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Annual Report 2011—2012

Interventions and Objectives

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Word and Action, Inc. (W&A) is headquartered in Miami, Florida. It is linked to its sister organization, Word and Action for Haiti (WNAH) in order to provide services to the sexually abused population in Haiti.

We have developed an authentic cultural-based approach, “Strengthening the Family”, in order to prevent further occurrences of child sexual abuse and trafficking in persons in Haiti. This research-based prevention program is regionally sensitive and community participatory. The agency staffs 7 local professionals of healthcare, project management and social services and uses the Likert-scale method for program evaluation and evidence-based documentation.



Three years of ethnological investigation helped Georges Bossous, Jr., M.S. - Executive Director of W&A, to develop this unique program taking a regional approach to prevention. Being Haitian and speaking Creole is not enough, using region-centric words and customs provides a deeper level of communication to help change communal behaviors and norms towards sexual and domestic violence, restevèks, and street children.

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention at Limbé, Northern Haiti



“Strengthening the Family” program tackles sexual abuse at three levels: Community Participatory, Cultural, and Economic Impacts, by building communication strategies, creating prevention activities, educating and treating survivors of sexual violence (child sexual abuse and trafficking), developing curriculum for the private and public schools in Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas, and promoting legislative advocacy through the Haitian Youth Parliament.

In October 26, 2011, Executive Director George Bossous, Jr. addressed (and received support) from both chambers of the Youth Parliament on child trafficking legislation; a historical occurrence since organizations are rarely allowed this privilege.

The terms “Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking” do not exist in Haitian Creole and “Sex” is taboo thus scarcely talked about within the household, schools or churches; two suppressed reasons that Haiti remains a Special Case ranking for the sixth consecutive year in the Trafficking in Persons report. WNAH identifies these gaps and confronts the eradication process of sexual violence and trafficking issues in its core.

The majority of trafficking and sexual abuse cases is found among young children without family support (physical, mental, and/or financial) and secure housing (over 550,000 individuals still live in camps per September 30, 2011 Haiti Camp Coordination Camp Management report). The lack of trafficking legislation is another major obstacle. “On the ground” prevention, incorporating the stakeholders, is the grassroots to help decrease the problem. This program aims to change the mind-set of a restevèk system with an estimated 173,000 to 225,000 children.

Sexual violence against children has always existed as a serious problem in Haiti, even more since the 2010 earthquake.

Accurate statistics on the prevalence of child and adolescent sexual abuse are difficult to collect because of the problems of underreporting and the lack of a unifying definition constituting such abuse. Nonetheless, the August 25, 2011 United Nations Security Council report on Haiti covering the past 5 months stated that 114 minors had been raped or other sexual violence acts, 68 had been recruited in gangs, 22 had been murdered and an additional 9 killed due to crossfire.



Violence against children is a multi-faceted phenomenon. A person's ability to cope with sexual violence may differ depending on his/her culture and supportive network. Furthermore, parents' behaviors and attitudes toward sexual abuse incidents may have significant impacts on a child's recovery process. The focus of the group intervention program is to provide an environment where children can be healed physically, emotionally, and psychologically to reintegrate into the community and to strengthen the family whose children have been victimized.

Additionally, organizations' staff will be trained on evidence-based international care practices as well as a "Culturally-Based Approach" on service delivery allowing a more sensitive, effective and accurate response to the children and their families' needs.

In 2010, Word and Action for Haiti hosted two prevention sessions in collaboration with ACRAL (Action Citoyenne pour le Relèvement et l'Avancement du Limbé) in Northern Haiti and an estimated 250 children received intervention on child sexual abuse.

In February 2011, 33 ACRAL staff was trained on child sexual abuse and trafficking. In Carrefour, Western Haiti, child sexual abuse intervention was given to 100 children of Apostolic Orphanage. With follow-up studies every 2-3 months, 6 months and 1 year, the Likert-scale outcomes have resulted in 80%-100% success rates among children and staff.

Through present collaborative relationships with the congregational schools in Port-au-Prince, the New Life 4 Haiti that built a private school of 389 children, the Office of the Minister of Education, school curriculum will be advanced in the educational system. WNAH will aide policy makers through MINUSTAH's sponsored Haitian Youth Parliament on effective and resourceful trafficking and sexual violence legislation and continue developments with the Director's Office of MINUSTAH, its Politic Affaires and Civil Affaires Bureaus.

The strength of this innovative model resides on the reinforcement of the three reciprocal approaches: Community Participatory, Cultural, and Economic Impacts. Community Participatory partners with local individuals and civil society organizations. The Cultural-based provides culturally, competent prevention and educational services and the Economic Impact confronts the long-term costs and consequences for Haiti due to the negative psychological impact that sexual abuse has on educational achievement, job performance and earnings.

Working within local, national and international civil society organizations, Word and Action for Haiti incorporates a sustainable way to deliver their program. However, their headquarters are located at #50 Rue Grégoire, Complexe Galerie Nader, Pétion-Ville, Haiti (WI), registration # STC-15812 and WNAH's fiscal sponsor is Word and Action, Inc. [US-Based 501(c)(3)].

In summary, one Word and Action's main objectives is to coordinate with the Government of Haiti and non-governmental organizations including the Haiti Child Protection Sub-cluster to decrease the occurrence of child sexual abuse and trafficking throughout Haiti. By working with children, families, staff, directors, and teachers of Haitian orphanages and schools, WNAH will build child protection capacity within prevention programs and educational curriculum on sexual violence, trafficking, and restavek prevention and protection, and through pending work with the Haitian Youth Parliament, WNAH will help to create trafficking in persons laws.