

Advocacy case studies

Uniting churches for a national movement in Haiti

Country:

Haiti

Themes:

Governance; disaster risk reduction; food security; human rights; social justice; church and community; corruption; livelihoods; water, sanitation, and hygiene; peacebuilding; environmental sustainability; health; children and education

Advocacy approaches:

Working in alliances and coalitions; church and community mobilisation; building relationships

Over the decades, Haiti has been negatively impacted by both natural disasters and corruption. The country is also the poorest in the Western hemisphere. Although the church in Haiti has existed for over 200 years and Christianity is the predominant faith of the population, church leaders have been reluctant to engage in civic and societal issues. In addition, the various denominations in Haiti have not worked harmoniously together for a long time.

In recent years, Tearfund has supported a campaign in Zimbabwe called 'The Zimbabwe We Want'. After hearing about the Zimbabwe campaign, Tearfund Haiti was inspired to implement a contextualised version in their country. Tearfund and our partner, World Relief, hosted Haitian church leaders at a retreat to reconcile the different denominations across long-standing fractures. There, key church leaders signed an official agreement to increase unity, transparency and communication and actively work towards peace and coordination, while maintaining autonomy. This agreement then enabled the wider leadership of Haiti's churches to meet and learn about church and community transformation (CCT), integral mission, and the biblical call of the church to achieve societal changes in Haiti through practical actions and civic engagement.

In response to their new understanding of the church's call in Haiti's society, these united church leaders together cast a vision about the changes they wanted to see in Haiti over the next 30 years. These changes included addressing the following issues:

- physical and mental health
- education
- family, youth, and sports
- governance

- law and justice
- public security and national defence
- economy and industry
- agriculture and land resource management
- social affairs and human relations
- territorial planning, infrastructure and services
- environment
- disaster risk reduction
- culture and civism

[These desired changes were written in this vision statement.](#) The statement has been officially endorsed by four of the largest evangelical networks in Haiti - Protestant Federation of Haiti (FPH), National Spiritual Council of Haitian Churches (CONASPEH), Federation of Pastors from the Great North region (FEPAGNO), and Council of Evangelical Churches of Haiti (CEEH) - as well as Christian NGOs, individual leaders, faith-based institutions, and other stakeholders.

These churches, united with a common vision, have established a national movement in Haiti called Ayiti Nap Bati A ('The Haiti We are Building') and are forming a three-year action plan to begin producing the changes they have envisioned. An important next step for this movement is to lobby government officials to transform their vision into reality, a step which has unfortunately been delayed by Covid-19. However, the movement's leaders are confident that government officials will engage with them, because the government understands how much power and influence the church holds with the population. So far, this process of unifying and mobilising the Haitian church has taught Christian leaders about the power of their unity. Even if they do not agree on everything, when they work harmoniously they can achieve powerful change.

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