

Advancing Partners & Communities
Country Program in Review
Haiti

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JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.



ADVANCING PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES

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JSI RESEARCH & TRAINING INSTITUTE, INC.

1616 Fort Myer Drive, 16th Floor
Arlington, VA 22209, USA
Phone: 703-528-7474
Fax: 703-528-7480
Email: info@advancingpartners.org
Web: advancingpartners.org

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Background

Haiti's already struggling health system was severely affected by the earthquake in 2010 and the cholera outbreak that followed and became endemic. Although investments in the health system are increasing, Haiti has immense needs. The country has a significant number of nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations that provide services, either working in partnership with the public sector to fill gaps or to reach segments of the population that have no access to services. These organizations are trusted members of their communities and therefore highly effective in reaching the most marginalized populations.

The USAID Mission in Haiti, which is committed to a policy of increased country ownership, seized the opportunity to improve health outcomes and leverage resources by increasing the number of Haitian organizations receiving direct U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funding. Given the variations in organizational capacity among these organizations, USAID in 2014 engaged the Advancing Partners & Communities (APC) project to provide support.

While supporting local organizations, USAID also funded a results-based financing (RBF) initiative that is improving health services and accountability within the health system. Haiti's Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP) embraced RBF as a key pillar of the country's 2012 National Health Policy. In collaboration with USAID and the World Bank, MSPP's *Unite de Contractualisation* developed an RBF operational manual in 2013 that became the foundation for the USAID-financed government-to-government (G2G) RBF pilot.

Program Overview

From 2014 to September 2017, APC supported 11 local organizations whose missions range from providing health care and outreach to specific populations—such as prisoners, disabled people, and schoolchildren—to distributing medical commodities countrywide. APC built organizational and staff capacity to ensure that grantees could implement operational and technical programs in alignment with their USAID award and deliver high-quality services. APC provided intensive competency-based capacity-building support targeted to the specific needs of each of the 11 organizations. APC conducted an organizational capacity assessment (OCA) of each grantee to identify its areas of need, which the project supported with capacity building including financial, performance, and organizational management.

From June 2016–September 2018, the project supported Haiti’s MSPP in managing the financial implementation of the RBF initiative, which was designed to improve the use of health financing resources to enhance health system performance and accountability. It is also expected to improve the quality and equity of health services, particularly for maternal and child health; improve working conditions for health staff, encourage motivation, retention, and willingness to work in remote areas to reach the most underserved people; and increase communities’ voice and governance in the delivery of health services.

Start of APC Support to Local Organizations

- Nov 2014: **Society of Studies and Training in Strategic Information (SEFIS)** and **LOGIK** – USAID contractors for RBF data verification.
- April 2015: **Zanmi Lasante (ZL)** – USAID grantee with one cooperative agreement and two fixed-amount awards (FAAs).
- July 2015: **Chatelain Cargo Services, Hejec Security Transport, National Transport Services** – contractors for transportation and distribution of health products (USAID Supply Chain Management System sub-contractors).
- Sept 2015: **Health through Walls** – APC grantee.
- Oct 2015: **GHESKIO** (Haitian Global Health Alliance), **Service Chretien d’Haiti** – USAID grantees with FAAs.
- Nov 2015: **Fonkoze Foundation, J/P Haitian Relief Organization** – USAID grantees with FAAs.



Photo: Spring

APC successfully implemented the RBF pilot for 33 health facilities and fully institutionalized the RBF system within the MSPP.

Results Summary

STRENGTHENING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

APC's support to 11 Haitian organizations that received USAID funding enabled these organizations to manage their funding with accountability and good governance practices. The support, which encompassed a broad array of organizational capacities from basic administration to data analysis and resource mobilization, helped the organizations expand service offerings and build resilience to help them continue when their grants ended.

APC's support helped four local nongovernmental organizations secure grants and funding for their programs while building their capacity to respond to requests for proposals and manage funding streams. SEFIS and LOGIK received World Bank funding, and Fonkoze and Zanmi Lasante received additional USAID direct funding.

RESULTS-BASED FINANCING

Haiti's G2G RBF pilot provided incentives to health workers and institutions to improve the quality of health services, encourage motivation, and increase accountability within the health system. APC supported the MSPP in identifying areas of financial risk for the pilot, setting up and monitoring the financial systems to track and disburse payments, and increasing the capacity of ministry staff to manage the RBF system in the future. Over a period of 28 months, APC implemented the RBF pilot for 33 health facilities, and fully institutionalized the RBF system within the MSPP.

Achievements

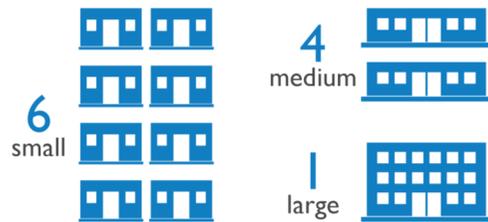
- Implementation of USAID risk mitigation plan for G2G RBF pilot.
- Implementation of a dedicated RBF accounting system within MSPP's Directorate of Administration and Budget.
- Verification and processing of 7 RBF bonus payment cycles for 33 health facilities.
- Increased capacity of MSPP staff to manage G2G funds.

SUPPORT FOR 11 LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

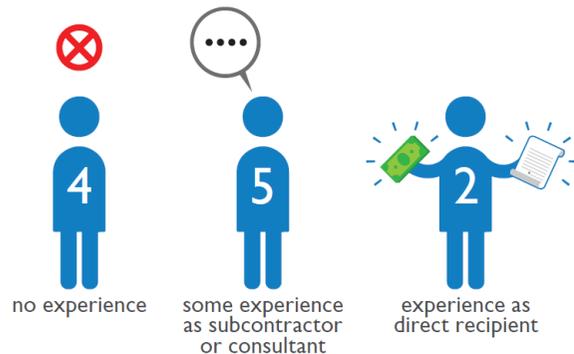
TYPE OF ORGANIZATION



ORGANIZATION SIZE



EXPERIENCE WITH USAID GRANTS AND CONTRACTS



CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT TO GRANTEEES



11 organizations attended capacity building workshops



7 organizations attended 4 or more workshops

“JSI gave us the opportunity to secure the grant. Before the grant, we offered services in only 10 of 44 sites nationally. With this funding, we are expanding [our health programming] to all 44 sites. JSI’s organizational development [support] was very important to us because sustainability is our core value. We are learning to use different tools and lead different processes [for implementation].”

—Florence, Fonkoze



Photo: SCMS

APC CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT

- Governance and accountability
- Administration
- Data analysis and use
- Financial management
- Human resources management
- Organizational management
- Program management
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Resource mobilization

CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS

	Chatelain	J/P HRO	Fonkoze	GHESKIO	Health Through Walls	HEJEC	LOGIK	NATRANS	SEFIS	SCH	Zanmi Lasante	Number of Participating NGOs
New Grantee Orientation		✓	✓	✓						✓		4
Supportive Supervision			✓									1
Monitoring & Evaluation Overview	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Strategic Planning		✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	6
M&E refresher		✓									✓	2
Data Visualization for Decision-making		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Writing Effective Reports		✓	✓		✓				✓		✓	5
Planning Based on Results			✓									1
Data & Communication		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	7
Orientation to USAID Award			✓									1



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Strengthening Local Organizations

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS

Before providing technical assistance (TA), APC analyzed the capacity of each of the 11 organizations through two-day organizational capacity assessment (OCA) workshops, conducted in partnership with the implementing organizations. The OCA used a facilitated self-assessment approach in which the organizations scored themselves in each area, with assistance from APC to explain the process and the scoring categories. The tool measured each organization's strengths and weaknesses, ability to comply with USAID regulations and procedures, and meet programmatic requirements across seven management elements (see sidebar page 11).

Because of the variation of skills and abilities across organizations, APC adapted the OCA process in October 2015 for organizations that were less familiar with USAID funding and were receiving FAAs. The APC team organized a three-part workshop that included:

- 1) An orientation to USAID grants (project lifecycle, key players, and U.S. Government [USG] regulations).
- 2) Meetings between each organization and APC facilitators to discuss the grant in detail and answer questions, including those about special award conditions.
- 3) An OCA-outcome-based action plan to guide TA.

The action plans guided TA provision and, over time, were adapted to meet the changing needs of the organizations. Many organizations set new priorities and requested support based on the changes. APC conducted regular reviews of all OCA-generated action plans either remotely or in person to review progress and to strategize further support. The reviews helped identify areas for additional support, and regular check-in calls and visits with the organizations ensured that they received specific, high-quality TA and guidance as needed.

“The OCA helped us a lot because we had to make a capacity improvement plan with deadlines that we followed to get these documents. We already had a staff manual that we redesigned; we also reviewed our accounting procedures, our financial procedures, and we had an M&E plan. There have been many documents that we have developed, or at least revised from the OCA.”

—Margaret Bury,
Health through Walls

SUPPORTING GRANTS MANAGEMENT

If local organizations are to move toward self-reliance, they must be able to properly administer donor funding and fulfill the requirements. APC helped USAID grantees review accounting systems, human resource policies, audits, and many other activities that ensure USG-compliant execution of the grant objectives. Throughout these activities, APC provided significant input to refine documents while coaching local staff to take these tasks on independently.

APC provided tools, templates, and guidance to all grantees to strengthen their organizational management systems (finance, human resources, general operations, USG compliance) according to the needs identified in their individual action plans. During start-up activities, APC supported the grantees and helped them tailor tools and templates to their circumstances. APC supported organizations in meeting initial grant requirements and special award conditions. For example, APC provided support to Service Chrétien d'Haiti and ZL to develop PMPs and to Fonkoze for its branding and marketing plan.

APC also organized a one-day orientation for Fonkoze's AKSYON project leadership and staff on the requirements associated with its new large USAID-funded cooperative agreement on nutrition, and guided the organization in developing sub-agreements with its partners. This included providing templates, reviewing draft agreements, and giving advice on clauses to flow down to partners. APC worked closely with Fonkoze to respond to its special award conditions and prepare for the USAID financial review. To this end, APC conducted a mock audit of Fonkoze's systems to ensure its audit-readiness. As a result, Fonkoze passed the USAID review.

APC provided interested partners with tools and guidelines to conduct financial and administrative closeout of their USAID grants in a compliant manner, and responded to ad hoc requests for support. For example, at the request of ZL, APC held a session in February 2017 to provide a closeout plan and inventory tracking templates, as well as specific guidelines on the closeout of different type of grants, as ZL was due to close a number of awards during the fiscal year.

OCA_s FOR NEW USAID GRANTEES

- 1) Introduction to USAID grants
- 2) Review of the organization's award
- 3) Capacity assessment
 - Governance
 - Administration
 - Human resource management
 - Financial management
 - Organizational management
 - Program management
 - Project performance management

Working with Fixed Amount Awards

For organizations used to operating with unrestricted funds, the FAA mechanism was a completely new concept that required them to adapt their processes and cashflow to account for the "payment on deliverables" type of funding.



APC's grant management support was customized to each organization's needs and often took place through one-on-one coaching, site visits, and review of organizational documents. For Health through Walls, which was funded by a grant through APC, the project ensured compliance with grant requirements, including review of invoices, accounting records, and financial reports; tracking expenditures; making payments; and monitoring financial and technical aspects of the awards.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

APC designed support activities to improve organizational competencies required to expand operational strengths, meet donor requirements, and provide high-quality client services. Major areas of support included strategic planning to identify and prioritize activities; performance monitoring to strengthen the execution of activities; and data management to analyze, report, and communicate data to guide programmatic work and strategic planning.

APC's support also focused on strengthening the organizations' sustainability, since the USAID grant or contract was the most significant source of funding for many of them. A three-day workshop focused on helping grantees develop a strategic business plan to enhance their sustainability and, ultimately, expand their operations and mobilize resources. Participants developed messages for their organizations that described their purpose, achievements, and objectives. After elaborating on these objectives, grantees used them as starting points to develop business plans serving as a road map for program activities. The workshop was also a forum for discussions on current and anticipated challenges in resource mobilization; the changing funding landscape; access to donors; and how to research, evaluate, and approach potential donors and partners. During the on-the-job training (OJT) support that followed the workshop, grantees continued to develop their strategic and business plans.

All 11 organizations benefited from some level of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) training or coaching. At the request of several grantees, APC offered an M&E overview workshop and refresher training that focused on how to collect good data, analyze it, and use it for program management, decision-making, and advocacy. The trainings also helped participants build a PMP to

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

- Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) template
- Branding and Marking Plan template
- Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan and Report template
- Introduction to USAID grants
- Fraud and ethics guidance
- USAID Audit Scope of Work template
- Sub-agreement template

meet USAID requirements. A data management and analysis workshop in September 2017 enabled organizations to expand their M&E and develop skills and strategies for communicating data findings.

Through a workshop attended by 29 staff from eight organizations, APC expanded grantee capacity in data visualization and communication for both internal and external actions, supporting program decisions, communication to donors, and using data for advocacy. Participants learned the fundamentals of data visualization, acquiring Excel and PowerPoint skills and designing slides to communicate action effectively. They created “data stories” to visualize compelling findings from their own M&E data for advocacy.

In March 2017, 16 people from five organizations participated in a report-writing workshop that built their skills to communicate data visualizations in the context of their program and strategy. The training focused on the fundamentals of strong writing, and gave participants tips and templates for creating various reports (quarterly reports, evaluation reports, success stories, and fact sheets) required by USAID. In September 2017, APC conducted a knowledge management and communications workshop that built on the previous workshop and offered grantees strategies for promoting their projects for sustainability and growth.

APC provided capacity-building support to grantees using a blended approach of traditional classroom-based training, OJT coaching and mentoring, short-term technical assistance from subject matter experts, and remote assistance. Trainings and workshops were typically followed by OJT support to further develop and solidify the learning.

Besides providing key organizational capacity building, APC responded to specific grantee requests for support, including community mobilization for Health through Walls, conducting a client survey for National Transport Services (NATRANS), training Fonkoze staff on supportive supervision, and facilitating links between Hejec and supply chain networks.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

- M&E overview workshop
- Strategic planning workshop
- Data visualization workshop
- Writing and reports workshop
- Data management and analysis
- Knowledge management and communications



CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Although APC's support to local Haitian organizations was highly successful in enabling partners to fulfill their contracts and grant obligations, several challenges impeded the grantees' ability to achieve all the benefits of the capacity-building work. During and following the OCA process, it was important for participating staff to commit to completing the action items that their teams identified. APC provided resources and materials, but the actual pace of the changes depended on the individual organizations. APC continued to experience a lack of responsiveness from a few of the partners, in some cases due to staff turnover.

Lesson: *Adapt to the needs of individual organizations to support them as much as possible, as well as manage stakeholder expectations.*

Some organizations were hesitant to accept capacity-building assistance because they lacked experience with USAID and were unsure of what to expect. It was therefore critical to establish a trusting and collaborative relationship. The OCAs, through the highly interactive self-assessments, were an important part of this process. Partners tested their own solutions, acknowledged gaps and mistakes, and sought the project's guidance. One organization, Service Chrétien d'Haiti, said that in retrospect it would have liked APC's capacity-building support on USAID rules and regulations before signing a USAID award.

Lesson: *Establish trust with the organizations early in the project.*

Political instability and increased violence in Port-au-Prince prevented the APC team from traveling to Haiti at the beginning of 2016. As a result, the project was unable to offer specialized on-site short-term technical assistance visits to address needs identified in various action plans during that period. However, the APC team continued to provide TA on project management matters remotely, while the in-country finance specialist gave in-person support.

Lesson: *Find alternative ways to continue working in case of unexpected events.*

Results-Based Financing

Haiti's MSPP made RBF a key pillar of its 2012 National Health Policy, with the aim of introducing performance and accountability as the main drivers of improvement in parts of its health system. In 2013, through a collaboration with USAID and the World Bank, the MSPP's *Unite de Contractualisation* developed guidance for an RBF system, including implementation procedures and tools, a data verification process, and an invoice payment system. USAID then funded a G2G RBF pilot to test the system's viability.

As part of the G2G agreement, USAID conducted a fiduciary risk assessment that identified several areas of risk within the MSPP that required capacity building and systems strengthening. APC worked with MSPP to implement a risk-mitigation plan and improve its capacity to manage the financial implementation of the RBF G2G pilot for 33 health facilities.

Over a period of 28 months starting in June 2016, APC collaborated with the MSPP Directorate of Administration and Budget (DAB), putting in place an accounting system and payment mechanism that aligned with USAID regulations. In addition to working at multiple levels within the Ministry, APC coordinated with external verification agencies, which USAID directed to conduct data verification at the health facilities to determine and validate RBF bonus payments. SEFIS and LOGIK, the two private Haitian companies that were awarded contracts as part of the implementation of the RBF system, had previously benefited from APC's capacity-building support.

APC sub-contracted with Gardere/BDO, a USAID-approved certified public accounting firm, to provide financial management and accounting expertise. Gardere/BDO also acted as disbursement agent and ensured that the system met USAID standards and Government of Haiti regulations for funding control and accountability. Together, APC and Gardere/BDO ensured that RBF funds were properly managed within the MSPP.

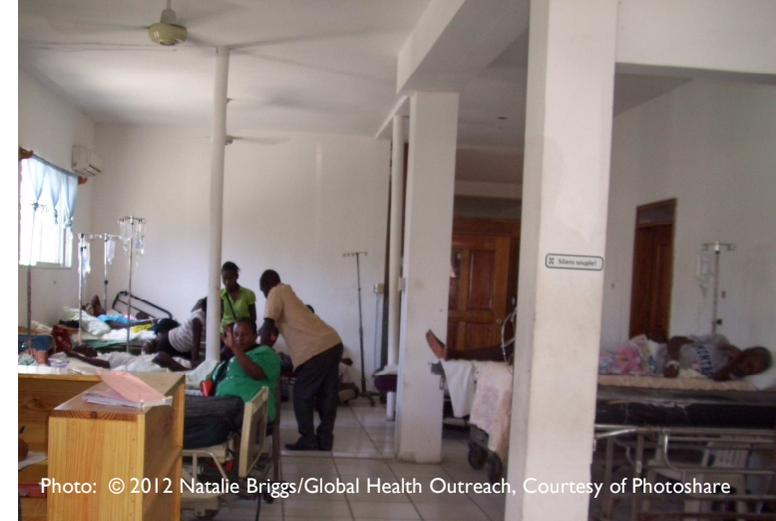


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MSPP'S RESULTS-BASED FINANCING OBJECTIVES

- Improve use and quality of health services, particularly for vulnerable groups.
- Provide funding to health facilities, enabling them to execute business plans and undertake innovative strategies to improve outcomes.
- Motivate and retain health staff, particularly in rural areas.
- Strengthen management, autonomy, and organization of health facilities.
- Consider the views of beneficiaries in the management and resolution of health problems.

RBF CREATES INCENTIVES IN CAP HAITIEN

Fort St. Michel Hospital, in the city of Cap Haitien, was established in April 2001 to serve the surrounding population, and was one of the health facilities participating in the RBF system pilot. Mr. Andre, who has worked there as a hospital administrator since March 2015, explained how the Fort St. Michel used RBF funds.

“Currently, we have a maternity center, an operating room, an emergency center, and a community care center. We just opened a pediatric center, but are not fully equipped to provide some of the neonatology care. Over time, we have purchased some medical equipment and are storing it, with the goal to have a fully equipped neonatology area to treat respiratory and other common health issues.

“It is thanks to the RBF project that we have a space to receive children for pediatric visits. With the RBF funds, we also built the space for our neonatology, but sometimes when a baby has respiratory problems, we have to refer to another hospital.

“The RBF incentive has impacted the hospital staff as well; they are always impatient to receive the incentives. It is very challenging, we are trying not to delay, to enhance our system and perform better.”

“The RBF promotes the staff’s commitment... everyone is motivated and everyone is raising others’ awareness to do their chores and to gain RBF incentives.”

—Administrator, Hospital de Bienfaisance de Pignon

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Supported implementation of USAID’s risk mitigation for the RBF G2G agreement, including the implementation of an RBF accounting system and development of a user guide, and the development of a financial procedures manual. By the end of APC’s engagement, the RBF accounting system was fully functional and up-to-date.
- Supported the MSPP in reviewing and executing seven RBF bonus payment cycles, benefitting 33 health facilities.
- Through formal and on-the-job training, enhanced DAB staff capacity to manage G2G funds, enabling them to process RBF payments in compliance with USAID requirements.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The RBF initiative initially included an external fiscal agent with full oversight authority over funds. However, because the Government of Haiti required that G2G funds go through the Central Bank of Haiti rather than a commercial bank, APC’s contracted fiscal agent, Gardere/BDO, could not become a signatory on the RBF account. As a result, USAID amended the implementation letter to limit the fiscal agent’s role to approving RBF invoices before the DAB could process the payments. This complication caused a six-month delay in the implementation of the G2G RBF pilot.

Lesson: Fully investigate host country legal and administrative requirements that could affect the payment flow for a G2G program during the project design phase.

A lack of communication and coordination between the DAB, the Unite de Contractualisation, the external verification agencies, and APC to discuss timing of invoices, changes in costing, indicators, and other issues caused payment delays on a number of occasions. These communication gaps were exacerbated by the fact that two different implementing partners supported the MSPP as part of the RBF initiative.

Lesson: Establish a formal coordination mechanism, such as a steering committee, between an RBF scheme's technical and finance units. In addition, to the extent possible, the same implementing partner should provide technical and financial support for RBF implementation.

The DAB accounting staff had to contend with a language barrier and limited RBF and/or USAID G2G payment mechanisms experience, which meant that APC and Gardere/BDO had to provide continuous mentoring while setting up the financial systems and processing the first payments. Because of the limited size of the RBF pilot program, the DAB did not have a staff person fully dedicated to it, and existing accounting staff had to balance RBF deadlines with other ongoing MSPP responsibilities. This led to a longer timeframe for building sustained MSPP capacity to manage RBF funds.

Lesson: Support the setup of RBF financial systems before starting implementation.

A change in government, with a new Minister of Health and a new DAB director, required additional time for orientation and for changing signatories for the RBF bank accounts. This translated into delays in payment processing and hindered APC's capacity-building efforts.

Lesson: Donors and TA providers should anticipate and build in extra time for governmental agency staff changes.

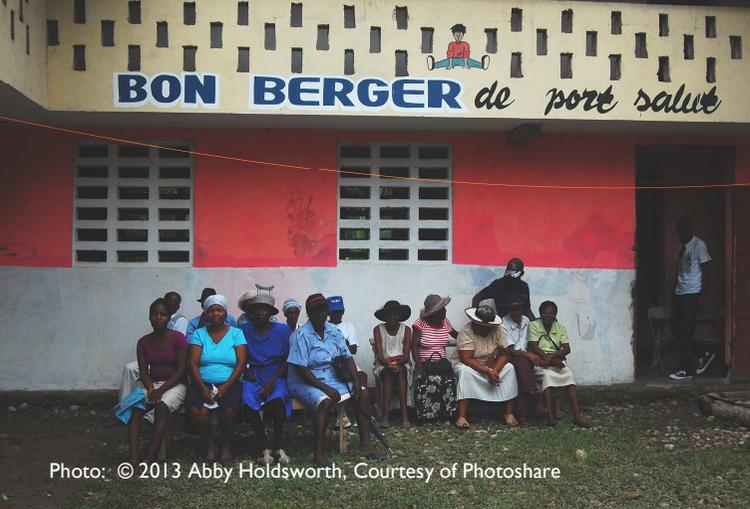
Two hurricanes, Matthew in October 2016 and Irma in September 2017, as well as social unrest, caused closures of the ministry and APC offices on several occasions, which led to delays in both the verification process in the field and submission of RBF invoices.

Lesson: Find alternative ways to continue working in case of unexpected events.



OVERALL RECOMMENDATION

Based on lessons learned, APC recommends that if the RBF program is taken to scale, a dedicated unit for RBF payments should be set up with staff hired and paid by the program. DAB staff had to take on additional responsibilities without compensation, resulting in a lack of motivation in processing payments on time, which is critical in an RBF scheme. The formal set-up of a dedicated team and a steering committee are crucial to ensuring RBF program sustainability and ownership.



Conclusions

For many of the organizations that APC worked with in Haiti, the grant or contract from USAID was the most significant part of their business. Managing a new, significant area of work can be overwhelming, and poses a risk to both USAID and to the organization. APC's comprehensive assessment and support mitigated this risk and helped the organizations increase in size, stability, and viability.

APC's support for grant management strengthened internal controls and built capacity for the organizations to comply with USG regulations, preparing them to manage future funding. Grantees improved their organizational structures and gained valuable skills that will enable them to mobilize funds and grow. Receiving grants and contracts, paired with holistic organizational capacity support, enabled these local organizations to increase the quality and quantity of their services to the benefit of the Haitian population.

In support of USAID's RBF G2G pilot, APC's multi-pronged support ensured that RBF financial procedures were fully institutionalized within the ministry and executed in compliance with USAID's accountability standards. Ministry staff learned to manage the new financial system, which provides a robust foundation for further pilot testing or scale-up of the RBF initiative.

"One year later, we are doing better Excel spreadsheets and using Data Viz concepts. We also learned how to put more visibility on our website, it was very positive."

—Margaret Bury, Health through Walls

Acronyms

APC	Advancing Partners & Communities
DAB	Directorate of Administration and Budget
FAA	fixed-amount award
G2G	government-to-government
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MSP	Ministry of Public Health and Population
OCA	organizational capacity assessment
OJT	on-the-job training
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
RBF	results-based financing
SEFIS	Society for Studies and Training in Strategic Information
TA	technical assistance
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USG	U.S. Government
ZL	Zanmi Lasante



Photo: Spring



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Advancing Partners & Communities
JSI RESEARCH & TRAINING INSTITUTE, INC.
1616 Fort Myer Drive, 16th Floor
Arlington, VA 22209, USA
Phone: 703-528-7474
Fax: 703-528-7480
Email: info@advancingpartners.org
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