own neighborhood. HTI repeated the model in Ti Chery, facilitating community identification of priorities and launching a group of projects at once. Communities felt more powerful because of the increased proximity of both assistance and law enforcement and were less tolerant of gang activity in their communities. One by one, gang leaders fled Bel Air and small neighborhood groups approached HTI for assistance. Within six months, normalcy (and traffic jams) had returned to Bel Air and the extent of HTI involvement had reached the border of Cite Soleil. Because HTI involvement went hand-in-hand with an expanded MINUSTAH presence and increased community activity, it is impossible to claim sole credit for the transformation, but there is certainly a plausible association between the stability achieved in Bel Air and HTI programming which the MINUSTAH Force Commander acknowledged to the IOM Chief of Mission during a joint field visit.

Martissant experienced a similar transformation, again with strong initiative by local civic groups. HTI had earned a positive reputation in Martissant as a program that both delivers and endures. Unfortunately, due to a reallocation of funds to support the Bel Air initiative, HTI involvement decreased significantly. After a deterioration in both the security situation and relations with MINUSTAH, a group of civic leaders approached HTI with a proposition. These organizations, with which HTI had worked in the past, proposed a set of nine projects that would bring a significant amount of employment and neighborhood improvement to an area that was plagued with inter-gang violence. The critical part of the plan was how the projects were presented to the community. The groups announced the projects publicly at a neighborhood carnival celebration but added that the projects would only happen if there was no violence during their implementation. This conditional promise of jobs and incomes to the neighborhood was enough incentive to precipitate a gang ceasefire. The gangs in Martissant were relatively well-integrated into the community, meaning that local gangs committed their acts of violence in neighboring communities while leaving their own people unharmed. These gang members were sheltered (de facto) by their own community since residents were not ready to risk their own safety telling local gangs to stop being violent toward their neighbors. The jobs and improvements offered through HTI projects provided the incentive for community members to stand up to the local gangs, their "own people", and say that the violence had to stop. After all, a gang member is always somebody's son or cousin who is not immune to local pressure. When word of the civic groups' plan spread throughout the area, the local gangs felt the tide of public opinion rising against them, and they declared a ceasefire among all gangs in the Martissant/Grand Ravine/Ti Bois area. HTI reinforced this stability through 11 additional projects with the civic groups. This experience demonstrated the power of community groups to achieve peace in their neighborhood, but only if they have some sort of leverage, which HTI provided. However, the lack of an effective law enforcement presence in Martissant threatened the durability of this stability and the neighborhood would later see a resurgence of inter-gang violence, demonstrating again the case for "the rule of three" in achieving lasting community stabilization.

## **PROGRAM STRENGTHS**

Although the overall strategy may have been refined and altered throughout the duration of the program, it was based on methodological fundamentals that both guided and protected the integrity of the program. A guiding principle that impacted each aspect of the HTI approach was the invisibility of IOM. IOM distanced itself from the program so that it would not be given all of the credit. For the success of the program, it was more important for the government, communities and local organizations to be recognized for their achievements in order to build local confidence. IOM interceded in program implementation only to ensure quality and a transparent process. For example, IOM was not responsible for making sure that workers came to the job on time or for paying workers' compensation if someone was injured while on the job. It was the responsibility of the community/local partner. If they did not take responsibility for the project, then they would not have had ownership of the success. Keeping this distance, however, was an ongoing challenge because instinctively, HTI management wanted to step in to help communities overcome obstacles. However, upholding this principle resulted in improved community cohesion produced through the shared responsibility to manage the projects and resolve problems together.

In addition to keeping a distance from program implementation, HTI's approach had a number of other strengths including how it selected locations and strategic partners; ensuring that the community owned the projects; the responsiveness of the program to local needs; the inclusion of multiple

partners/benefactors for each project; encouraging interim government involvement; undertaking a critical mass of activities; and the messaging/branding strategy.

### ***Selecting Locations and Strategic Partners***

HTI realized that it could not be very effective if the projects and project impact were spread too thinly across a wide geographic area. This, combined with initial resource scarcity, necessitated a strict and relatively narrow geographic focus, at both the national and municipal levels. Initial cities were chosen based on the political events of 2004. When the program expanded from three offices to five, Cap Haïtien and Les Cayes were chosen based on a relatively simple analysis of the nature of the conflict in proposed areas and the capacity with which HTI would be able to make an impact. This analysis was made after site visits, meetings with government representatives, local organizations, police, citizens and discussions with MINUSTAH (Civil Affairs, Human Rights, Political Section, DDR, UNPOL, Military), as the newly allocated ESF funds were earmarked specifically for supporting MINUSTAH. Hinche was also considered because of the presence of ex-FAd'H in the area but was eliminated due to the lack of a concentration of individuals to target. Similarly, Ouanaminthe was considered because of the high level of violence experienced there, but was also rejected because the violence was primarily banditry, which HTI was ill equipped to address.<sup>4</sup>

Neighborhoods within target cities were selected based on known political instability and intelligence from local staff and partners, government officials, MINUSTAH, and other agencies or organizations in the area. New neighborhoods were added as the situation on the ground evolved, for example if an area became unstable due to gang activity, a political dispute, etc. It was also important to maintain balance when selecting neighborhoods, particularly in the provinces where the conflicts were typically between neighborhoods. This not only prevented jealousy among residents, it also prevented the program from being seen as supporting a political agenda. Limiting geographic focus was most difficult at the neighborhood level because there is a huge temptation to extend activities to all areas "in need." However, this limitation was absolutely critical to prevent spreading the program too thinly. Addressing "need" occurred at the municipal level when appropriate, for example by supporting the creation of municipal tool banks, repair of trucks, etc.).<sup>5</sup>

HTI did not work with individuals, but rather community groups, associations, and organizations. These groups were apolitical and without criminal ties, gang affiliation or strong political identity. When it entered new areas without any existing connection, HTI worked with a well-known humanitarian organization, sports association or other formal civic group. Regardless of the nature, the first project provided the HTI team with an opportunity to understand who was doing what in the area and identify potential alternative partners for subsequent projects. HTI staff's intimate knowledge of the communities in which they worked proved critical to the program's ability to respond to dynamics affecting conflict utilizing small grant activities as tools for conflict mitigation.

### ***Community Ownership***

A key element of the HTI program was its capacity to involve the target community (and the government) at every step of the process: identification, implementation and maintenance. More importantly, the community was the main actor in charge of preventing problems and finding solutions once they occurred. Being part of a project with the government was a way of being part of the transition, and residents were less likely to fight against the transition if they were part of it. In most programs, community ownership was achieved by requiring a community contribution to each project. The generation of income through HTI projects was necessarily an HTI goal due to the destitution of partner communities. Therefore, the community contribution to the project typically came in the form of security, coordination, and solving problems. The main responsibilities of the community included the identification of the project, involvement in the tendering process (typically with the relevant ministry and municipality), selection of unskilled workers, and coordination with the contractor. By placing the community in charge of selecting workers, it ensured that local residents were not only part of project management **but also**

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<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, HTI supported a single project in Ouanaminthe to enhance MINUSTAH's ability to provide law enforcement by helping the national electrical utility install public lighting.

<sup>5</sup> HTI faced criticism by residents of areas that were not targeted by HTI.

benefited from the wages provided. They also serve a vetting function, taking responsibility for choosing those most in need and those who will get the job done.

Everyone, including the spoilers, had a stake in the selection of the workers. Even when the HTI team did not manage to engage the broader population during the project identification process, the word went out that a certain number of jobs would be created. To prevent the spoilers (often political parties without funds prior to elections) from trying to take credit for bringing resources to a neighborhood, the committee was in charge of choosing the workers. This tactic ensured that the “right” people received the benefit of wages without corruption or intimidation of the contractor, or manipulation by a spoiler. This self-regulation occurred successfully in Petit Goâve where a group of women disapproved of the initial all-male selection of workers and persuaded the committee to change the roster. The women activists then had to choose the beneficiaries of the limited number of positions, which they awarded to the neediest women in the area. It is important to not underestimate the community’s understanding of the issues that affect them. Members of the project committee know that they should include at-risk youth in the employment roster in order to achieve stability, and also understand that the laborers could not consist entirely of youth as this would risk alienating the broader community. In fact, residents understood this balance more acutely than outsiders ever could.

For programs similar to HTI, it is important to remember that each community has a particular personality, which serves to maintain a sort of order within the system, and could be characterized as a general community consensus. This quiet consensus, regardless of what outspoken leaders or noise-makers may say, supports projects that benefit the greater good, the sum of individual interests, whether that is a flood prevention project or a new school. This creates a self-regulatory mechanism that operates within a community that can be used to HTI’s advantage. If the general consensus (the community) does not validate a project, it will rarely be completed satisfactorily. However, if a project is recognized as beneficial to the greater good, the community will ensure the conditions necessary for completion of the project. Large public gatherings rather than small, interpersonal meetings were essential to identify projects or validate project selection in front of the community to ensure its success. For example, in an area where residents saw their houses washed away by floods, it was guaranteed that they would do everything they could to ensure the successful completion of riverbank reinforcement, even if it meant standing up to gangs. However, if the project was not supported by the community, there was no incentive for residents to risk retaliation, and in these cases, they would inform HTI staff. Likewise, if a steering committee was not similarly validated, its members were removed and replaced by people with more authority and concurrence with the majority without the HTI team’s involvement. This was not something that could be imposed upon a community, but rather something that naturally occurred because the program provided the space for this ownership.

### ***Program Responsiveness and Flexibility***

What was successful about the HTI program was its responsiveness to community needs and its flexibility in the kinds of programs it implemented, the time in which they were completed, and the speed with which it moved from idea to completion. HTI was cross-cutting rather than sector-focused, meaning that its activities were not restricted to a single type of intervention such as education, infrastructure, health, etc. Therefore, each project could be designed to respond to the expressed needs of the community, so HTI usually supported whatever project the community identified as a priority within certain limitations. HTI avoided some types of projects, including those that could be corrupted for someone’s political agenda. For example, HTI rejected a request to renovate a community center in Les Cayes that was doubling as the Lavalas headquarters. Also, programs that were not sustainable, like clean-up programs which were often one-time projects, were generally avoided unless they contributed to a rehabilitation project. Stand-alone latrines were never constructed with HTI funds because nobody was willing to pay for something they could do in a canal with impunity.

An example of other successful community-driven programs included infrastructure projects. They worked well as initial projects, especially in insecure areas, because they were easy to monitor in times of increased violence due to their ability to produce tangible results quickly. These projects also served as foundations for future activities. Electricity and water projects were a perfect tool for sending a signal that the transition was bringing positive change. Often conflicts arose between neighborhoods because one shantytown would steal these types of resources from a neighboring community. This problem that could be resolved through an HTI project similar to the one referenced above that took place in the provinces

and provided water and electricity services to the communities. These projects also eased accumulated frustration toward the government and presented an opportunity to share management of these resources in a sustainable system. Moreover, extending basic services to a shantytown was a huge step toward social integration of these communities and reducing their isolation.

By in large, the project itself was of secondary importance to the process through which it was identified and implemented and the dialogue created around it. This emphasis on process over product was facilitated both by the distanced nature of IOM as implementer as well as a high degree of flexibility in the time for implementation. The ability to prolong a project enabled HTI to take a hands-off approach to problems, prompting the community to create local conflict resolution mechanisms or turn to the government as a mediator. This process often took time as communities had been trained by NGOs that if they wait, eventually the NGO will solve the problem for them so that the product can be finished. By leaving residents to create their own mechanism to solve the problem, the process provided a shared experience and a model for collective action that could be applied to other community problems.

In terms of the responsiveness, HTI was able to bring communities together and reduce violence or the potential for violence because of its stress on the process of implementing a program instead of the product. For instance, when a contractor was attacked near the site of a soccer field rehabilitation project in Cite Soleil (IOMPAP001), HTI simply stopped the projects and left the community to find a solution to the problem with assurances that HTI would restart activities when the problem was solved. The community responded by creating a system of escorts that ensured the safe transit of the contractors, after which project activities resumed and the project was completed, albeit nearly six months behind schedule. Nevertheless, the common experience increased the cohesion of the community which was then applied to other, non-HTI community issues. A project which takes nine months instead of three months, but during which a community solved three problems together, is a successful project.

Moreover, this emphasis on process also enabled HTI to keep the momentum going for program implementation. For example, once a grant was signed, HTI began the tendering process immediately, leaving no time for community momentum to be lost. It wasn't difficult to get communities mobilized to begin a project, but it was very easy to lose this energy (and program credibility) by delaying the start or resumption of activities. Therefore, when a community solved a problem which had resulted in a pause in activities, HTI endeavored to resume work immediately.

### ***Multiple Partners***

HTI projects were managed by committee, with members occasionally being formally elected but always validated by the broader community, at a minimum. Committees were typically composed of representatives from a formal community organization, members of the community at large, representatives from the Municipality, and representatives of the relevant Ministry. Involving multiple actors in the activity established a system of shared responsibility and shared recognition. It also ensured that the project contributed to stability in the entire community rather than reflect the agenda of a few individuals. The committee was a self-regulating mechanism in which community participation ensured that the government could not take full credit for the projects, and vice versa. If only one civic group was participating in the project, HTI tried to identify other local associations with which to work on future projects to ensure that a single organization or individual did not gain too much power in the area.

To ensure the integrity of the project management committee, HTI created a committee for each project lasting only as long as the duration of the project. HTI opposed the strategy of establishing local standing committees to oversee all development projects in a neighborhood. These kinds of committees often came with a certain cache that was attractive to individuals with political agendas rather than a community agenda. Likewise, people who obtained power through force (i.e. gang leaders) could formalize and legitimate their position in the community by securing a place on such a committee, not only injuring the credibility of the process but also the implementer and donor. Similarly, a committee that was too high-profile could also draw the negative attention of people whose power was threatened by positive development. Small, project-oriented committees that dissolved when the project was complete ran less chance of being both exploited and threatened by negative elements. Members of HTI committees could be elected to subsequent project committees if the community wished it, which guaranteed accountability to the people.

It was very common to have committee members occupy several roles, particularly with regard to government representatives. For example, a Deputy Mayor could also have been the head of a political party, and the head of the football association could also have been a local business leader. HTI worked to prevent corruption of project goals by rigorously communicating with these people and publicly referring to them in their institutional capacity rather than as individuals. The presence of other partners on the committee helped secure this distinction.

### ***Interim Government Involvement***

The involvement of the central (interim) government was absolutely essential to accomplishing the goals of the HTI program. In Port-au-Prince particularly, much of the conflict was based on citizen frustration with the government. So to overcome this obstacle to a peaceful transition, the government had to participate in projects in a positive way to demonstrate their will to help the communities. In the provinces, the government (through the appointed transition mayors) had a crucial role to play in resolving inter-neighborhood conflicts. Hence, depending on the area, HTI either brought the government to work in areas in which it was not liked or raised the profile of the government as a mediator in municipal affairs. To work in absence of the government would have been to diminish its authority in the public domain and be in conflict with HTI objectives.

In addition to the strategic necessity of working with the government, there was a functional need to work in partnership with them. Many of HTI's grants were infrastructure projects; therefore it was imperative for them to be consistent with government plans. While HTI may have been able to build a water kiosk or install an electrical network, it could not have filled the water pipes or turned on the lights. Moreover, water and electricity were both limited resources so HTI worked with the government to encourage sensitization training on wise usage to accompany any network expansion. HTI funds were also used to leverage additional resources to increase the supply by repairing an existing but non-functional hydro-electric plant, for example. Additionally, through technical assistance to the government, HTI encouraged the government to inform communities diplomatically why their needs could not be met at that time (i.e., if they are outside the plan or it is a technical impossibility). Although the government's message was not good news, by virtue of the fact that they acknowledged the community and its problems demonstrated that the government was listening.

### ***Critical Mass of Activities***

To have an impact, HTI realized that there needed to be a critical mass of activities in an area. As the representative of the State Secretary for Youth and Sport in Cap Haïtien said, "It is necessary to fill the space (power/leadership void) or someone else will." As the program was working during a politically sensitive period in desperate areas where very few organizations had previously been involved, the pressure on each project was significant. A single project in a neighborhood would seem like a weak attempt at appeasement rather than a decisive effort toward progress. In fact, the program worked to build positive momentum to change mindsets towards the transition, which required a significant number of projects sustained over time. In some areas, the critical mass grew gradually, while in others, specifically Bel Air and Martissant (2006), HTI began with five or six projects to provide more "instant" critical mass.

Once a critical mass of activities was achieved, it was necessary to maintain the momentum until a natural ending point, such as a handover of activities to longer-term development programming. The program also saw the disastrous results of not sustaining the momentum when it seemed that stability had reached Martissant in mid 2005. The previously violent area had calmed significantly during the first year of HTI activities there, allowing the program to allocate resources elsewhere. However, as the conditions for enduring stability had not yet been achieved, the situation deteriorated again. This decline was made tragically apparent when a gang from a neighboring area used a tournament during the "Play for Peace" summer camp as an opportunity to assert its power, resulting in at least eight people killed. HTI returned to Martissant en force through the Martissant Initiative described above.

In ideal cases, HTI achieved critical mass through labor-intensive infrastructure projects and then sustained positive momentum by adding activities and events to the spectrum of projects. Maintaining momentum was a critical aspect of the program and required that funding for new areas of intervention be

evaluated against existing needs. However, the necessary size and scope of an initiative, and program in general, depended on the nature of the communities targeted by the program. A clear example of this is the contrast between Cite Soleil and Bel Air, both strategic and highly sensitive areas in Port-au-Prince. HTI achieved a critical mass in Bel Air with roughly \$1 million and six months. However, this was enabled by a strong sense of community among residents, a relatively dense geographic area, and the additional support of MINUSTAH as a law enforcement presence. In contrast, HTI was unable to reach critical mass in Cite Soleil because of the lack of cohesion among residents, the lack of law enforcement and a wide geographic territory. While a huge amount of funding could have enabled HTI to make more of an impact in Cite Soleil, the limitations were equally due to the existing circumstances on the ground.

### ***Messaging/Branding***

As vital to the program as achieving critical mass was, it was important to do so under the radar of spoilers who might have tried to derail the process. For this reason, media and messaging activities had to be very sensitive to this and highly strategic. If too much attention was called to an initiative in an area that did not yet have sufficient rule of law to protect citizens, community partners could have been put at risk of retaliation by gangs. For example, before MINUSTAH established itself in Bel Air, HTI assisted a community group in holding a “Play for Peace” summer camp, which the community advertised widely and even holding a “Peace Parade” in the neighborhood. A gang saw this as a threat to their authority and attacked the final camp event resulting in one injury and two deaths immediately after it.

Additionally, while HTI's emphasis on community ownership strengthened programs, it limited its control in assisting the communities to develop messages for projects. Given the inexperience of the community in creating messages, the projects were vulnerable to misinterpretations and spoilers who could corrupt the integrity of the project with their own message. For example, a major park in Cite Soleil was inaugurated by Aristide in February 2004, before it was completed. This park was chosen by the Preval government as one of the projects in their post-election strategy. The completion of the park could signal that the country is moving on, or it could be corrupted by spoilers to emphasize that Aristide is still a vital part of the political landscape. Therefore, it is advisable to avoid projects for which the risk of message corruption outweighs the benefits of the project.

Nevertheless, messaging was critical to broadening the impact HTI. HTI identified three distinct levels of messaging needed for the project. The first focused on the impact of HTI *within* the areas in which projects were implemented. While only some residents were employed on a construction site or had children who played on a soccer field, the whole community benefited from the psychological impact of the project if they felt connected to it. This was achieved by advertising projects locally, for example, with banners saying “People at Work” over a road rehabilitation work site and using standard USAID project boards. The second level of messaging was efforts to change the image of target areas in the minds of the public *outside* of target neighborhoods. To achieve this, HTI worked with the IMC of the Prime Minister's office to hold nationally televised sports events featuring youth from HTI target areas. Additionally, the program sponsored a series of short radio broadcasts about HTI projects throughout the five cities, which also achieved the first and second messaging objectives as residents from the target zones themselves listened to the broadcasts. The third level of messaging was advertising the successes of HTI to the broader international community, including other offices of USAID. This was done to increase the likelihood of partnerships and coordination among other organizations and donors, but was almost exclusively in the form of briefing papers, standard USAID reporting and participation in coordination meetings rather than through the media.

In general, HTI could have done more with regard to messaging. Communities were encouraged to use the media to advertise their activities if they saw fit, but HTI was not very proactive in encouraging this outside of specific media projects. In addition to the radio broadcasts, HTI organized a media tour for journalists to visit the “Play for Peace” summer camps in 2005 and sponsored a media event to launch the “Play for Peace” theme, but typically the program relied on the USAID/US Embassy press office to liaise with the media when appropriate. This area of the program could be improved, both in the quantity and variety.

The experience HTI had with branding developed a concrete lesson learned – when the brand is created locally it has more of an impact than when it is created by the donor. HTI had two main “brands” throughout the program: “Play for Peace” (Jwe pou lape) and “Common Grounds” (Terrains d'Entente).

The “Play for Peace” theme originated with the State Secretary for Youth and Sport and the IMC. The title was validated by each project committee and was widely used on banners and t-shirts. The community groups internalized this theme, as demonstrated by the fact that one group created a spin-off of the brand. A sports association from Bel Air held a soccer tournament approximately six months after the attack on the “Play for Peace” camp, and after a successful pacification process they decided they had achieved peace and called the event “Play for Reconciliation.”

Common Grounds (“Terrains d’Entente”), the other brand, described the sports fields, parks, and public kiosks created or rehabilitated by HTI on which “Play for Peace” activities took place. This theme had less success. It was suggested by the OTI Country Representative and was never owned by the communities, which was partially the fault of the HTI staff members’ who did not frequently use it in daily conversations with beneficiaries. It was also partly because the term was only accurate once a critical mass of positive activities had taken place on the site (i.e. Ste Bernadette, Grand’ Ravine, Soleil 19). This could have been improved upon by having more formal inauguration ceremonies that unveiled a sign designating the site a “Terrains d’Entente.” Unfortunately, however, this term remains only a title on grants rather than a theme used by partners.

### ***Transparency***

HTI was a credible partner for both communities and the government because it delivered what it promised in a transparent way, thereby reducing the possibility of corruption. To avoid corruption, projects were strictly limited to less than \$100,000 but generally did not exceed \$50,000 and average about \$23,500. This prevented the project from tempting officials or community members who were interested in skimming a percentage off the total. At the beginning, HTI went further to prevent corruption by controlling all procurement needs for each project (i.e. each bag of cement, tool, etc.). This proved to be too much of a burden on staff as the monthly grant expenditures grew, so a formal system of tendering was put in place.

Tendering was useful not only in reducing the procurement burden on the staff and keeping them focused on the process, but it also gave more responsibilities to the community and management committee as they verified the work each day. However, if partners had been aware of how much money was allocated in the grant for a specific activity, there would have been significant potential for collusion between contractors and partners when tenders were used. Therefore, as a precautionary measure, HTI decided to remove the budget from the grant agreement form signed by the partners to avoid this problem. To prevent accusations of favoritism on HTI’s part and to ensure that no single partner could decide tender, contractors were chosen by IOM with a committee in an open process. HTI received all tender documents and contracts were validated by the community and government before being signed by IOM, though this rule was inconsistently applied by field officers. Having contractor selection validated by all partners was particularly difficult regarding government officials in Port-au-Prince, but HTI management continually stressed the importance of this principle. Another step requested by communities to ensure transparency was the requirement that unskilled laborers be identified by the community committee to prevent contractors from hiring only friends or people outside the target neighborhood.

In addition to having an open contracting process, HTI made open communication a key element of all interactions with partners and beneficiaries. Communication with the population took place at public meetings, which avoided suspicions about activities and reduced pressure on the oversight committee. According to some local partners, Aristide used a significant portion of project funds to “buy peace” by paying the local spoiler. To prevent this type of corruption, public meetings with committee representatives were held making it difficult for anyone to corrupt a committee member as he/she would have to answer to the entire community. Moreover, the committee also had to introduce the results of their work to demonstrate how project funds were used.

In an environment where communities were routinely promised things by government and other organizations that never materialized, HTI only promised what it could deliver. Expectations from the community were kept at a minimum to avoid disappointments, and partners were encouraged to remain realistic about how they presented projects to the greater public. It was important not only to deliver projects, but to do so in a timely fashion and with quality. While it was important to stop projects if there was a problem, it was equally important to resume immediately when it was resolved and to ensure that

work continued at a reasonable pace. As important as doing what is promised, HTI was also open about what it was unable to do, which had a huge positive impact on the program's credibility.

Listening to the community was also a significant part of open communication and was crucial to avoiding pitfalls and political traps. At the project identification stage, it was important to listen to what residents said about each project idea to avoid selecting a project that was tied to a specific person or had a politically-charged history. Likewise, locals were the first to say if someone was being dishonest or a contractor delivered poor quality or if there was another project idea that should be explored, illustrating the self-regulatory mechanism of community ownership. HTI relied on residents to similarly report on the local security situation to ensure the safety of staff.

## **CONCLUSION – PROGRAM IMPACT/OUTCOMES**

The HTI program sought to bring stability to volatile areas by creating dialogue among parties in conflict, reducing the potential for spoilers to act, and enabling civic organizations to reduce violence in their neighborhoods. The underlying assumption of the program was that the majority of residents want peace and stability and, as a group, they know best how to achieve this. Consequently, the effects and successes of the program were assessed by looking at whether or not the community voice was heard. Expression of community voice was quantitatively measured through indicators such as the number of meetings held for each project and number of formal agreements between the community and government. However, this dialogue was more often evident through qualitative indicators like statements made by beneficiaries and partners and observations of activity levels in target areas or violence trends.

The nature of the issues HTI addressed mean it is impossible to statistically demonstrate a direct causal relationship between HTI activities and community stabilization. "Stability" is difficult to quantify, and, as illustrated with the Rule of Three, HTI is only one part of a multi-actor effort. However, a plausible association can be drawn to show the positive impact of HTI on the improved security of certain zones. Through anecdotes and measurable indicators, HTI was able to show its impact in the following ways:

- The creation of community problem-solving mechanisms that were used outside of HTI sponsored activities;
- Increased legitimacy of local and national government as evidenced through generally improved relations and increased deference to Municipalities to mediate;
- Isolation and disempowerment of negative elements (i.e. gang leaders fleeing areas with HTI projects);
- Infrastructure rehabilitated or constructed with HTI funds used for non-HTI activities;
- Increased access for law enforcement through repaired roads and improved public lighting;
- Short-term employment generated.

During the first two years of operations, HTI saw its towns in the provinces remain calm and some particularly violent neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince return to calm.

### ***Challenges to Measuring Impact***

Evaluating the impact of HTI was accomplished through a variety of methods including both objective and subjective indicators. Each grant was written with a list of three to six objectives and a series of standardized outputs. Objectives were a combination of concrete impacts ("Renovate a primary school") to more abstract goals ("Enhance the relationship between the community and government"). Outputs were all measurable products such as "number of meetings between community and government," and "person-days of employment generated." Employment figures were collected each month while other outputs were entered into the database at the closure of each grant.

More abstract objectives were assessed through interviews, anecdotal information, and directly observable processes. At the conclusion of project activities, HTI staff conducted interviews with project partners in the community and government according to a standardized evaluation tool. HTI staff was in the field on a daily basis, meeting with project partners and were constantly approached by residents expressing their appreciation for the activities. Also, staff observed incidents and processes that

demonstrated the effects of the program, such as a community group adding speed bumps to a newly-refurbished road or organizing a community event on an HTI-funded public kiosk. Anecdotes were reported in the “Hot Topics” section of the database and in monthly reports.

In general, HTI could have improved the level of monitoring and evaluation. It was very difficult to collect the data as the people best positioned to do this were the field staff. Unfortunately, there is a strong, natural tendency to focus only on the implementation of a project. Staff found it difficult to extract them from the logic of “project” (rehabilitate a road) to move towards the logic of “program” (i.e. support momentum). Moreover, the evaluation process was originally designed to evaluate each individual grant which became a huge burden as the monthly grant expenditures increased, and were also much less relevant as many of the grants were implemented as a package with several others. Most single grants had only a minor impact while the aggregation of all the grants in an area achieved a critical mass that was sufficient to dramatically alter the neighborhood. The Play for Peace summer camps were evaluated as a group, which marked a change in the conception of evaluations. In spring 2006, staff began grouping grants by location or initiative and began evaluating on a more macro-level.

Nevertheless, informal evaluation was a constant process within the program, with program staff regularly discussing grants, partners, and locations. The HTI team would assess the general success of a project on course, identify aspects of the project that were not working, adjust methods and determine whether or not to work with certain partners again. While the greater political context governed broader strategy and geographic concentration, this constant process of discussion and reflection informed decisions on individual grants and partners.

### **Anecdotes**

HTI staff was constantly being thanked in the field by community and government partners, but this is more a measure of good public relations than program success. However, with equal regularity, HTI encountered anecdotes that represented true demonstrations of the plausible impact of the program.

- The HTI Program Officer for St. Marc went to a neighborhood in Gonaives where he thought he would find a violent protest going on as others had warned. Instead, when he arrived he saw a small group of people protesting because according to a local man everyone else was busy cleaning canals (an HTI project).
- The Petit Goâve representative of the Ministry of Public Works went from being vilified to being welcomed in the area because of his involvement with HTI projects. This prompted him to increase his presence in the town, demonstrating more commitment and responsiveness from the government.
- The Mayor of Les Cayes went for a drink at an HTI-funded public park on the beach of a very volatile neighborhood. Some local youths (perceived as tough guys) saw him and called out that they should be buying his drink for all he has done for them.
- A group of youths in Martissant formed an association to promote work over gang activity after meeting and working together on several HTI projects.
- After multiple projects in Soleil 19, which were to build community cohesion, residents donated part of their salaries from the “Play for Peace” summer camp to pay legal fees for one of the young men who worked with the sports association who had been falsely accused of being involved in a kidnapping.
- At a meeting with community leaders from Cite Soleil and heads of UN Agencies, representatives repeatedly said that agencies could work in Cite Soleil without a problem if they followed the HTI model. One also said that he did not know what residents would have done for the past two years without HTI projects providing incomes to residents.
- A local resident known for participating in road blockages in Petit Goâve was seen working on an HTI project by a neighbor. When he was teased about this newfound cooperation with the government, he responded that he had no need to protest because he had a job.

- A community leader from Portail Montrouis, a neglected neighborhood in St. Marc known for setting up roadblocks along the National Road, said that people were ashamed to admit they come from Portail Montrouis. After helping the community complete a new vocational training school, and several other projects, the same leader told HTI staff that residents were now proud to say they came from Portail Montrouis and had a renewed confidence thanks to the activities they accomplished with HTI support.

## Annex 1: Timeline

### September 2003

The violence that eventually brought down the Aristide presidency started reaching the boiling point in September 2003 when clashes between militants and government forces (police) began. Rebel forces were composed of former members of the Haitian Armed Forces (FAd'H, Forces Armées d'Haïti) among others, including members of a gang known as the "Cannibal Army" whose leadership was from Gonaïves, known as the birthplace of the revolution that led to the overthrow of the Duvalier dictatorship. Violence between the rebels and police escalated through January 2004, by which point nearly 100 people had died.

### February 2004

On 5 February, rebel forces drove police from Gonaïves, setting police stations on fire, and in the four days that followed, 46 people were killed. Within two days, violence had spread south to Saint Marc where residents blocked the roads with flaming tires, looted the shipping containers at the port, and drove out police in gun battles leaving two dead. Violence in Saint Marc was primarily between residents of two areas, Portail Guepes, a predominantly pro-Aristide neighborhood, and La Scierie, an anti-Aristide stronghold. Political leaders from both areas had a longstanding conflict over control of the port which was exacerbated by the wave of rebellion, which culminated in the alleged "La Scierie Massacre". Between 9 and 11 February, violence gripped Saint Marc; and at one point, residents of La Scierie claim that government forces carried out what can only be described as a massacre. Houses were burned and protesters fled into the nearby mountains where special police in a government helicopter shot at them. This controversial event is alleged to have been ordered by the highest level of government and is claimed to have left approximately 100 people dead. Some leaders and commentators assert that the massacre never occurred while others dispute the number of dead, claiming a much lower number. According to one report, an investigation into the event counted 44 dead with only 22 victims actually identified.

Meanwhile, anti-government violence spread to other major population centers throughout the country. On 22 February, rebels gained control of Cap Haïtien, the second-largest city, and by 26 February, they had captured Les Cayes. Soon after, rebels entered Port-au-Prince and paralyzed the city with road blocks and gun battles. On 29 February, Aristide fled the country with assistance from the US government, later claiming that he was kidnapped.

### March 2004

US, Canadian, and French troops arrived as a short-term peacekeeping force while the UN assessed the situation and organized a full-scale peacekeeping mission. While the arrival of these forces resulted in a dramatic decrease of violence over all, pockets of volatility persisted in both pro- and anti-Aristide areas. Media reported that armed gangs held public executions of Aristide supporters in Les Cayes.

*OTI sends an assessment team (Fritz Weden and Leah Werchick) to Haiti. The team recommends that OTI initiate a program to support the newly installed interim government in stabilizing communities in urban slums.*

### May 2004

*HTI activities commenced in Port-au-Prince, St. Marc, and Petit Goâve. With relatively limited resources, HTI restricts its activities to these three sites because of a combination of political relevance and logistical capacity. Port-au-Prince was clearly the top priority because of its strategic importance as the capital and most populous city as well as having the highest proportion of staunch Lavalas supporters living in volatile, marginalized neighborhoods. St. Marc and Petit Goâve were selected because of their highly polarized populations and the nature of the conflicts they experienced during the unrest. Rather than being limited to rebels versus police, the conflict in both Petit Goâve and St. Marc escalated to violence*

*between groups of residents, and was therefore well-suited to an HTI-style conflict mitigation program. Certainly other cities were similarly important (Gonaïves, Cap Haïtien, Les Cayes) but the geography of Haiti and initial program resources limited the scope of the intervention.*

#### **June 2004**

**(2 Grants; \$61,896)**

UN peacekeepers, led by the Brazilian military, arrived in Haiti to form MINUSTAH, the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

*HTI signs its first grant for the rehabilitation of the St. Anne football field in Soleil 19, Cite Soleil (IOMPAP001). The program initially emphasized the involvement of the Interim Government of Haiti (IGOH), both at the local and national level, in all HTI grants. The difficulty of including them in all stages of the grant process led to slow monthly expenditure rates in the first several months.*

*OTI begins rotation of senior field advisors and other staff to serve as acting country representative.*

#### **July 2004**

**(8 Grants; \$313,578)**

International donors met at the World Bank in Washington and pledged approximately \$1.2 billion in aid. However, much of this aid was allocated for use after elections, leaving the government with very few resources during the interim period. This lack of resources, particularly in the area of public works, became more evident as the volume of HTI projects increased. For this reason, the government's general inability to keep up with the pace of HTI, the program moved to focus on community involvement by spring 2005 during which the role of the government was still emphasized through public signatures and openings, but the emphasis on material contributions by the government was significantly reduced.

*U.S. Ambassador James Foley requested OTI/IOM assistance in addressing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), specifically with regards to the former military (FAd'H). OTI senior field advisor Jason Aplon visits twice and determines that the conditions to undertake a DDR program did not exist in the context of Haiti.*

#### **August 2004**

**(12 Grants; \$335,319)**

Ex-FAd'H members began occupying police stations, including Petit Goâve, in a series of actions that were largely well received by the population. In fact, in Petit Goâve, residents protested initial MINUSTAH action to reinstate police control because they claimed that the ex-FAd'H were more effective than the police at limiting gang activity in the area.

*HTI suspends activities in Cite Soleil following a security incident. A private transporter hired by IOM to deliver materials to a USAID-funded project was assaulted by a group of seven gang members on the way to the project site. The seven assailants waved their weapons, assaulted and robbed the vehicle occupants, and shot one of the vehicle tires. The deputy mayor of Cite Soleil with whom IOM had coordinated on projects in Cite Soleil was informed and arranged an escort for the vehicle. Activities resumed within a few days under a new security protocol developed by the municipality and the community. The new protocol mandated that community members escort all vehicles from the entrance of Cite Soleil to the project sites.*

#### **September 2004**

**(14 Grants; \$158,584)**

*HTI signs its first grant in Gonaïves to provide benches and materials for two public schools.*

Hurricane Jeanne devastated Gonaïves killing approximately 2,000 people, leaving 900 missing and 300,000 homeless. Participation by HTI staff in the UN coordination meetings revealed that the involvement of the central government was severely neglected by the humanitarian community. This was particularly sensitive in the case of Gonaïves because of its long history of mistrust and antipathy toward the government.

*HTI responded by supporting the government in its efforts to participate in the relief effort initially funding incidentals like spare truck parts and road markers, ultimately adding several employment generation clean-up, water distribution and flood prevention activities. HTI made the strategic choice to support government efforts to respond to the crisis by filling critical gaps that could have been exploited by spoilers. For example, HTI funded cleanups and extension of the water system into the Raboteau neighborhood, the most volatile area of the city, which was neglected in the reconstruction effort. In anticipation of a larger USAID reconstruction process, HTI made approximately \$500,000 immediately available, which was declined by the USAID mission.*

Illegal militia groups, many of which included members of the ex-FAd'H, continued to occupy government buildings and demand payment of pensions, back-pay, reinstatement of the military and recognition for their role in ousting Aristide. The IGOH formed the Presidential Commission in Charge of Negotiations with the demobilized military to initiate dialogue with the ex-FAd'H and eventually the Bureau for the Management of Demobilized Soldiers, under the Prime Minister's office, to manage the registration, profiling, training and employment of former soldiers.

*From September 2004 to June 2005, OTI undertook planning and preparation for the reintegration of the ex-FAd'H. In partnership with the MINUSTAH DDR section and the IGOH, OTI used \$250,000 in seed money provided by USAID/Haiti to begin to define a DDR strategy for the ex-FAd'H. OTI focused only on reintegration since USAID is prohibited from providing support for demobilization or disarmament. OTI was later given \$3million in ESF funds towards a reintegration program to be implemented by IOM. The preconditions for a successful reintegration project did not exist. Given these circumstances, OTI redirected the \$3million allotted for reintegration into its main HTI program to implement quick impact activities to support stabilization and economic revitalization in the most dangerous zones in PAP.*

*Following the August security incident in Cite Soleil, HTI staff began to work more closely with the MINUSTAH Civil-Military Coordinator, introducing projects that were on-going in Cite Soleil so that the MINUSTAH would not consider the gathering of people as a demonstration. HTI activity reports were sent to MINUSTAH but were received as a courtesy rather than a tool that could benefit their operations.*

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|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>October 2004</b> | <b>(7 Grants; \$93,251)</b> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|

The month of October opened with sudden, horrific violence which began on 30 September under a cloud of suspicion. Some people say the violence, precipitated by the brutal beheadings of three police officers at the onset, was a direct reaction to police shooting into a peaceful pro-Aristide demonstration. Other reports claim that the government orchestrated the conflict as an excuse to crack down on Lavalas supporters and residents were merely defending themselves against government aggression. Whatever the cause, the result was that Bel Air, the main downtown section of Port-au-Prince, and Cite Soleil, including the major road which borders it, became no-go areas, the sites of daily violence, spontaneous gunfights, and clashes between various armed groups, including the police, MINUSTAH, and gangs, who frequently fought with each other.

*HTI continued to work in areas of the city impacted by the violence, but moved to almost exclusively small infrastructure for safety and ease of monitoring. Daily gun battles between gangs and police in Port-au-Prince reduced the mobility of HTI staff causing a slow down in project implementation. Several local partners were forced to flee Cite Soleil, also impeding IOM's ability to implement and monitor activities.*

*Security worsened in Gonaives as frustration from perceived in action and unmet needs eroded the legitimacy and support for the central government. Attempts to work with USAID/Haiti on relief efforts failed. OTI/IOM expressed significant concern that other partners like CARE were not including the local government in response efforts. USAID allotted approximately \$40million in assistance for hurricane relief/reconstruction. OTI, still operating on a limited budget, did not receive any of these funds and determined that it should close the Gonaives office to concentrate these resources in its other target areas. Without question, this was a difficult decision given the continued political relevance of the city and the highly volatile conditions following the hurricane. With good reason, IOM opposed this office closure.*

The interim government established an inter-ministerial commission to work in the sensitive neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince as a demonstration of its will to work together with citizens living in Lavalas strongholds. The initial idea was to have a holistic vision of the problems faced by the targeted areas. Therefore, during the first months, every minister had appointed senior representatives to attend meetings twice a week. Despite the relatively good attendance during the first months, very few actions were initiated due to the weak authority of the Coordinator (and by extension the authority of the Prime Minister himself). Moreover, once the Prime Minister's Office ran out of money to fund the attendance fees for the ministry representatives, the number of ministers represented decreased rapidly.

*It was important for HTI with regard to its specific mandate to support the commission, because both HTI and the commission were in theory aiming for the same objectives (make the government be visible and credible in marginalized areas). HTI management staff began attending meetings of the Commission and formalized this cooperation in December. The first jointly implemented project, IOMPAP033 Carnival in Cite Soleil, was signed in February 2005.*

#### **November 2004**

**(12 Grants; \$271,152)**

*HTI staff worked closely with the mayor of Cite Soleil to resume activities following a suspension in activities due to street violence. The mayor, a key HTI partner, coordinated with gang leaders to ensure the safety of HTI staff and community members working on projects. IOM insisted that local leaders, not IOM staff, deal with gangs to resolve problems like this.*

#### **December 2004**

**(4 Grants; \$122,107)**

*After months of delays, HTI activities resumed at full speed following significant efforts made by the municipality and central government working with community members and gang leaders to deal with the outbreak of violence in the area.*

MINUSTAH began making incursions into PAP slum neighborhoods in coordination with the Haitian police but severe criticism of MINUSTAH's unwillingness to use force and its resulting failure to command respect from armed militia and gangs persists.

*December marked the end of the first phase of HTI, when a significant challenge became evident: central government representatives were eager to participate in activities in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, but this did not extend into the provinces. At the same time, the strong sense of community found in the provinces was lacking in the metropolitan area.*

All high level staff of the Bureau de Gestion, an office established to "manage the affairs" of the former military, were dismissed due to their complicity with attempts to facilitate the return of the armed forces of Haiti (FAd'H). The Secretary of State for Public Security announced that compensatory payments would be made to 6,000 former soldiers and several hundred higher ranking ex-FAd'H officers in an effort to mollify insurgents and restore stability in the country. Payments would vary according to rank but average \$4,800 per person for a total of approximately \$30million.

A faction of ex-FAd'H members, led by notorious rebel leader Remissainthe Ravix, occupied former President Aristide's residence. Members of the interim Haitian Government and MINUSTAH negotiated a peaceful resolution after Ravix fled the scene. The remaining 46 members of the group were transported to the Haitian Police Academy where they were disarmed and registered. Those found to be legitimate members of the ex-FAd'H were given the first installment of compensatory payments by the Government.

#### **January 2005**

**(6 Grants; \$159,727)**

Nothing to report.

#### **February 2005**

**(6 Grants; \$131,159)**

Approximately 481 inmates of Haiti's central prison, including former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune and former Interior Minister Jocelerme Privet, escaped during an attack by masked gunmen. Neptune and

Privet turned themselves in soon after, but others eluded capture and went on to terrorize citizens with a wave of retaliatory violence.

The one year anniversary of the departure of former President Aristide was marked by increased violence in several neighborhoods. Two thousand unarmed protestors took to the streets in Bel Air shouting anti-Bush slogans, whom Aristide blames for his fall. During the demonstration, and to the surprise of the demonstrator's UN escorts, police officers attempting to block the protesters fired tear gas and bullets into the crowd killing at least two people. In response, the UN sent 300 heavily armed peacekeepers and 50 UN vehicles to secure a peaceful demonstration in Bel Air, kept the demonstration's route under tight control and denied access to Haitian police who wanted to enter the perimeter of the march. The Minister of Justice accused MINUSTAH of violating their mandate. Overall, violence and kidnappings increased.

The interim government of Haiti (IGOH) confirmed municipal elections to be held on October 9 and legislative and presidential elections to be held in two rounds on November 13 and December 18.

*HTI implements its first project with the Inter-ministerial Commission of the Prime Minister, a Carnival celebration for Cite Soleil (IOMPAP033).*

|                   |                              |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>March 2005</b> | <b>(9 Grants; \$169,994)</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------------|

March marked the first UN casualties when one Nepalese soldier in Hinche and one Sri Lankan near Petit Goâve were killed in clashes with ex-FAd'H. The Sri Lankan was killed when UN troops attempted to recapture a police station which had been occupied by ex-FAd'H. This operation was met with public protest from residents of Petit Goâve who blocked the national road with burning tires and accused the police of corruption, claiming that the ex-FAd'H were more effective at maintaining order than the police.

|                   |                              |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>April 2005</b> | <b>(8 Grants; \$194,128)</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------------|

On 6 April, the Interim Government issued a decree launching a National Dialogue process to be organized by a commission of 12 people. The aim of this process was to depolarize the population in the lead up to the elections, scheduled for October at that point. However, due to a lack of public awareness, organization, and effective design, the National Dialogue is dead before it begins.

*HTI approved a set of four projects to support a local organization to bring women's voices into the National Dialogue process. These grants supported public forums in Port-au-Prince, Cap Haïtien, and Les Cayes.*

MINUSTAH welcomed the start of voter registration for elections later this year. U.N. Special Representative to the Secretary-General, Juan Gabriel Valdés, called it "a moment of joy for Haiti and the international community." The Provisional Electoral Council launched the registration effort in Gonaïves.

On 9 April Remissainthe Ravix was killed in clashes between ex-FAd'H and police/UN troops. Contrary to concerns that this would energize the ex-FAd'H forces, Ravix's death essentially neutralized the threat posed by the former military. Remaining ex-FAd'H returned to their homes, quietly disappearing off the political landscape.

*OTI began efforts to redirect funds originally earmarked for the reintegration program for the ex-FAd'H to a strategy to support MINUSTAH efforts to combat gang violence. These funds facilitated the opening of offices in Cap Haïtien and Les Cayes, which were selected after an extensive evaluation process.*

|                 |                               |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>May 2005</b> | <b>(10 Grants; \$260,016)</b> |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|

*HTI begins work on its first project in Bel Air after months of discussions (dating back to November 2004) with community leaders. The first project rebuilt a kiosk that had been burned by HNP police and served as a constant reminder of violence between pro-Lavalas supporters and the HNP supporters of the incoming IGOH. This kiosk, and a follow on gala football day with the Inter-ministerial Commission of the Prime Minister, got HTI's foot in the door.*

*U.S. embassy instates ordered departure of all dependents of U.S. government staff in Haiti. OTI representative, Merrie Archer, had to take her 3-year old son to Ft. Lauderdale to live with relatives.*

**June 2005**

**(22 Grants; \$527,709)**

*The U.S. embassy instates an ordered departure of all but essential personnel. The decision was made to include Merrie Archer in ordered departure due to her status as a single Mom. She did not return to Haiti. OTI began its rotation of acting country representatives (Fritz Weden, Tom Stukel, Don Krumm, John Rigby, Katherine Donohue) which would end in April 2006 with the arrival of Lauren Barbour who remained in Haiti until close out.*

*OTI obligated \$3million (redirected from reintegration) to IOM to support MINUSTAH operations in anti-gang efforts in hot spots. OTI worked with IOM to increase monthly expenditure rates, which jumped from \$268,000 in May to \$570,000 in June. HTI also refined strategy to focus on two main sources of easily-mobilized people: out of school youth and the unemployed. HTI moved to increase employment projects and activities for youth.*

*IOM opens an office in Cap Haïtien (north).*

**July 2005**

**(28 Grants; \$697,702)**

*In a joint raid of Cité Soleil, the notorious gang leader Dread Wilmé was killed along with a dozen other gang members. This came as part of one of the largest MINUSTAH operations yet with over 400 peacekeepers, four helicopters and over 40 armored vehicles. MINUSTAH reported fragmentation and disarray among gang members immediately following the operation, but soon afterwards, new gang leaders assumed the mantle of authority in Wilmé's place.*

*Father Gerard Jean-Juste, a prominent Lavalas leader, was arrested at the 21 July funeral of notable journalist Jacques Roche.*

*HTI responds by starting activities in Petit Place Cazeau, the home of Jean-Juste, as an effort to bring positive government involvement in the neighborhood. This effort is highly successful, particularly in relation to the local school and water system.*

*As of late July, over 800,000 voters were reportedly registered in Haiti. Voter registration was extended to 9 September. MINUSTAH projects registered between 3.6million to 4.1million voters using 424 registration sites and 50 mobile sites. However, the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) and international community still faced challenges managing the security situation, budgetary limitations, and party and candidate registration and campaigning.*

*In an effort to provide alternate activities to youth at risk in targeted neighborhoods, HTI initiated "Play for Peace" summer activity camps in partnership with the SEJSEC and local sports and civic associations. Based in various locations in Cite Soleil, Bel Air, Martissant and Cap Haïtien, these activities provided daily sports and cultural activities, civic education and non-violence promotion.*

**August 2005**

**(40 Grants; \$595,236)**

*The CEP twice extended the deadline for political parties to register for upcoming elections, agreeing on 15 September as the final date. Various political parties and groups in civil society expressed the hope that this additional time would have allowed moderate Lavalas candidates to register, thereby ensuring a more fully participatory process. On 9 August, the interim government announced that the local elections will be postponed until a date in late December; the presidential and legislative votes will be moved up one week from 13 November to 6 November, with the runoff election to be held 11 December. This was the first of many postponements.*

*OTI obligates \$2.5M to IOM to further support MINUSTAH operations. IOM opens an office in Les Cayes (south).*

Violence broke out during one of HTI's "Play for Peace" summer youth activities in Martissant on 20 August. Widely reported in both national and international press as a lynching, the incident was described by HTI partners as a coordinated attack with national police and neighboring gang members. According to partner reports, the police arrived with members of a rival gang, and the gang members proceeded to single out "informants" and attack them with machetes. Fatality figures vary from six to 30. Following the incident, the camp was suspended for a few days, but activities resumed five days later.

U.S. Ambassador James B. Foley, who led the U.S. embassy in Haiti since May 2003, left departed his post. He was replaced on an interim basis by former U.S. Ambassador to Haiti, Timothy Carney.

#### **September 2005**

**(33 Grants; \$752,050)**

Another HTI Play for Peace Summer Youth Activity was attacked by gang members, resulting in the murder of two residents who worked on the camp. At funeral services for one of the victims, community members displayed the t-shirt from the HTI camp on the casket.

HTI staff immediately contacted MINUSTAH to inform them of this event and request a response from law enforcement. Members of the community provided detailed information about the location of the perpetrators, which HTI passed on to MINUSTAH. This information was not acted upon, and HTI appealed to OTI for assistance. USG representatives in New York applied pressure on the UN Department of Peacekeeping, which precipitated MINUSTAH operations in Bel Air resulting in the arrest or death of all three gang members involved in the killings.

Following operations and establishment of a MINUSTAH base at Fort National, HTI was able to develop a series of projects in the area. Only weeks prior, this neighborhood was inaccessible to outsiders due to gang violence in the area, which also caused hundreds of residents to flee. The development of an alliance of Fort National community groups supported by HTI led to new community-improvement initiatives which helped the area return to the bustling place it once was. HTI started with seven projects totaling more than \$100,000 in Fort National.

#### **October 2005**

**(28 Grants; \$837,189)**

Elections are delayed.

HTI monthly grant expenditures reached \$920,000. Significant progress was made on communication and coordination with MINUSTAH forces on the ground. After attacks on HTI projects in Martissant and Bel Air in August, HTI staff met with representatives of MINUSTAH to create better channels of communication to prevent project-related incidents and to improve the response by MINUSTAH when such incidents occur. These improvements resulted in an immediate rebuilding of trust with the citizens of Bel Air, illustrated by a move on the community's part to request HTI assistance in increasing MINUSTAH patrols near a project site. Through this successful interaction, the HTI team developed a briefing mechanism to regularly update MINUSTAH teams on the ground on the location and status of projects and to keep communities informed of MINUSTAH efforts to improve security. This mechanism includes the use of Google Earth® mapping software, which enabled HTI staff to make detailed maps of project locations. These maps were sent to the MINUSTAH civil-military liaison and distributed to patrol commanders.

#### **November 2005**

**(28 Grants; \$678,965)**

A week after Prime Minister Latortue announced a 27 December date for elections Haiti's electoral board postponed them until early 2006 with the first round scheduled for 8 January, a 15 February runoff, and local elections in mid-March. The change made it impossible for Haiti to meet the 7 February date established in the constitution for a change of government. The council had not finished printing ballots, distributing more than 2.5 million voter identification cards, or training poll workers on schedule.

At the direction of OTI, IOM begins collaboration with the Pan-American Development Fund (PADF) on activities in Port-au-Prince under USAID/Haiti's Urban Peace Building Initiative. This Initiative was an early attempt to direct resources to hot spots. Collaboration would prove difficult as the two organizations

*had dramatically divergent methodologies. PADF did not share IOM's strong commitment toward refusing to work with gangs and seemed to be unwilling to develop a cooperative relationship.*

*HTI returns grant expenditures to approximately \$750,000 per month, as it is unclear when elections will actually take place.*

|                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>December 2005</b> | <b>(42 Grants; \$691,167)</b> |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|

Kidnappings, already immobilizing residents of Port-au-Prince, sky rocketed in December with a reported 30 kidnappings taking place during the first week alone.

*HTI continued its pre-election strategy of mixing labor-intensive infrastructure projects with youth activities in Port-au-Prince conflictive neighborhoods. Priorities shifted as some areas like Martissant and Grand Ravine re-ignited due to the return of gangs while others like Bel Air and Petit Place Cazeau saw increased stability. Cite Soleil continued to be a primary HTI neighborhood concern.*

|                     |                               |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>January 2006</b> | <b>(32 Grants; \$702,773)</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|

*Program activity in Cite Soleil remained challenging due to the security situation and the deteriorating image of MINUSTAH troops in the area. Accused of shooting at civilians and generally alienating the population of Cite Soleil, peacekeepers did not have the success that their counterparts had in Bel Air. Nevertheless, HTI continued to implement projects with the support of community partners.*

|                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>February 2006</b> | <b>(35 Grants; \$755,016)</b> |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|

René Préal, who served as President from 1996 to 2000, was elected president on 7 February. The initial vote count showed Préal just shy of the 50.1 percent majority needed to avoid a runoff. Before the election council announced the final vote tally, massive urban street protests – some spontaneous, some organized – erupted when rumors spread that the vote count was rigged. Thousands of discarded ballots were discovered in a garbage dump near Port-au-Prince, further stimulating claims of election fraud. Under an agreement between the Interim Government and the electoral council, some 80,000 ballots cast but left blank were allocated among the candidates in proportion to ballots cast with entries, giving Préal the majority vote needed to win without a runoff. A period of calm throughout Haiti followed including a sharp reduction in kidnappings.

*HTI staff initiated engagement with Preval's transition team to begin planning for what would be coined the "Cite Soleil Initiative," an initial package of 20 projects identified by various Cite Soleil sub-communities and the new government. Although the calm in Cite Soleil made it tempting to rush in with assistance, HTI's strategy was to put the new administration at the helm of efforts to stabilize the area, in accordance to a request made by Preval to the international community.*

*HTI also increased activities in Martissant to address the upswing in gang activity in the area. What would ultimately become a package of 17 projects worth approximately \$450,000, this initiative was launched at a February Carnival celebration sponsored by HTI. The response to this initial activity was so strong that armed groups declared an area-wide ceasefire.*

|                   |                               |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>March 2006</b> | <b>(31 Grants; \$760,647)</b> |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|

*Led by USAID/DCHA/CMM, a team composed of CMM, DG, OTI, S/CRS, and LAC conducted a conflict assessment in Haiti. They identified the following key potential "spoilers" to stability in Haiti: the role of entrenched, violence-prone and amply armed elements of Aristide supporters and the disruptive prospect that the unpredictable Aristide would seek to return to Haiti; armed and violent neighborhood gangs and criminal networks; former elements of the Haitian Armed Forces (FAAdH) and the HNP; manipulative efforts by Haitian elites, and a mix of nationalist/anti-foreign/anti-American elements. The CMM assessment identified key, volatile "hot spots" (Port-au-Prince, Gonaives, Saint Marc, Cap Haïtien, Petit Goâve – all but one of which are focal areas for the HTI program and sites of HTI field offices) where civil unrest could threaten democratic rule.*

*USAID/Haiti and OTI commenced active planning for turnover of the HTI program to the Mission by September 30. A significant indicator that the HTI program had proven relevant to current transition activities in Haiti was the desire on the part of the USAID Mission to absorb and fund the program, including the small grants mechanism with IOM as the implementing partner. Accordingly, OTI actively initiated a process of steering HTI activities, when feasible, to linkages with longer term Mission programs to accelerate incorporation of HTI into the Mission's portfolio in advance of the turnover.*

#### **April 2006**

**(27 Grants; \$612,298)**

Parliamentary run-off elections were held 21 April with an estimated 30 percent of the country's registered voters participating. Municipal elections are delayed with no clear date given.

*HTI began meeting with Preval's transition team to introduce the program and begin discussing opportunities for collaboration.*

*Lauren Barbour arrived and served as OTI Country Representative through OTI's close-out in September 2006.*

#### **May 2006**

**(63 Grants; \$936,593)**

On May 14, Rene Preval was inaugurated during a ceremony that drew thousands to the National Palace, marking the return of democratic rule in Haiti. Preval actively engaged with Haitian political parties, the public, and the international community to secure support for his new administration. President Preval's party Lespwa won 11 of 30 senate seats, boosting his support. Legislators in the Senate took the oath of office just a day after deputies in the lower house were sworn in. Haiti's parliament hasn't convened since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted in February 2004.

President Preval appointed a six-party coalition government in May, underscoring the need to unify Haiti's bitterly divided political factions after more than two years of instability. The 18-member Cabinet includes five members of Preval's 1999-2001 government. Preval nominated former Prime Minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis as Prime Minister who many believe is capable of brokering relations between rival political groups. Alexis announced that the government would embark on a 25-year development plan, including boosting access to public services for Haiti's poor, reinforcing the country's brittle state institutions, attracting private investment, and restoring security.

*The list of activities to be included in the Cite Soleil Initiative was finalized by the GOH transition team, but not in time to be included in the inauguration speech. One of the first activities with the new government outside of the Cite Soleil initiative was a series of renovations to existing Terrains d'Entente to make them capable of showing World Cup soccer matches for public viewing. The World Cup period was identified by Prime Minister Alexis as being a vulnerable time for shantytown residents and provided an excellent opportunity for initial projects with the new State Secretary for Youth and Sport.*

*The HTI program bid farewell to core management staff Philippe Branchat (Program Manager) and Stephanie Broughton (Program Support Officer) who left the program after two years of service. HTI welcomed Gabrielle Goodfellow as Program Support Officer, though a new Program Manager had not yet been named at the time of writing.*

## Annex 2: Quick Guide to the HTI Strategy

There is no *one* right way to do community stabilization, but there are guidelines to follow and definitely specific things to avoid doing. The basic steps for starting a program are as follows:

1. Identify target communities by gathering information from all available sources.
2. Enter a community by meeting with politically neutral people (i.e. sports associations, religious leaders, school administrators) and appropriate political entities (i.e. municipality) provided that you remain distanced from individuals. Before focusing on a single project, have in mind at least 2-4 potential projects, so that you know it will be possible to build/sustain positive momentum should the circumstances require it to be done immediately.
3. Identify an initial project, usually a straightforward one that is generally accepted, like a sports field, and one with guaranteed beneficiaries. An initial project could be identified through public meetings or selected strategically but validated in a public meeting. The first project should be relatively low profile and will not necessarily be ideal, but will provide an entry point and a way of learning more about the community. Any mistakes will inform future activities and be relatively insignificant in the life of the program as many projects will be successful.
4. The implementation process of the first project (as with all subsequent projects) will yield important information and lessons about the community and it will serve as an advertisement for the program. Word of mouth is more important than any other type of publicity. Once the program is known, both within and outside the community, project ideas will not be difficult to find as the needs are numerous.
5. Identify and implement more projects in accordance with the desired program objectives.

Each field office had specific objectives pertaining to the unique political context of the cities in which they worked, with Port-au-Prince facing the added complication of persistent insecurity. For this reason, the program operated with a general framework of principles and a great deal of flexibility. In general, program staff found what worked in their communities by being close to the process and listening to partner.

### *Targeting Where and With Whom to Work*

- In order to have the desired effect (achieve critical mass) it is necessary to have a relatively narrow geographic focus and/or a significant amount of funding.
- In selecting a zone of intervention, ask the questions: Is the source of conflict/violence something that can be addressed with this program? And will the program be able to achieve a significant effect?
- If an area is too hot to enter and you lack a good, reliable partner, start with projects on the outskirts and gradually move toward the more tense and violent zones.
- Work with groups, not individuals. Groups should be a-political.
- DO NOT work with any individuals with criminal ties, gang affiliation or strong political identity, regardless of their membership in useful groups.

### *Process and Flexibility*

- Infrastructure projects are a good start because they are easy to monitor in times of insecurity, provide tangible results quickly, and provide shells for future activities.
- Avoid unsustainable projects like public latrines and clean-ups (unless as flood mitigation or for a specific purpose).
- Don't solve problems for the community but rather stop activities and assure the community that things will resume when they find a solution. Remind them that this is their project and we don't really care if it ever gets built or not. Also, the community should be made aware that the failure of the project will be their responsibility as well, and projects that fail will affect the likelihood of future projects.

### *Project Identification*

- Projects should be in response to formally expressed community needs. Support existing initiatives; don't impose project ideas on the community.
- For all humanitarian actors everywhere, it is important to remember that just because you are helping the community does not mean that you are not also helping the bad guys. Do not select projects that can be manipulated later on.

### *Community Ownership*

- Consider the community as a single entity rather than treating one association separately from another. As above, this means that all actors will be equally concerned with the successes of their neighbors and be affected by the consequences of the failures.
- By placing the community in charge of selecting workers, it ensures that local residents are part of the project, as well as benefiting from the salary. No single person (particularly mayors or political leaders) should be responsible for this, as it can easily be used for political gain.

### *Multiple Partners*

- Make a new committee for each project and limit the life of the committee to the duration of the project
- If there is only one civic group involved in the committee, look for another group for subsequent projects to ensure that credit is diffused throughout the community.
- Some partners wear multiple hats (i.e. Head of Municipality and head of a political party) and it is vital to always communicate with the partner in his institutional capacity rather than political persona.

### *Government Involvement*

- Make sure the government is (or at least appears) involved in all projects to ensure that community frustration toward it is not actually increased.
- A negative answer is still an answer and demonstrates responsiveness, acknowledgment of the shantytown and respect to residents.
- Respect government plans and technical capabilities because a water kiosk is useless if nobody fills the pipes.
- Work with General Directors of Ministries rather than the Minister him/herself. The DG is likely the only person with enough authority to order resources to be committed, and not subject to the same rate of turnover as Ministers which change with every new government or upon the decision of the Prime Minister.

### *Critical Mass*

- Achieve a critical mass of activities either through a gradual accumulation of projects or an initial set of five or six projects at the same time, according to the level of tension. A strategy of conflict reduction requires that HTI move quickly with a large number of projects at the same time to solidify and sustain stability once the community has made its move. A conflict prevention strategy can achieve critical mass gradually over a longer period of time.
- Do not decrease significantly the level of activity until a natural ending point has been reached such as the end of the transition or handover to another process. If momentum is lost before conditions for durable stability are achieved, progress may be lost.
- Critical mass can be achieved through labor-intensive infrastructure projects and then sustained by increasing the portfolio of HTI projects to include with activities and events, which are cheaper and useful in providing symbols and messages.

### *Media and Messaging*

- Media should be cognizant of and sensitive to the potential risk it could pose to community partners should gangs perceive a threat before security is sufficient to protect partners.
- Messaging works best when it has been generated by the community.

### *Transparency / Building Trust*

- Use tenders for project implementation whenever possible, but do not print budgets on grant documents signed with the partners to avoid collusion with contractors.
- Communication with “the community” should take place at public, advertised meetings to avoid suspicions and limit the committee's corruptibility.
- Do what you say you will do and be honest about why you can't if you can't.
- Deliver. Deliver reactively. Deliver quality.

### *Working in Insecurity*

- Listen to the community.
- Small infrastructure projects are easiest to monitor remotely using reliable community partners and digital cameras.
- No clean-ups.
- Support the establishment of the Rule of Three (community initiative supported by law enforcement and humanitarian assistance) by working behind the scenes to bring in MINUSTAH military, but only if this action is validated by the community. If MINUSTAH is reluctant to respond, request assistance (through OTI) from the State Department.
- Do not appear in public with law enforcement of any kind (neither MINUSTAH nor HNP) or you run the risk of staff and partners becoming soft targets.

## Annex 3: Lessons Learned – Working in Gang Areas

Conflict situations involving gangs are inherently unpredictable and complex, depending on the nature of the gang, the community in which it is based, and the relationship between the two. Stabilization of an area with gang activity, therefore, requires a thorough analysis of the situation, appropriate responsiveness, nuance, and a strong reliance on local partners. The following are lessons learned through HTI's successful efforts to support community-driven stabilization of activities with high levels of gang activity.

1. Know the limitations of the program and the type of violence it is able to address. HTI was not able to combat violence with no geographic or political roots, such as the road banditry that plagued cities like Ouanaminthe or the dispersed threat presented by the ex-FAd'H.
2. Remember the "Rule of Three." Freeing neighborhoods from gang control and influence must be a community-driven process. Nevertheless, this process must be supported by law enforcement (so the community feels protected from retaliatory violence and law breakers face the consequences) and by humanitarian assistance (to provide an influx of resources sufficient to catalyze anti-gang action).
3. Avoid working directly with gang members at all costs, not only for legal reasons but also to avoid legitimizing gangs and reinforcing their ill-gotten authority. This applies both to identifying potential projects as well as solving problems on projects generated by the gangs.
4. Do not be a problem-solver. Instead, stop project activities and place the responsibility upon community members and law enforcement to overcome obstacles or respond to conflicts with gangs. The idea is to isolate potential spoilers of stability by empowering peaceful community groups and enabling government institutions to respond to frustrations that gangs/political actors could exploit. The shared experience of overcoming an obstacle builds cohesion. Reassure partners that work will resume when the problem is solved, and react quickly when it is.
5. The premise of the HTI program was that a critical mass of geographically targeted projects that respond rapidly to community needs will result in changed attitudes and behaviors. To have the rapid impact desired from stabilization initiatives, geography, flexibility, speed, and scale matter. Critical mass can be achieved all at once or gradually.
6. Stay under the radar. If critical mass is being achieved through a gradual build up of projects, this must be done without attracting the attention of the gangs. If too much attention was called to an initiative in an area that does not yet have sufficient rule of law to protect citizens, community partners could be put at risk of retaliation by gangs. This means that media and messaging should be used sparingly and wisely and must be thought out very carefully.
7. Share responsibility and credit. Involve people from multiple sectors (community, government, civic groups, etc.) to ensure that no one actor takes sole credit for the project to use as a political tool. Implement projects through temporary committees established only for the duration of the project. The limited lifespan of the implementation committee avoids it from becoming a tool for legitimizing ill-gotten authority, exacerbating/creating power struggles, or presenting an opportunity for corruption or pressure by gangs.

## Annex 4: Key Outcomes and Relevant Grants

During its first two years, HTI achieved important interim results in its efforts to stabilize volatile communities in Haiti. This document highlights specific programmatic aims and accomplishments and the associated grants or groups of grants. This paper also describes some projects that were not successful. The date listed is the clearance date.

### Tipping the Balance

The principle of tipping the balance of power in a community from gangs to civic organizations was most clearly illustrated in Bel Air where HTI signed a package of grants in one neighborhood and momentum spread to adjacent areas.

#### *Fort National*

|           |                                                            |             |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| IOMPAP096 | Fort National Clean-Up                                     | 30 Aug 2005 |
| IOMPAP098 | Rehabilitation of the St. Michel Community & Health Center | 29 Sep 2005 |
| IOMPAP100 | Fort National Sapatann Terrain d'Entente                   | 10 Sep 2005 |
| IOMPAP104 | Fort National South Terrain d'Entente                      | 10 Sep 2005 |
| IOMPAP105 | Fort National North Terrain d'Entente                      | 10 Sep 2005 |
| IOMPAP106 | Road Rehabilitation and Wall Construction in Fort National | 23 Sep 2005 |
| IOMPAP111 | Paving Pedestrian Walkways in Fort National                | 23 Sep 2005 |

#### *Ti Chery*

|           |                                                     |             |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| IOMPAP126 | Ti Chery Neighborhood Clean Up                      | 26 Oct 2005 |
| IOMPAP127 | Concrete Paving of Corridors in Ti Chery and Solino | 21 Oct 2005 |
| IOMPAP128 | Ti Chery Canal Construction and Adoquin Paving      | 21 Oct 2005 |
| IOMPAP129 | Ti Chery Public Square Terrain d'Entente            | 24 Oct 2005 |
| IOMPAP130 | Completion of Paving Impasse Lamarque (Ti Chery)    | 27 Oct 2005 |

#### *St. Martin*

|           |                                               |             |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| IOMPAP134 | Concreting of Corridor Tamarin Club (Bel Air) | 18 Nov 2005 |
| IOMPAP135 | Paving of Rue Mariela (Bel Air)               | 8 Nov 2005  |
| IOMPAP136 | Paving Corridor Ti Chery (Bel Air)            | 18 Nov 2005 |
| IOMPAP137 | Completion of Corridor Ti Jean (Bel Air)      | 18 Nov 2005 |

### Diminish Mobilization Capacity of Spoilers

HTI reduced the quantity of idle people in areas of tension by providing employment for adults and activities for youth.

|           |                                                           |             |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| IOMGNV004 | Support to TPTC for Post-Flood Canal Cleaning             | 23 Nov 2005 |
| IOMPAP050 | Romulus Road Rehabilitation                               | 3 Jun 2005  |
| IOMPAP075 | Play for Peace Summer Youth Activities Petit Place Cazeau | 8 Aug 2005  |

### Building Support for MINUSTAH

The activities in Bel Air described above built support for MINUSTAH throughout the area. Additionally, HIT implanted activities that complemented projects sponsored by MINUSTAH forces on the outskirts of Cite Soleil.

|           |                              |             |
|-----------|------------------------------|-------------|
| IOMPAP196 | Rehabilitation of Volcy Road | 28 Feb 2006 |
| IOMPAP197 | Volcy Road Terrain d'Entente | 28 Feb 2006 |

### Social Integration

An objective of the HTI was to promote a sense of inclusion among residents of traditionally neglected neighborhoods. The theory behind this was that people who feel like they are part of the transition will be less likely to engage in activities to destabilize it.

|           |                          |            |
|-----------|--------------------------|------------|
| IOMPAP033 | Carnival for Cite Soleil | 1 Feb 2005 |
|-----------|--------------------------|------------|

This grant ensured that residents who could not leave Cite Soleil because of the violence were still able to enjoy traditional Carnival festivities.

|           |                                                     |             |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| IOMLCY014 | Latourterelle Plage Public Square Terrain d'Entente | 16 Dec 2005 |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------|

Les Cayes mayor reported that residents from outside of La Savanne, a neighborhood regarded by many to be too violent to enter, were coming specifically to enjoy this new public space, removing the stereotypes of the area.

|           |                                                       |             |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| IOMCAP013 | Sainte Philomene Canal Rehabilitation                 | 18 Aug 2005 |
| IOMCAP014 | Dos Centre de Sante Drainage Canal Rehabilitation     | 18 Aug 2005 |
| IOMCAP015 | Sainte Philomene Canal Rehabilitation: Second Section | 18 Aug 2005 |
| IOMCAP016 | Isidor Canal Rehabilitation                           | 18 Aug 2005 |

After a big rain, which left many of the nicer areas of Cap Haitien flooded, residents of the shantytowns invited their neighbors from the flooded area to visit because the canal cleaning projects ensured that their homes and shops were not flooded.

|           |                                                             |             |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| IOMSTM020 | Municipal Vocational Training School                        | 10 Jun 2005 |
| IOMSTM032 | Portail Montrouis Play for Peace Summer Youth Activities    | 23 Aug 2005 |
| IOMSTM039 | Portail Montrouis Basketball Terrain d'Entente              | 21 Oct 2005 |
| IOMSTM040 | Portail Montrouis Public Square Terrain d'Entente           | 21 Oct 2005 |
| IOMSTM043 | Improving Water Distribution in Portail Montrouis           | 21 Oct 2005 |
| IOMSTM051 | Play for Peace Reconciliation Tournament: Portail Montrouis | 13 Dec 2005 |

A leader of a local development organization in Portail Montrouis said to the HTI Program Officer that thanks to HTI, residents were no longer ashamed to admit that they were from Portail Montrouis and were proud of their neighborhood.

### **Changing Minds – Within the Community**

HTI focused on bringing tangible indications that peace is accompanied by prosperity and positive momentum. This was illustrated with the Bel Air initiative above as well as the social inclusion activities. Additionally, specific grants focused on removing symbols of violence in communities to aide in the process of moving past the unrest.

|           |                                          |             |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|-------------|
| IOMPAP042 | Bel Air Terrain d'Entente Rehabilitation | 19 May 2005 |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|-------------|

This project repaired a public kiosk that had been badly burned in conflict between residents and police.

|           |                                        |             |
|-----------|----------------------------------------|-------------|
| IOMPAP166 | Gwo Roch Basketball Terrains d'Entente | 16 Dec 2005 |
|-----------|----------------------------------------|-------------|

This grant transformed into a sports field an area that was used by gangs for voodoo ceremonies before they committed illegal activities.

### **Changing Minds – Outside the Community**

Two different types of grants attempted to demonstrate to the wider Haitian public the positive (non-criminal) activities and accomplishments of residents of volatile communities. The first set were media grants to promote the activities of HTI partners, and the second set were activities co-sponsored by the Inter-ministerial Commission of the Prime Minister which brought sports teams from partner communities to national venues for high-profile events.

|           |                                                            |             |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| IOMPAP030 | Extending the Effect of HTI through Media                  | 16 Dec 2004 |
| IOMPAP034 | Reaching Out with Radio                                    | 24 Feb 2005 |
| IOMPAP046 | Play for Peace Program Launch                              | 13 May 2005 |
| IOMPAP078 | Communicating Peace: Training for Trainers                 | 26 Aug 2005 |
| IOMPAP079 | Communicating Peace: Port-au-Prince                        | 26 Aug 2005 |
| IOMPAP116 | Grand Opening: Carrefour-Feuilles Community Cyber Center   | 19 Jan 2006 |
| IOMPAP144 | Building Capacity for Reporting on Community Stabilization | 23 Mar 2006 |

|           |                                          |              |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|--------------|
|           | Activities                               |              |
| IOMPAP174 | Haiti Transition Initiative Calendar     | 9 Dec 2005   |
| IOMCAP017 | Communicating Peace: Cap Haitien         | 26 Aug 2005  |
| IOMPGV044 | Communicating Peace: Petit Goave         | 26 Aug 2005  |
| IOMSTM033 | Communicating Peace: St. Marc            | 26 Aug 2005  |
| IOMPAP049 | Play for Peace Gala Football Day         | 10 June 2005 |
| IOMPAP080 | Play for Peace International Match       | 19 Jul 2005  |
| IOMPAP177 | Play for Peace Holiday Tournament Finals | 16 Dec 2005  |

### Community Initiate

Because HTI grants build community cohesion, some communities demonstrate post-project initiative, accomplishing positive things for the neighborhoods without HTI assistance.

IOMPAP008 Martissant 1 Street Rehabilitation 25 Jul 2004

After HTI rehabilitated a neighborhood street, vehicles were able to move more freely and more quickly. Residents pooled resources to construct speed bumps to slow cars, and they kept the street free of trash.

IOMPAP069 Cite Soleil 19 Play for Peace Summer Youth Activities 30 Jul 2005

One of the leaders of the Soleil 19 sports association (and a strong HTI partner) was wrongly imprisoned without charge for several months. All community members who worked on the summer camp donated a portion of their salaries to pay the necessary legal fees to have him released.

### Problematic and Failed Grants

IOMPAP005 Rehabilitation of Wharf Jeremie Road – Sidewalks 18 Nov 2005  
IOMPAP006 Rehabilitation of Wharf Jeremie Road – Drainage Canals 18 Nov 2005

The estimates made by the Ministry of Public Works were very poor, leaving a huge funding shortfall on their part to complete the works envisioned. While the HTI-funded component could be completed as a discreet activity, the project as a whole will seem unfinished to observers.

IOMPAP084 Capacity Building of Inter-ministerial Commission 30 Aug 2005

This was unsuccessful because the person hired to work with the ministries claimed that IMC coordinator was trying to extort half of his salary. He resigned. A second person was never hired because HTI was not able to reach consensus with the IMC coordinator. The person in question was highly qualified and seemed to be a good choice. The purpose of this project was to give resources to the commission to work more effectively, but the Coordinator made this impossible. The only recourse would have been to complain to the Prime Minister, which was not a viable option.

IOMPAP123 “Jam for Peace” Musical Competition 13 Oct 2005

This was signed with the MINUSTAH DDR Unit and was never realized due to lack of follow-through by DDR.

IOMSTM012 Ministry of Public Works Truck and Backhoe Repair 15 Oct 2004

This project illustrated the difficulty in doing this sort of project in the provinces. A local contractor was used, but all the parts had to come from the capital. There were extreme delays and cost overruns because of the lack of an adequate assessment before the work began. It would have been more efficient to transport the entire vehicle to Port-au-Prince for service at the affiliated dealership.

This project started as a good project with strong community support. Unfortunately, this support got a bit out of control when pressure was put on the IOM national staff engineer supervising the project to expand the works beyond the scope of the original contract. Under normal circumstances, this pressure would have been deflected by the international staff member, who would be relatively immune from local pressure. The Petit Goave office was not staffed by an international for approximately three months during project implementation when the contracted works were modified to construct a much bigger structure, resulting in a significant shortfall. This underscored the need for international staff presence to support local staff and relieve any undue pressure placed upon them by partners.