

Building migration research and policy infrastructure in Haiti

CASE STUDY



AUTHOR

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The [Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development \(INURED\)](#) has been working with OECD to bring migration to the core of Haiti's policy approach. With more than one-third of Haitians living abroad- a level rising to almost half since the COVID-19 pandemic - migration is a fundamental feature of Haitian society with the potential to severely hamper the nation's development through brain drain. Paradoxically, with the adoption of sound policies that harness these resources (e.g., human, financial, technological) migration has the potential to contribute to Haiti's post-earthquakes rebuilding recovery and Haiti's long-term development. The MIDEQ Hub has not only stabilized INURED's ability to conduct systematic research on this topic at a national level, it has also consolidated the organisation's ability to bring together key stakeholders (e.g., government, civil society and human rights organizations) to think of concrete ways to capitalize on diaspora investments in different sectors in Haiti (e.g., education, health, agriculture, new technologies). Without UKRI funding this effort, which began with OECD in 2014, would have been halted.

Haiti now finds itself in a profound crisis (political, economic, social) compounded by a pandemic that has paralysed state institutions and civil society organisations, the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise and a migration crisis that spans across North and South America culminating in the US-Mexico border crisis. Despite these challenges, INURED has continued this critical work at a time in which migration is being further fuelled by political instability, local insecurity, and a public health emergency. INURED has developed its work along the corridor in partnership with the Brazil team assisting their more recently acceded counterparts in all aspects of fieldwork preparation and development. In summer 2020, and in response to the pandemic which significantly halted legal migration around the globe, INURED implemented a study of the impact of COVID-19 on Haitian families. By December 2020, INURED completed data collection for MIDEQ's Hub-wide survey. INURED continues to conduct in-depth interviews and observations as well as focus group discussions with migrants and their family members. INURED is also in the process of conducting ethnographic tracing of migratory networks between Haiti and Brazil.

INURED has undertaken a rigorous agenda in terms of engagement outputs publishing four blogs in English and four blogs in French. In terms of scientific outputs INURED published a working paper titled, [Post-earthquake Haitian migration to Latin America](#), in 2020. In Autumn 2020, INURED published the study report [The Impact of COVID-19 on urban and rural families in Haiti](#). INURED has also developed several academic publications. INURED's entire research team has contributed an article to the MIDEQ Hub's *Zanj* special issue titled: *Migration, Memory and Longing in Haitian Songs*. INURED researchers have also submitted a manuscript to the inaugural journal of the *Caribbean Studies Association* titled: *Crises and the Continuities of Structural Violence: Gender Based Violence in Haiti*

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Before and During COVID-19. Finally, we have submitted a manuscript titled: *Post-Earthquake Migration to Latin America, the COVID-19 Pandemic, and Haiti's Changing Remittances Landscape*, to the *Journal of International Development*. These are significant achievements particularly considering the political instability outlined above.

Through its work with the MIDEQ Hub, INURED is raising awareness on migration and its links with inequality and development in the Haiti-Brazil corridor. INURED's work has resulted in the establishment of important and innovative partnerships as well as the consolidation of existing partnerships between government entities, civil society institutions and international organisations. These partnerships are strategic and will be consolidated through MIDEQ's Theory of Change.

INURED has convened several high-level meetings with current and past government officials from the Office of National Migration (ONM), Office of the Prime Minister's Migration Unit, Office of Citizen Protection (OPC), Ministry for Haitian Living Abroad, and the Ministry of the Feminine Condition and Women's Rights. A partnership has been developed around Haitian migrant rights and advocacy with the following local institutions and civil society leaders: the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH), Groupe d'Appui aux Rapatriés et Réfugiés (GARR), Réseau National de Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RNDDH), Cellule de la Réflexion et d'Action Nationale (CRAN), and Solidarite Fanm Ayisyen (SOFA). INURED has collaborated with international partners at the local level to discuss policy development (e.g., International Organization for Migration, ACP Observatory on Migration and the situation of migrants in Brazil and Chile). In October 2021, INURED co-sponsored and hosted a virtual conference on Haiti's migration crisis, bringing together policy makers, academics, researchers, human rights activists and civil society organisation leaders from Haiti, Brazil, the US and Canada. The goal of this conference was foster a broader understanding of the historical and contextual roots of the US-Mexico border crisis and its links to migration policies in Latin America; sociopolitical, economic and environmental crises in Haiti; and international policies toward Haiti.

The development of such partnerships is an important impact of MIDEQ's work in Haiti. It constitutes the first critical step toward demonstrating political will to draw Haiti's migration reality toward the nation's development. This MIDEQ partnership also aims to conscientize stakeholders to the impacts of migration on women and families based on INURED's ongoing studies, white papers, policy briefs and policy reports, peer-reviewed and newspaper articles and popular radio and television media in Haiti. The long-term goal is to aid in the development of policies that promote equality and development by protecting migrants and their families in Haiti,

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particularly women and girls, and facilitating trade and economic, agricultural, environmental, and social development in Haiti that de-incentivises migration, in line with UK Government priorities.

INURED plans to host two stakeholder roundtable events prior to the publication of the study report to share preliminary results, solicit feedback from stakeholders in migration on policy, human and labour rights issues and explore potential recommendations that can be included in the report based on the data generated from the study. This will help strengthen local understanding of study results with respect to the realities and challenges faced by migration specialists and experts in Haiti. INURED plans to disseminate the Haiti case study report on migration and the policy briefs both online and in hardcopy, to accommodate those with limited to no internet access. This report will be available at no charge and disseminated widely to the public and allow policymakers, advocacy groups, human right organisations, interventionists and funders to draw from the study to inform policy and praxis.

INURED has already begun training young scholars in migration through this project and plans to expand and institutionalise this effort through university partnerships with the State University of Haiti, Université Notre Dame and Université Quisqueya. As part of our capacity building strategy, INURED plans to organise an annual symposium with professors and university students to discuss research being conducted on migration, in general, and Haitian migration, in particular. On a more practical level, INURED plans to develop an internet application tentatively named: InfoMigrantsHaïti, available in two languages (Creole and French) to provide migrants and potential migrants with access to reliable and real-time information on destination countries; information on services relating to migrants' rights (e.g., justice, health, education, employment, etc.); information and data on the risks / dangers of irregular migration; information on migration routes via geographic maps, etc.

INURED strives to be inclusive in terms of its research questions, analytical strategies, policy formulation and the composition of its staffing and research teams and in our engagement with stakeholders. Research questions are formulated from the active differentiated gender-specific voices of those migrants who are targets of violence but also the resilience of those who are creating gender-driven forms of resisting marginalization and confronting inequities. INURED's methodological and theoretical frameworks are designed to capture nuances in gender dynamics, forces that generate layers of vulnerabilities linked to sexual orientation and gender identity. This effort requires researchers at INURED to develop new vocabularies and concepts that help translate these perspectives in our analysis. To do so, we maintain a research team within which parity in gender and gender identities is actuated. INURED's survey teams also consciously reflect this effort as well as the

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leadership of the organisation. A female researcher has contributed as lead author on all three of the peer-reviewed journal articles referenced above. They have served as lead author on three blogs: Haitian Families and Loss of Remittances During the COVID-19 Pandemic; [Migration and the Vulnerability of Haitian Women](#) (published [in French](#)) and a final blog, titled: *Haitian Migrants and the US-Mexico Border Crisis: A Broader View* (published in [English](#) and [French](#)).

All of our researchers have contributed to all scientific reports produced as part of the MIDEQ Hub:

[*The Impact of COVID-19 on Families in Urban and Rural Haiti, December 2020,*](#)

[*Post-Earthquake Haitian Migration to Latin America*](#)

We would like to draw attention to one blog, in particular, published in French, that was re-published in one of Haiti's most well-known online newspapers, AlterPresse : *Politiques migratoires en Amérique Latine entre 2010 et 2020, et choix du Brésil comme pays de destination par les migrantes et migrants d'Haïti* [Migration Policy in Latin America between 2010 and 2020, and the Choice of Brazil as Destination Country by Haitian Migrants]

<https://www.alterpresse.org/spip.php?article26508>



Cover image

Visit of the Dominican Republic / Haiti boarder at Dajabon. Photo by European Union. CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

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