



Until we are all equal

Child protection and education in humanitarian action

Needs assessment report for the South and South-East Departments

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Type, location and date of emergency	Multisectoral Rapid Assessment in the South and South-East departments following ongoing population movements in these areas.
Names of evaluation team members	Lucien Amani, Jean Giles Michelet and 8 External Investigators.
Places	Jacmel (Bas Cap Rouge, Lavaneau, Lamandou) and Cayes (Champlioie, Saint-Louis-du Sud, Camp-Perrin, Centre-ville)

Summary

The humanitarian situation in Haiti continues to give cause for concern. In the South and South-East departments, internal displacements have intensified due to the rise in power of Organized Criminal Groups in the Ouest department, particularly in Port-au-Prince, following the events of February and March 2023. These displacements exacerbate the vulnerability of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities.

The evaluation was based on field observations, interviews with key informants specializing in child protection and education, focus group discussions with parents, teachers and adolescents (boys and girls separately), and a literature review.

Preliminary findings reveal recurrent and widespread violations of children's rights, with a significant prevalence of gender-based violence, particularly affecting deported populations. Cases include large-scale sexual violence, including systematic rape of young girls during deportations to Anse-à-Pitre, and high rates of early and unwanted pregnancy among teenage girls aged 15 to 17. In addition, over 90% of displaced children have no access to education, and no specific assistance has been put in place in this area.

A multi-sector humanitarian response is strongly recommended for all affected areas, with particular emphasis on targeted interventions in child protection and access to education.

Introduction

Overview of the humanitarian situation

The humanitarian situation in Haiti is deteriorating rapidly due to gang violence, mainly in Port-au-Prince. In 2024, more than 702,000 people, 52% of them children¹, were displaced. The majority (75%) found refuge in the provinces, particularly in the Grand Sud (45%), while 25% were welcomed in Port-au-Prince, often in precarious conditions². These massive displacements have created a situation of overcrowding in the refuge sites, where living conditions are unhealthy and precarious.

The education system is in dire straits. More than a million children face obstacles in accessing education, and 400,000 have been unable to attend school, according to data withdrawn in October 2024, due to

¹ Pag 2- [2025-HAC-Haiti \(1\)](#)

² UNICEF, Haiti Humanitarian Situation Report No. 8, Pag 2-

displacement and school closures³. Since January 2024, more than 900 schools have closed due to attacks, fear of violence or because³ they are being used as shelters for displaced people⁴. The shortage of teachers, due to emigration and internal displacement, has also aggravated the situation.⁵

In terms of child protection, in 2023, 5% of households reported cases of children separated from their families, a rising trend. In the South-East region, these rates reached 15%⁶. In addition, children are exposed to serious risks of violence, including physical, psychological and sexual abuse. The lack of security and basic infrastructure means that many children live in highly vulnerable situations. In December 2024, an estimated 1.6 million children were in need of protective services⁷, including shelter, education and healthcare.

In terms of nutrition, as of December 2024, 1.2 million children are in urgent need of food assistance due to food insecurity caused by the conflict, the blocking of trade routes and the interruption of local agricultural production⁸. The situation is exacerbated by the lack of access to drinking water and adequate sanitation. More than a third of rural households have no access to improved water sources, and 21% of households have no sanitary facilities, increasing the risk of infectious diseases such as cholera, which continue to affect the country.

Projections for 2025 are alarming: it is estimated that 6 million people, including 3.3 million children, will need humanitarian aid due to the worsening crisis⁹. There is an urgent need to intervene in key areas such as education, nutrition, health, drinking water and child protection.

Security context

The security situation in Haiti is extremely unstable, marked by gang-related violence in Port-au-Prince and the Artibonite department, where armed gangs control vast areas and frequently clash with the resource-constrained security forces. Self-defense groups intensify the violence by attacking and killing suspected gang members. In 2023, homicides rose by 72% and kidnappings by 71% compared with the previous year.¹⁰

Schools and hospitals, often targeted in gang clashes, operate in slow motion. Staff are prevented from working, the sick forgo treatment, and many parents refuse to send their children to school for fear of stray bullets or kidnappings¹¹. This violence is the main cause of internal displacement, accounting for 99% of cases.¹²

Currently, 75% of the displaced reside in the provinces, mainly in the South, which hosts 45% of them, while the ZMPP now hosts 25%.¹³

Department ¹⁴	Displaced households	Displaced persons	% IDPs
South	27,441	116,602	17%

³ Pag 2- [UNICEF Haiti Humanitarian Situation Report No. 9 - October 2024](#)
⁴ Pag 2 - [13 UNICEF Haiti Humanitarian Situation Report No. 08 - September 2024](#)
⁵ Pag 4- [11. REACH-Haiti-Brief-Face-a-la-violence-et-aux-aleas-climatiques-Octobre-2024 \(1\)](#)
⁶ Pag 16- [10. DONE REACH-Haiti-Multisectoral-Need Assessment-MSNA-Protection-Results-October-2024 \(1\)](#)
⁷ Pag 2- [2025-HAC-Haiti \(1\)](#)
⁸ Pag 2- [2025-HAC-Haiti \(1\)](#)
⁹ Pag 2- [2025-HAC-Haiti \(1\)](#)
¹⁰ OCHA, HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND HAITI RESPONSE PLAN, Pag 6- <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/haiti/haiti-besoins-humanitaires-et-plan-de-reponse-cycle-de-programme-humanitaire-2024-publie-en-janvier-2024>
¹¹ OCHA, HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND HAITI RESPONSE PLAN, Pag 7- <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/haiti/haiti-besoins-humanitaires-et-plan-de-reponse-cycle-de-programme-humanitaire-2024-publie-en-janvier-2024>
¹² IOM, Haiti - Report on the internal displacement situation in Haiti - Round 8, Pag 8- <https://acortar.link/Byhhc2>
¹³ UNICEF, Haiti Humanitarian Situation Report No. 8, Pag 2- <https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/unicef-haiti-humanitarian-situation-report-no-08-september-2024>
¹⁴ [Haiti: Report on the internal displacement situation in Haiti - Round 8 \(September 2024\) - Haiti | ReliefWeb](#) (pag 5)

South East	21,368	82,366	12%
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Movement restrictions imposed by gangs and vigilante groups have also paralyzed markets and supply chains.

At the same time, precarious living conditions and lack of resources have compounded the risks for women and girls, who are exposed to exploitation, particularly in the form of transactional sex.¹⁵

Problems and aggravating factors

Haiti is classified in the "very high risk" category on the INFORM risk index due to its high exposure to climatic and geological hazards, as well as to violence. Among island countries, Haiti ranks third in terms of vulnerability to climate change.¹⁶

Forced displacement is one of the main consequences of the crisis in Haiti. Many displaced people are unable to return to their homes, as they are in areas controlled by armed groups¹⁷. In addition, relations with the Dominican Republic have deteriorated, leading to the closure of the border and making access to resources and international aid more difficult.

Haiti's geographical position makes it particularly vulnerable to hurricanes, tropical storms and earthquakes, affecting coastal areas and densely populated neighborhoods in particular. In November 2024, heavy rains caused flooding in the South, notably in Les Cayes, affecting 116,602 people and damaging agricultural infrastructure. In Les Cayes, many residents attribute the flooding to a lack of mitigation measures¹⁸. The situation is further complicated by the cholera epidemic, which remains difficult to control¹⁹. In 2024, over 83,000 suspected cases of cholera were reported, with children being the most vulnerable²⁰. The spreading of this disease has resulted in thousands of cases and deaths, mainly affecting the most vulnerable communities.

These events have exacerbated food insecurity. According to the IPC analysis published in September 2024, almost half the population (5.4 million) is acutely food insecure, including 2 million in phase 4 and over 6,000 people in phase 5, facing an imminent risk of famine²¹. The drought and insecurity have reduced agricultural production, once the main source of subsistence, severely impacting livelihoods in rural areas.

On the other hand, the deteriorating security situation has restricted population movements, impacting access to services, markets and livelihoods. This led to a 27% increase in the cost of the food basket between January and May 2024.²²

Finally, another aggravating factor is the significant shortfall in humanitarian funding for Haiti in 2024. Of the \$327.8 million raised, only \$271.5 million (83%) is allocated to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), while \$56.3 million (17%) comes from external sources. However, the HRP requires \$674 million, but only 40% of this amount has been funded, leaving a shortfall of \$402.3 million (or 60%) which compromises essential humanitarian actions.²³

Humanitarian access

¹⁵ UNFPA, Haiti Situation Report #8 - November 2024, Pag 2- <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/haiti-situation-report-8-november-2024#:~:text=An%20upsurge%20in%20violence%20by,care%2C%20protection%2C%20and%20education.>

¹⁶ Pag 14- [DONE- Haiti - Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024 \(January 2024\)](#)

¹⁷ Pag 2- [11. REACH-Haiti-Brief-Face-a-la-violence-et-aux-aleas-climatiques-Octobre-2024 \(1\)](#)

¹⁸ Pag 1- [OCHA inondations dans le Sud Nov 24](#)

¹⁹ Pag 16- [Haiti - Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024 \(January 2024\) \(1\)](#)

²⁰ Pag 5- [11. REACH-Haiti-Brief-Face-a-la-violence-et-aux-aleas-climatiques-Octobre-2024 \(1\)](#)

²¹ Pag 2- [13. UNICEF Haiti Humanitarian Situation Report No. 08 - September 2024](#)

²² Pag 2- [11. REACH-Haiti-Brief-Face-a-la-violence-et-aux-aleas-climatiques-Octobre-2024 \(1\)](#)

²³ Pag 1- [OCHA AperçuFinances 20241014](#)

Humanitarian access in Haiti has deteriorated significantly since February 2024, due to road closures imposed by armed gangs. The closure of the port of Port-au-Prince, the main cargo entry point, has particularly affected the arrival of humanitarian supplies, limiting the assistance available to the population.²⁴

At the same time, humanitarian access in Haiti deteriorated further between August 1 and October 15, 2024. According to OCHA, 131 access incidents were recorded in 9 of the country's 10 departments²⁵ . These obstructions are the result of multiple factors, including insecurity and the activities of armed groups.

In 2024, the humanitarian community planned to help 3.6 million people, 12% more than in 2023. This response is divided into two strategic objectives. The first objective is to provide a multi-sectoral emergency response to 2.2 million people, particularly in areas affected by insecurity, forced displacement, natural disasters and epidemics. The second objective is to strengthen the resilience of 3.6 million people through actions promoting sustainable solutions and emergency preparedness. ²⁶

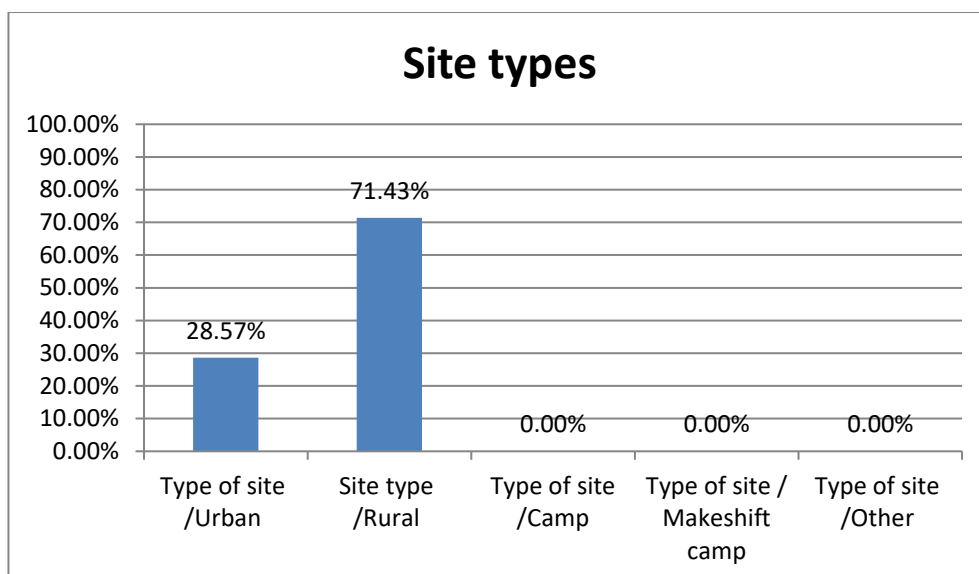
Currently, in the South department, only three protection organizations have provided psychosocial care services for 1,400 women, girls and boys. On the other hand, in the South-East department, only two organizations have provided psychosocial support to 460 beneficiaries.²⁷

Evaluation methodology

Zone / Site ²⁸	Total population	Displaced population (IDPs)
South East	706 220	34 977
South	865 165	36 813

Women make up just over half (52%) of the population concerned by this assessment, of whom almost half (45%) are aged 15-49, i.e. of reproductive age. People with disabilities or reduced mobility make up around 3% of the population.

²⁴ Pag 1- [11. REACH-Haiti-Brief-Face-a-la-violence-et-aux-aleas-climatiques-Octobre-2024 \(1\)](#)
²⁵ Pag 2 - [UNFPA. Haiti October SitRep. Oct 24](#)
²⁶ pag 18- [Haiti - Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024 \(January 2024\) \(1\)](#)
²⁷ Haiti- Child Protection area of responsibility (January to November 2024) [Dashboard CPAoR Haiti](#).
²⁸ Statistical Report 2023 Ministry of Health and Population
DTM Haiti September 2024



This assessment was carried out mainly in rural areas where there is a high concentration of internally displaced populations, in the South and South-East regions. Specifically in Jacmel: Bas Cap Rouge, Lavaneau, Lamandou; and in Les Cayes: Champloie, Saint-Louis-du Sud, Camp-Perrin, Centre-ville.

The main objective is to gather reliable data that will enable us to design interventions tailored to the specific needs of internally displaced persons. In addition to the contextual analysis, the assessment places particular emphasis on identifying humanitarian needs in the child protection and education sectors in emergency situations. Data collection methods and approaches:

Sites	Observation checklist	Child Protection Key Informant Interviews	Key informant interviews in Education	FGD Parents	FGD Teachers	FGD Girls (15-17yrs)	FGD Boys (15-17y)
South	3	3	3	3	4	4	3
South East	3	3	3	4	5	6	3

Data were collected by field interviewers using the Kobo Collect application, then processed in database form and represented using pivot tables: two teams (one for Jacmel and the other for Cayes), each made up of 5 people, including a Plan Haiti staff member and 4 interviewers. The Plan staff were responsible for conducting the civility checks in each commune, filling in the observation checklists and interviewing state key informants. External interviewers trained in data collection procedures were in charge of conducting the focus groups, with one facilitator and one note-taker per focus group. They were also responsible for interviewing other key informants. Data analysis was carried out by one of the members of the Plan International Haiti team, with support from the ROA (Region of Americas) Regional Emergency Response Manager and Plan Haiti's Business Development department, and technical coordination from Plan Spain. Data collection required additional time due to the limited availability of some key informants, as well as access constraints to remote target populations, mainly due to the state of the road infrastructure.

In the target areas, the focus groups were made up of 70% displaced people and 30% members of the host community. The social dynamic between these two components is positive, fostering a climate of mutual trust.

Results presentation

Sub-theme 1: Child protection in emergency situations

The child protection situation in Haiti remains particularly worrying, especially in the sites evaluated. The political crisis and ongoing instability have considerably increased the risk of exploitation and abuse. At the same time, the severe economic recession, marked by high levels of poverty and unemployment, is forcing many families to abandon their children or entrust them to relatives or strangers, thus facilitating child exploitation and trafficking.

The data gathered in this assessment reveal that populations continue to suffer physical and sexual violence, as well as other forms of abuse and exploitation. These risks are exacerbated by population movements, where numerous incidents, perpetrated by gangs or unidentified individuals, occur along the way. Although the overall security situation remains stable in the South and South-East departments, these regions are particularly affected by the influx of displaced populations, fleeing gang violence in the metropolitan areas of Port-au-Prince or deported from the Dominican Republic.

As a result, the inability of many displaced households to meet their children's basic needs, such as adequate food, access to education, healthcare, etc., is a major concern. After abandoning almost all their possessions prior to departure, or having been dispossessed and abused along the way, they find it extremely difficult to meet their children's basic needs.

In the context of deportations, many adolescent girls are confronted with sexual violence or forced into survival sex to access food or provide for their families, exacerbating their vulnerability.

Consequently, the situation in which displaced families find themselves in these two departments is one of the main factors favoring the occurrence of child protection incidents such as neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence, including sexual and gender-based violence against girls and teenagers.

1.1.1. Sexual and gender-based violence

Interviews conducted in both departments, both with key informants and during FGDs with parents and teenagers, revealed that the main forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are rape, early marriage and denial of resources. According to information gathered from groups of parents and girls, such violence particularly affects displaced girls and teenagers, or those from host communities. During focus groups with teenage girls and parents, we found that over 50% of rape cases occurred during displacement, with a large proportion of these cases occurring in the south, given the high number of internally displaced persons and the shorter distance to the south-east from Port-au-Prince. It should be noted that girls are still the most affected, as they are indirectly forced into survival sex due to a lack of household resources. It is worth noting the level of exposure to rape and other forms of gender-based violence as a result of promiscuity within host families, with boys and girls spending the night together in the same room, according to parents and girls interviewed in focus groups.

According to the data collected, 80% of parents and key informants interviewed identified the food crisis as the main factor contributing to the sexual exploitation of adolescent girls. These girls often find themselves forced to adopt negative coping mechanisms, such as risky behavior, to meet the daily economic needs of their households. In addition, some adolescent girls are sexually assaulted while searching for food in the fields or walking long distances in isolation to collect water. Such violence frequently leads to unwanted early pregnancies and increased exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

These incidents remain largely unreported, due to the fear of social stigmatization or reprisals on the part of the aggressors. This encourages the prevalence of out-of-court settlements and impunity for the perpetrators. The consequences of this situation are manifold, and negatively affect adolescent girls' education, access to healthcare, and ability to maintain basic hygiene standards, particularly with regard to menstrual management.

1.1.2. Unaccompanied and separated children

Data collected during the FGDs reveal a notable prevalence of separated and unaccompanied children, representing 14% in the South department and 8% in the South-East. The factors behind these separations are diverse and can be classified into two main categories:

1. **Displacement caused by armed violence:** The massive displacement of families fleeing gang violence in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area is a major cause of separation. Poor coordination between humanitarian actors operating in this region significantly limits the ability to respond to the specific needs of these vulnerable children.
2. **Economic vulnerability:** Precarious socio-economic conditions force some parents to send their children out of their communities to engage in activities such as begging or domestic work (restavèk). These dynamics increase children's vulnerability, exposing them to greater risks of exploitation, violence and violations of their fundamental rights.

These findings highlight the need to strengthen the cross-sectoral coordination of humanitarian actors to ensure an effective response, as well as to invest in economic resilience initiatives to mitigate the structural factors behind these separations.

1.1.3. Physical and emotional abuse

Information gathered during the FGDs and KIIs reveals an intensification of violence perpetrated by armed groups in the metropolitan areas of Port-au-Prince. These groups are systematically attacking homes and businesses through acts of looting and intimidation. The attacks, often accompanied by explicit threats, expose boys and girls to severe physical violence and prolonged psychological abuse

- Violence against women and girls: Armed groups use various forms of physical violence, including beatings, choking and slapping, targeting women and girls in particular. These acts are committed either as direct aggression, or as reprisals against those they fail to exploit sexually.
- Psychological and social effects: These acts of violence have a profound impact on the mental health of victims, causing complex psychosocial trauma and compromising their long-term well-being.

The cumulative impact of this violence can be seen in:

- Increased psychosocial distress among survivors.
- A significant deterioration in living conditions and safety in affected communities.
- A weakening of community and individual resilience mechanisms.

1.1.4. Mental health and psychosocial distress

Data collected from parents and key informants point to a marked increase in behavioral disorders among displaced children, directly linked to the impact of gang violence. Trauma caused by the extreme violence experienced during forced displacement manifests itself in after-effects such as recurrent nightmares, mutism, chronic anxiety, aggression and self-destructive behavior. In the absence of adequate care,

these adolescents develop risky behaviors, including delinquency, drug use and alcohol abuse. This problem is particularly prevalent in the peri-urban communal sections of Cayes and Jacmel.

FGD participants, key informants and adolescents themselves highlighted a critical deficit in accessible psychosocial support services to meet these growing needs. This deficit is compounded by a widespread lack of awareness of the care mechanisms available, both at community level and in institutional services. In addition, few humanitarian actors, both national and international, offer safe spaces or community structures where children and adolescents can benefit from structured activities aimed at improving their psychosocial and emotional well-being.

Access to specialized mental health services also remains very limited, even within existing health structures, due to the shortage of specialists in the provinces compared with Port-au-Prince. This situation exacerbates the vulnerability of affected children.

These findings underline the urgent need to reinforce mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) interventions with inclusive and adapted community approaches, such as structured recreational activities for children and specialized care provided by trained psychosocial assistants.

1.1.5. Children associated with armed forces and groups

Discussions with parents during the FGDs revealed that 5% of children show a tendency to return to Port-au-Prince to join armed groups, attracted by the promise of rapid access to financial resources to meet their needs. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in Jacmel, due to its geographical proximity to the capital.

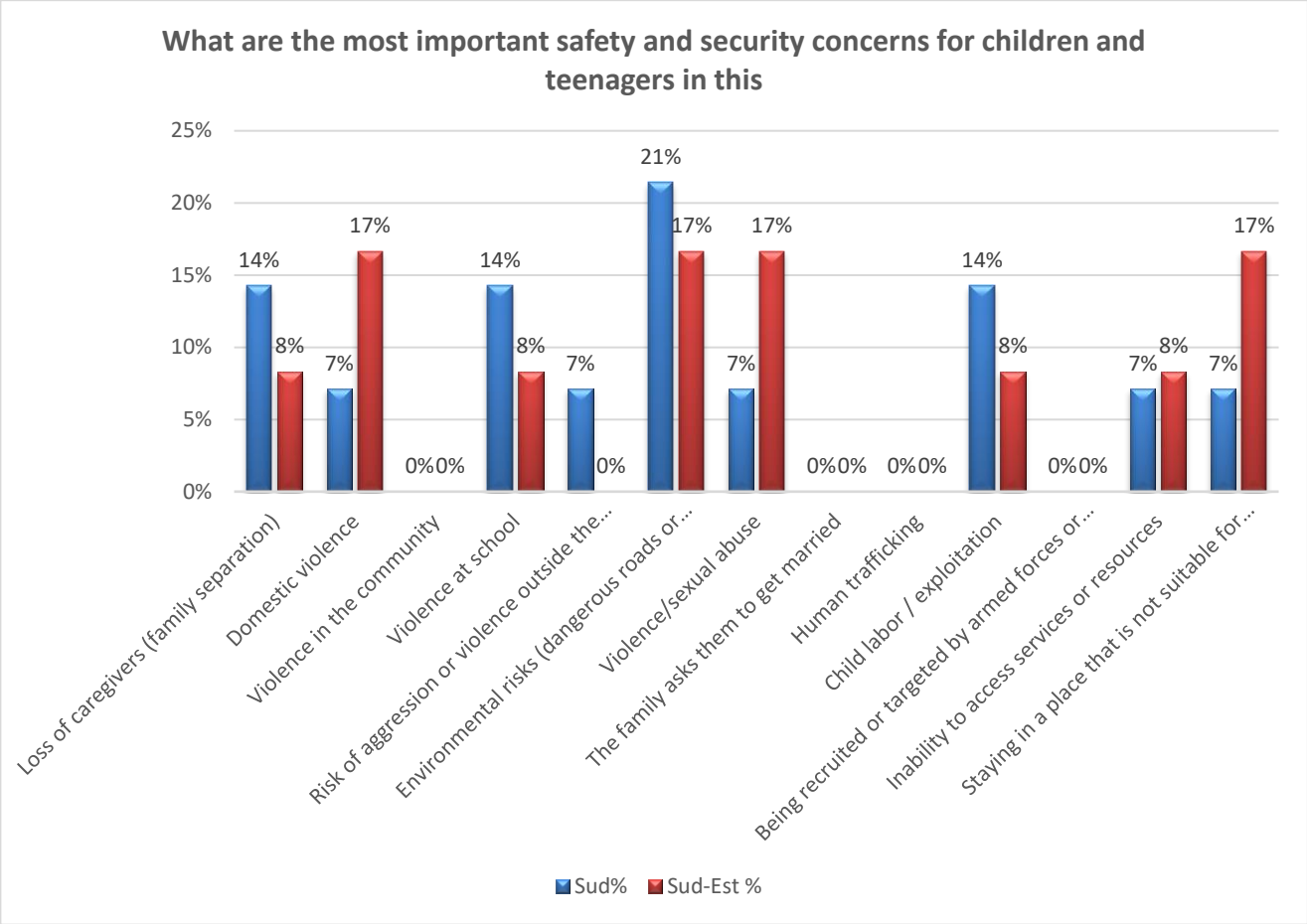
However, according to the latest Protection Cluster Dashboard, no cases of children associated with armed forces and groups (CAAFAG) were reported in the Sud and Sud-Est departments, highlighting a gap between community perceptions and the official data available.

1.2. Access to protection services

Access to services would not be a major obstacle if, on the one hand, the beneficiary populations were sufficiently informed about the availability of existing services, and, on the other, if the practice of silence regarding cases of GBV within communities were not so widespread. According to the data collected, over 40% of key informants confirm that GBV survivors prefer to remain silent or, in the best case, confide in a close relative, for fear of reprisals or stigmatization. Furthermore, access to essential services such as psychotherapy, medical care and legal assistance remains limited due to their cost, forcing survivors to fend for themselves.

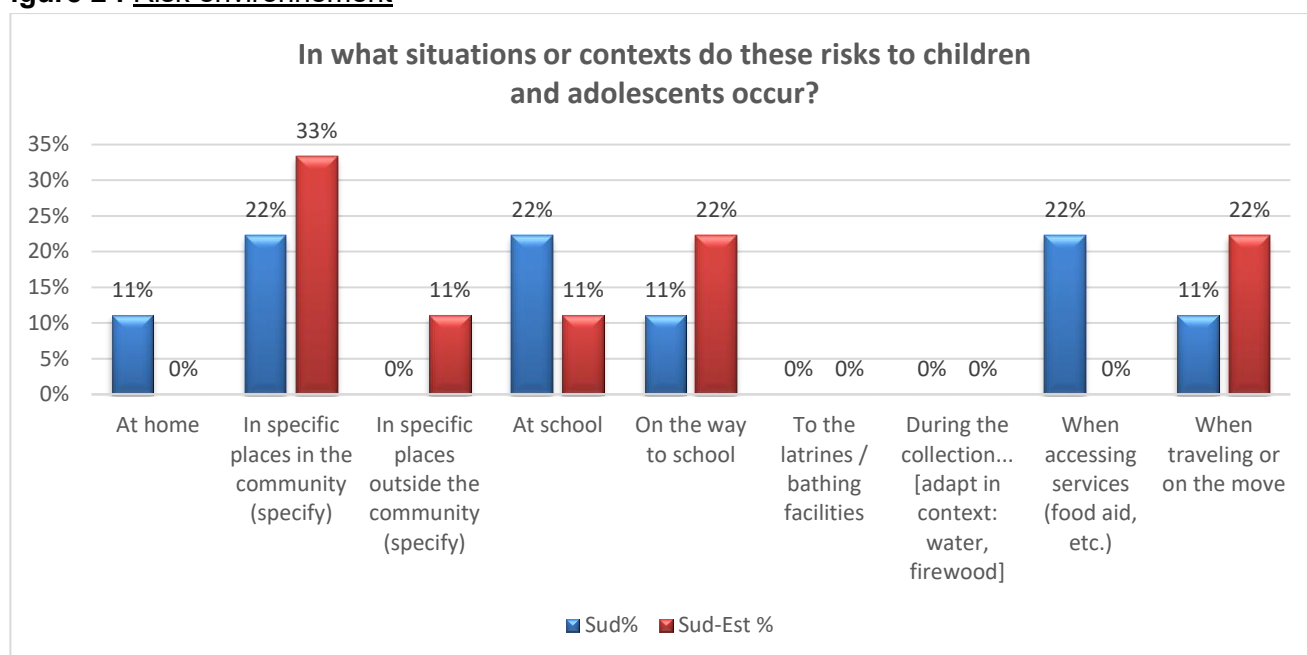
In the South and South-East regions, humanitarian funding for protection remains insufficient, compromising free access to quality child protection services. For example, only Plan International in the South-East and Save the Children in the South offer child protection services that meet international standards. What's more, the Institut du Bien-Être Social et de Recherches (IBESR), the main state institution in charge of child protection, is unable to deploy agents in all the communes concerned. This limitation is part of a context of partial paralysis of state services, directly linked to the dysfunction of public institutions. As a result, IBESR's interventions are mainly limited to awareness-raising activities and the promotion of children's fundamental rights, for lack of sufficient material and human resources. The limited technical capacity of some local actors to implement quality responses, combined with a low reporting rate and insufficient data sharing by partners (notably through the feeding of the Child Protection Working Group's 5W matrix), constitutes a major structural challenge. These shortcomings must be addressed as a matter of priority in order to strengthen the effectiveness, coordination and coverage of child protection interventions.

Figure 1: Types of incidents faced by children and teenagers



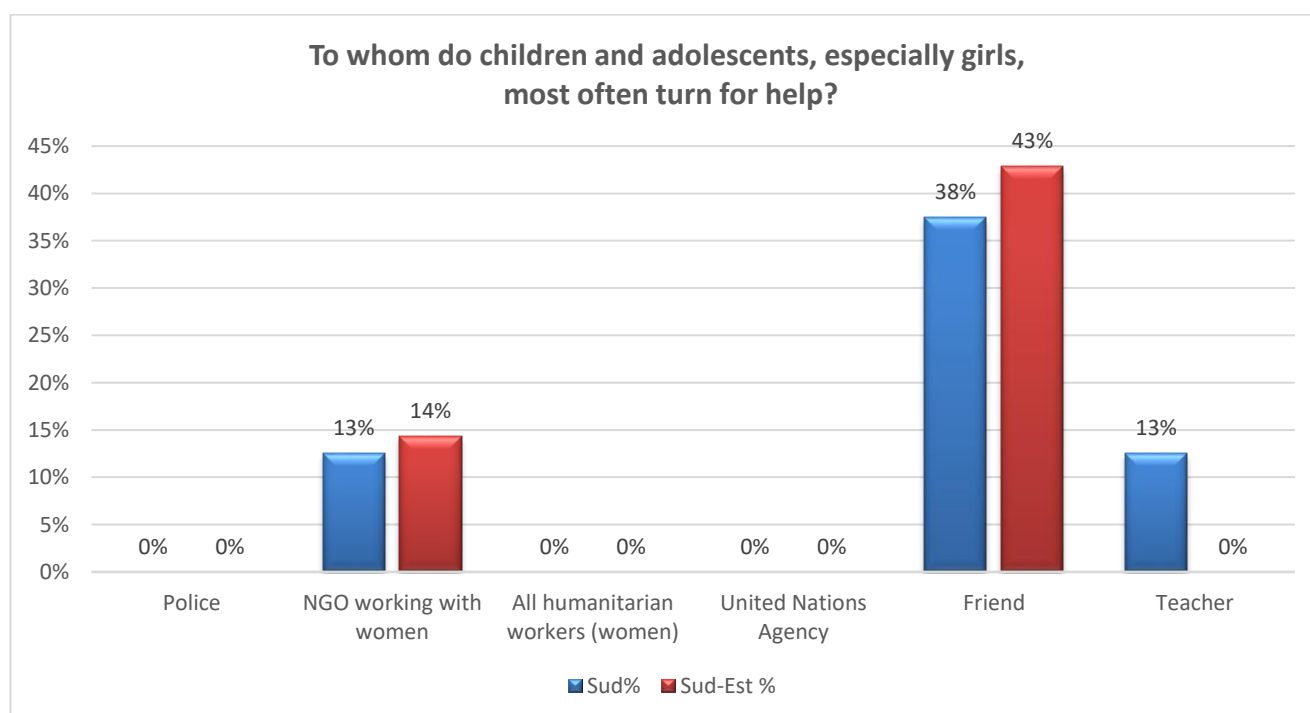
Comment: On the basis of information gathered from key informants, parents and adolescents, child protection incidents occur largely during displacement from Port-au-Prince to the Grand Sud. This graph shows that displaced people heading south were much more exposed to environmental risks. For the rest of the incidents, the percentage remains almost identical in both departments. 75% of the girls in the focus groups said that abuse at home was perpetrated by members of the host families in exchange for certain gifts or donations, view of their situation of vulnerability linked to displacement and the loss of personal belongings. 25% said that sexual violence had occurred during the search for water or food in the fields. In both departments, displaced children are used for daily work in exchange for food or used clothing, according to other information gathered during focus groups with adolescent boys.

Figure 2 : Risk environnement



Comment: Children and teenagers are mainly victims of abuse when on the move, fleeing areas where insecurity is high, then in specific places in the community, such as fields, remote water sources, wandering around begging or in the homes of host families. This information was backed up by displaced parents, who said in discussions that they found it difficult to keep their children stable at home without having to offer them food or clothing. In addition, children and teenagers face greater protection risks in specific areas of the community in the South-East than in the East, due to the lack of financial means to acquire the basic necessities to meet their needs. Similarly, on the way to school, the risks are higher in the South-East, due to the fact that displaced children can't easily access the schools closest to the city center, as they are expensive in terms of school fees. At school, on the other hand, risks are higher in the South, due to certain problems of cohabitation between former resident pupils and new displaced pupils

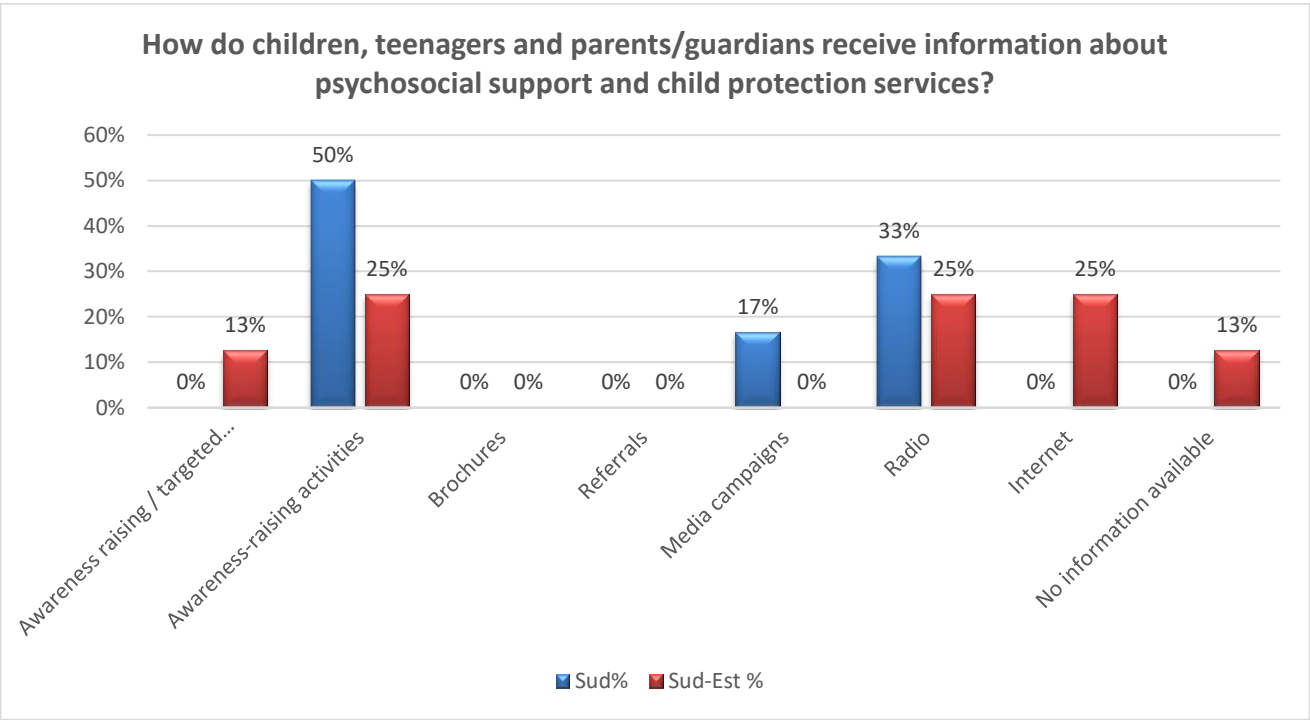
Figure 3: Reference options for reporting protection-related problems



Comment: Due to a lack of awareness and information on existing care mechanisms, children and adolescents surviving violence tend to confide mainly in family members or close friends. This tendency is often explained by fear of social stigmatization or rejection by those around them. On the other hand, some survivors, fearing reprisals from the perpetrators, choose not to reveal their situation. This silence often leads to late identification of cases, when signs of psychosocial distress become visible.

Only 27% of young people interviewed for the evaluation said they sought support from NGOs. These results highlight the urgent need to strengthen the mapping of available services and to conduct community awareness campaigns. These initiatives should aim to improve recognition of the signs of psychosocial distress, provide information on the reasons for seeking care, and promote rapid access to specialized services. Such an approach would help to reduce stigmatization and promote early and effective referral of survivors to appropriate support structures.

Figure 4: Sources of information on child protection services



Comment: In host communities, humanitarian and state actors implement initiatives to disseminate information on access to care services, notably through awareness-raising sessions, radio campaigns and community mobilization activities. However, displaced and deported populations face significant obstacles in accessing modern sources of information, such as media campaigns and the internet, which limits their access to key messages.

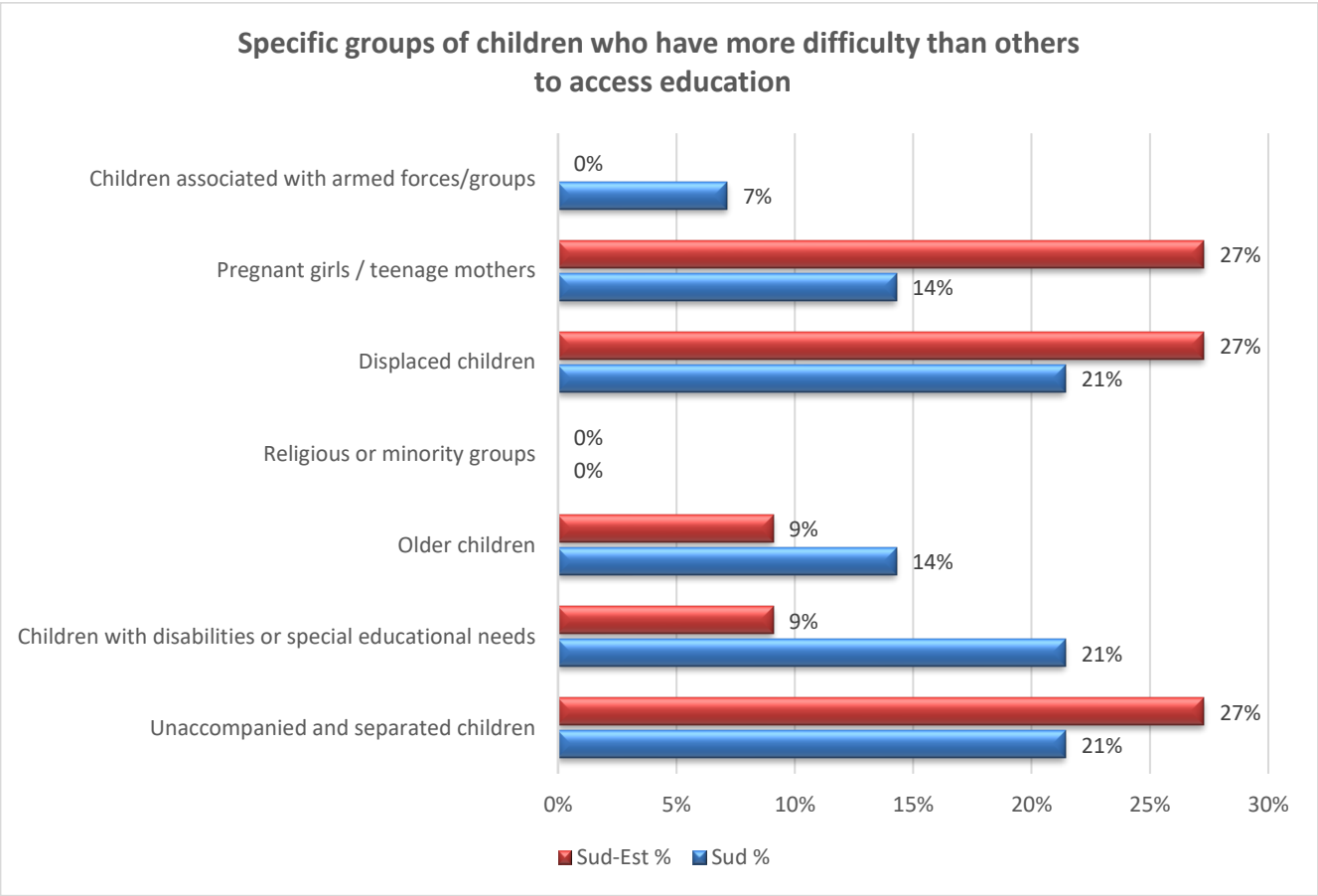
These findings underline the strategic importance of specifically targeting displaced populations with appropriate awareness campaigns, notably by reinforcing the use of radio as an essential broadcasting channel for reaching marginalized and vulnerable groups. The radio is the best way to reach a greater number of people, especially those who do not have access to smartphones and cannot access messages via social networks.

Sub-theme 2: Education in emergency situations

Widespread violence, forced displacement and massive school closures have had a significant impact on access to education in Haiti, seriously compromising the fundamental right to learn for thousands of children. In 2024, UNICEF Haiti estimates that there were over 700,000 internally displaced people in the country, including 200,000 school-age children, with a notable concentration in the Grand Sud regions. Of these children, some 103,000 live in situations of prolonged displacement, mainly in the Sud and Sud-Est departments, which were the focus of this assessment.

The Haitian education system is undergoing major disruption as a result of growing insecurity, particularly in areas under the influence of armed groups. This situation drastically limits children's access to education, the main factors being the closure of schools and the lack of qualified teachers capable of providing a safe and appropriate education in these high-risk contexts.

Figure 5: Access to education in the South and South-East

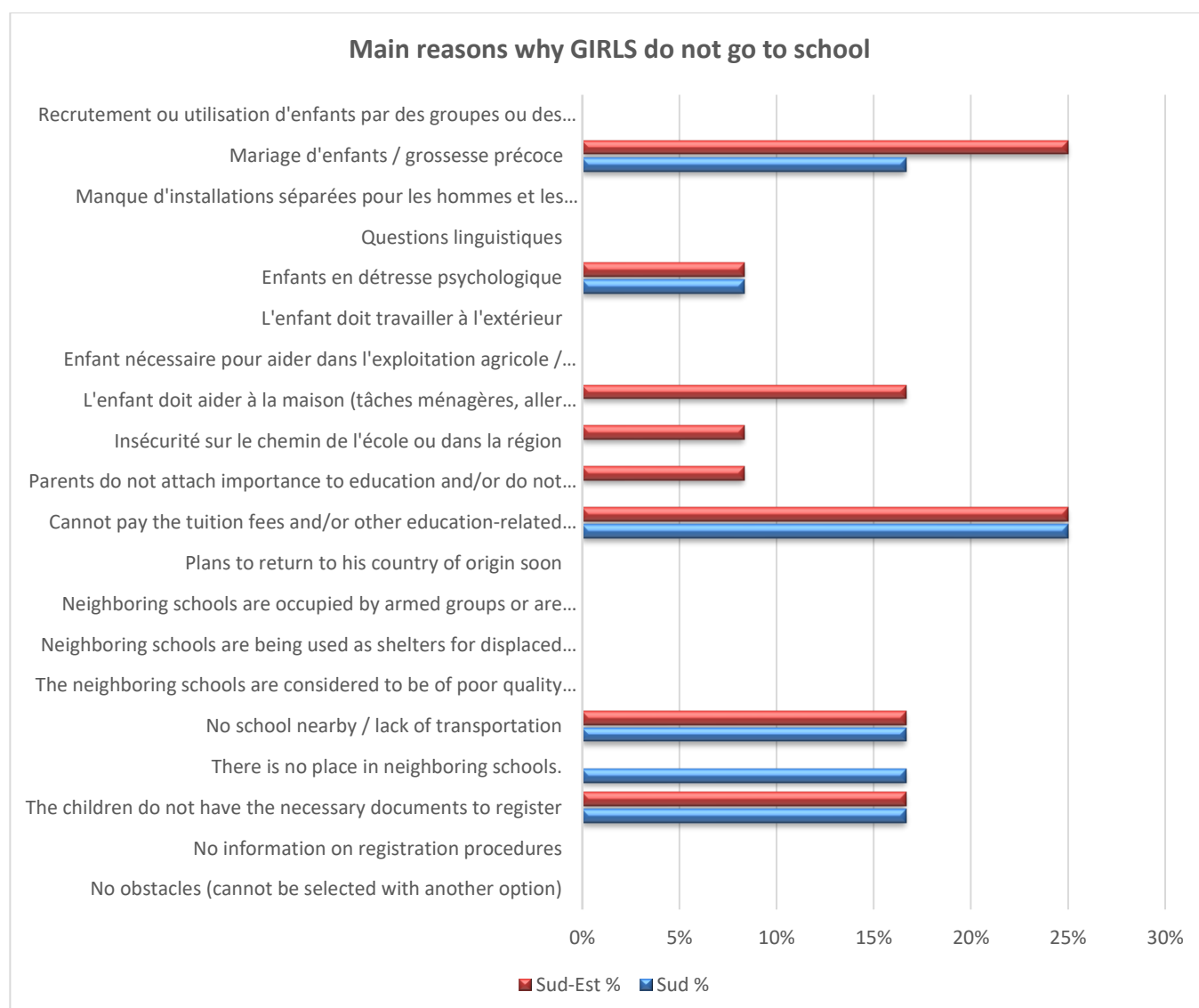


Comment: Early pregnancy is a major obstacle to girls' access to education, severely limiting their opportunities for learning and personal development in the two departments evaluated. Furthermore, unaccompanied and/or displaced children face significant obstacles to accessing education, mainly due to socio-economic challenges exacerbated by the current political crisis. These findings highlight the importance of targeted awareness-raising campaigns aimed at adolescent girls, focusing on their rights and their inclusion in the humanitarian education response.

Furthermore, children living with disabilities, often among the most marginalized groups, are also among the most vulnerable populations in terms of access to education. Their increasing exclusion from educational opportunities highlights the urgent need to design and implement inclusive and adapted

solutions. Specific follow-up is needed to meet their particular needs and overcome structural barriers to their integration into the school system.

Figure 6: Reasons for girls not attending school



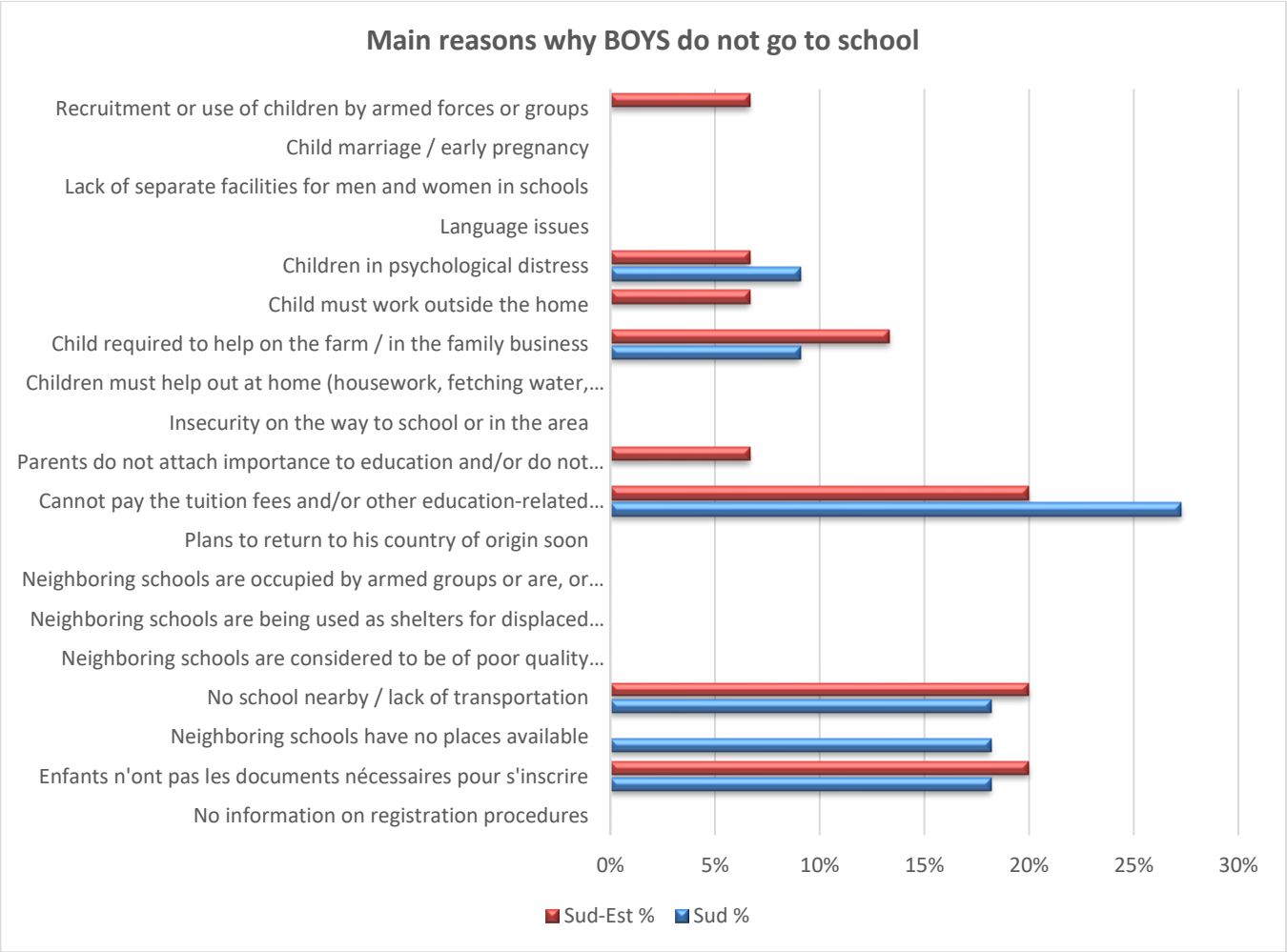
Comment: School fees represent the main obstacle to access to education for girls and teenagers in the two regions evaluated, forcing many girls to stay at home to perform household chores or enter into early unions. These dynamics restrict their opportunities for personal development and empowerment. This situation fuels a vicious circle in which child marriage and early pregnancy, already identified as major obstacles, further limit girls' access to education. Furthermore, the closure of school infrastructures, often linked to population displacements, exacerbates this problem by reducing educational opportunities for girls.

In the Sud-Est department, the data reveal specific reasons for girls' non-enrolment, such as the lack of priority given by parents to their education, or the requirement that girls contribute to domestic chores. These findings underline the importance of awareness-raising campaigns aimed at parents on the value of educating girls. At the same time, the obstacles shared by both departments include the absence of nearby schools and the lack of administrative documents required for school enrolment.

Girls affected by these problems are particularly vulnerable, especially when on the move or in temporary accommodation. In these precarious contexts, they are exposed to increased risks of sexual abuse, often

perpetrated by individuals from the host communities, exacerbating violations of their fundamental rights and their exclusion from the education system. This precariousness also increases their exposure to early pregnancy and recourse to survival sex, amplifying the challenges linked to their protection and educational inclusion.

Figure 7: Reasons for boys not attending school



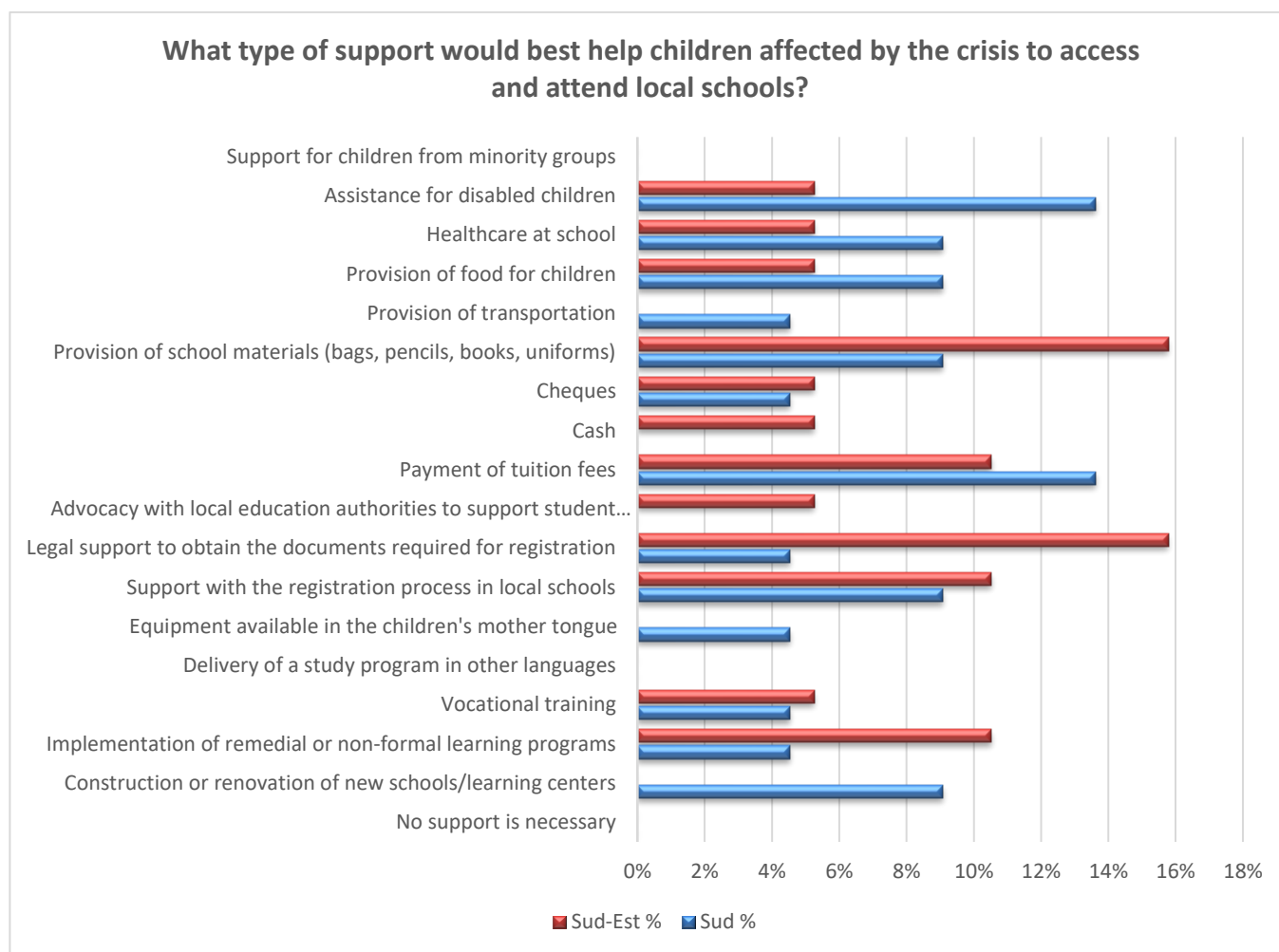
Comment: Lack of financial resources means that many parents no longer consider boys' education a priority, preventing them from covering school fees or other related costs. As a result, these children are often forced to look for ways to contribute to the family income or take on domestic tasks, limiting their access to education and compromising their development.

During the focus groups, some parents reported that, due to idleness, around 5% of teenagers are considering returning to Port-au-Prince to join Organized Criminal Groups, hoping to find opportunities for "easy money". This dynamic contributes to reinforcing the vicious circle between lack of resources and crime, exacerbating the risks of violence and insecurity.

Furthermore, the absence or loss of the necessary identity documents, often as a result of displacement, prevents some parents from enrolling their children in school. This problem highlights the need to lobby education authorities for greater administrative flexibility in favor of displaced children. In addition, administrative and legal support should be provided to children and adolescents to help them obtain the documents they need to enroll in school.

Finally, the lack of nearby schools is another major obstacle to access to education for boys, particularly in areas affected by displacement.

Figure 8: Type of support required to access education



Comments: In the context of vulnerability accentuated by displacement, parents are no longer able to provide school supplies for their children, which explains why their main request is for assistance with school supplies. This need has also been expressed by adolescents, who see this support as a priority for improving their access to education.

Parents also stressed the importance of advocacy on behalf of children with disabilities, who are particularly stigmatized within host and displaced communities. Greater inclusion of these children in the education system is seen as essential to reducing discrimination and promoting their integration.

In addition, parents, key informants and teachers overwhelmingly expressed a need for technical training for adolescents, aimed at empowering them in the face of current economic challenges. Catch-up classes were identified as a priority for children whose schooling had been interrupted or for those who had dropped out, in order to facilitate their reintegration into the education system. Literacy was also recognized as a crucial need, both within the formal education system and in child-friendly spaces.

Economic constraints remain the main obstacle to education, and payment of school fees is a priority form of support for vulnerable households. At the same time, legal support is needed to help families obtain the administrative documents required for school enrolment, as well as direct support for the enrolment process in local schools.

Finally, especially in the South department, aspects such as access to healthcare and the provision of school meals have been identified as key levers for increasing school enrolment and retention rates.

Conclusions and recommendations

The needs assessment carried out in Haiti's South and South-East departments highlights multidimensional challenges in the fields of child protection and education in emergency situations. These challenges are exacerbated by widespread violence, forced displacement and the socio-economic consequences of the current crisis. An appropriate humanitarian response requires multi-sectoral, coordinated interventions to respond effectively to identified needs.

Child protection: Strategic priorities and recommended actions

1.1 Strengthening psychosocial support and safe spaces

- Creating safe spaces for displaced and vulnerable children: These spaces must offer structured activities (playing, informal education, life skills) and adapted psychosocial services, integrating inclusive approaches for children with disabilities.
- Deploy mobile psychosocial support teams: These teams, made up of social workers and psychologists, must be trained to intervene in isolated areas and provide personalized support.

1.2 Strengthening community mechanisms

- Create or strengthen local child protection committees: Training community focal points to identify and refer children at risk.
- Deploy multi-sectoral mobile teams: Provide protection, education and psychosocial support services in remote, hard-to-reach areas.

1.3. Prevent and respond to violence, particularly gender-based violence

- Raise community awareness of the risks of GBV: Conduct targeted campaigns on children's rights, prevention of sexual violence, and available reporting mechanisms, adapting messages to the local context.
- Facilitate reporting of incidents: Set up anonymous and secure reporting mechanisms (toll-free numbers, listening centers, community focal points) to reduce stigmatization and encourage reporting.
- Strengthen specialized services for survivors: Develop integrated services (medical, psychosocial, legal) for survivors of GBV, with a particular focus on adolescent girls exposed to sexual abuse and early pregnancy.

1.4. Supporting unaccompanied and separated children

- Strengthen family reunification mechanisms: Identify separated children and coordinate their reunification with their families.
- Offer safe alternatives for temporary care: Mobilize communities to create systems of safe, supervised foster families.

1.5 Integrating protection into essential services

- Training local and humanitarian players: Building the capacity of teachers, social workers and community leaders to identify and refer children at risk.
- Integrate protection into basic services: Ensure that the health, education and WASH sectors integrate child protection standards and approaches into their interventions.

1.6. Coordination and community awareness

- Strengthen inter-institutional coordination: Create coordination platforms between authorities,

local NGOs and international partners to harmonize protection interventions.

- Conduct community awareness campaigns: Inform about children's rights and promote positive parenting practices to strengthen family resilience.

Education in emergencies: Priority recommendations

2.1. Improving access and equity

- Rehabilitate and develop school infrastructure and spaces: Prioritize areas heavily affected by travel to reduce distances.
- Promoting inclusive education: Adapt school spaces to children living with disabilities, and training teachers in inclusive approaches.
- Facilitating the enrolment of displaced children: Simplify administrative procedures and provide legal assistance to obtain the documents required for enrolment.

2.2. Material and financial support

- Distribute school kits: Provide school supplies to displaced children, with a particular focus on girls and disabled children.
- Introduce school meals: Implement school meal programs to improve enrolment and retention rates.
- Create an emergency school fees fund: Subsidize school fees for vulnerable families.

2.3. Catch-up and literacy programs

- Organize remedial courses: Provide accelerated programs for children who have dropped out of school or interrupted their education.
- Reinforce literacy: Offer literacy classes in host communities for children and teenagers outside the school system.

2.4. Capacity-building for teachers

- Train teachers in emergency education: Include modules on managing multi-grade classes, detecting signs of psychosocial distress, and administering psychological first aid.

2.5. Promoting girls' education

- Raising community awareness of the importance of girls' education: Conduct campaigns on the dangers of early pregnancy and early marriage, while offering specific educational solutions for girls.

Conclusions

The results of this assessment highlight an alarming convergence of vulnerabilities in Haiti's South and South-East departments, exacerbated by the socio-political and economic crisis. These vulnerabilities mainly affect displaced children and families, profoundly affecting their access to protection, education and other essential services.

Child protection and education in emergencies are proving to be critical areas requiring urgent, holistic and multi-sectoral interventions. These interventions must not only respond to immediate needs but also mitigate the long-term impacts of the crisis by building community resilience and promoting sustainable development for future generations.

The proposed approaches must be implemented in an integrated and inclusive way, considering marginalized groups, the differentiated needs of children and adolescents, and adapting to the rapidly evolving humanitarian crisis. Active collaboration with local communities is essential to ensure a sustainable and effective response.

In the field of child protection, gender-based violence, family separation and mental health challenges all for multi-sectoral approaches that include prevention, direct response to incidents, and community capacity building.

In terms of education, economic, logistical and social obstacles continue to seriously compromise learning opportunities for thousands of children. An effective humanitarian response must include targeted actions to guarantee access to education, precisely through financial and material support, the integration of marginalized groups and improving the quality and availability of educational infrastructures.

The recommendations resulting from this assessment focused on strengthening psychosocial services, access to education and better coordination of humanitarian actors. Through actions such an integrated intervention will help ensuring equitable access to protection and education for the most vulnerable children, by responding specifically and appropriately to the needs of children and adolescents in displacement situations, while strengthening communities' capacities to face current and future challenges.



Until we are all equal

About Plan International

Plan International is an independent humanitarian and development organisation that promotes children's rights and equality for girls. We believe in the power and potential of every child, but we know that they are often stifled by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected.

Together with children, young people, supporters and partners, we strive to create a just world, tackling the root causes of the problems facing vulnerable girls and children. We defend children's rights from birth to adulthood, and empower children to prepare for and respond to crisis and adversity. We drive change in practice and policy at local, national and global levels, drawing on our reach, experience and knowledge.

For over 85 years, we have rallied other determined optimists to transform the lives of all children in more than 80 countries.

We won't stop until we're all equal.

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