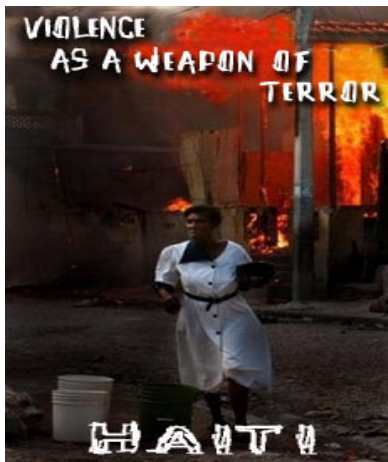


STUDENT'S HANDOUT



Background Information

To this day, the socio-political situation in Haiti remains critically unstable. In Port-au-Prince, the country's capital city, entire areas are subject to the laws and abuses of armed street gangs. Violence has become a part of daily life: killings, kidnappings, criminal fires, etc. The primary victims of the widely spread violence are women and children. In only a year, cases of violence are believed to have doubled.

Source : Kay Fann/CSTR activity report, june 2005



Instructions

Read the essay and answer the questions that follow.

Diary of a young haitian girl

March 31st: This morning as I was awaking, I had the feeling something was wrong. When I looked through the window it was confirmed: something had left the neighbourhood completely lifeless, in a dead silence. But then the voices of two neighbour ladies broke the silence, saying that some people had, during the night, broken into the house of the woman who sells pistachios. The bandits had apparently robbed the house and beaten the pistachio lady, her daughter, and her grand daughter. I'm completely shocked!

April 7th: We are always hearing of more kidnappings in the adjacent neighbourhood, but apparently this time it was a rich woman who was taken by the kidnappers... She must have gone through horrible moments; the word is that she committed suicide shortly after being brought back to her family. Violence is everywhere. Apparently, all of the troubles are caused by political tensions, but I don't understand much...

April 10th: I had never realized before that the violence could touch me so directly. My 12 year old cousin was attacked last night as she was coming home from school. Five bandits dragged her into the street. There were some witnesses, but no one tried to help in any way. Everyone is so scared. I'm really scared too... Scared that something might happen to me.

April 18th: I had a horrible week! I'm so nervous everytime I have to go outside! I'm so exhausted of living in fear. We all do it though. Everyone lives in terror but no one does anything. Is there really something I could do?

April 26th: Today again... a school girl, just like me. Taken away and raped, just like so many others. After it happened she was walking in the street, completely confused, when a man approached and offered to take her to Kay Fann. "The women's house" is one especially for women who are victims of violence. I had never heard of this place before so I went with them. The women at Kay Fann said that they would take care of the young girl. It reassured me. Not everything is lost yet. There are people who are willing to stand up for what they believe is right, people who are taking action! I will visit Kay Fann again tomorrow morning. I want to do something too, to be a part of it!

May 8th: I went to Kay Fann today. I am beginning my work as a volunteer tomorrow! Women belonging to various action groups will be coming next week for training in order to better assist other women in need of support. They told me I would be able to attend. I cannot wait! I'm happy! I can contribute to making things better after all!

Country: Republic of Haiti

Population (in millions): 8.4 (2004)

Population density per km²: 300 (2004)

Gross National Revenue per person: \$380 US (2003)

Life expectancy at birth: 43 years (1960), 50 years (2003)

Mortality rate of children under 5 years of age (per 1000): 253 (1960), 118 (2003)

Student's Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Reading Comprehension Evaluation
Haiti: Violence as a Weapon of Terror

1- You have just read an extract from the diary of a young Haitian living in Port-au-Prince. What situation does she mention that is occurring in her country?

2- Based on the extract, list the different people affected by the described situation.

3- What would be at the root of this situation?

4- How does the author feel in relation to the situation? Find six emotions transmitted by the young girl through her writing and list one or two sentences from the text that display each emotion.

Emotions	Quotes

5- Identify the moment in the text when the author realises the magnitude of the situation. Support your answer by quoting one or two sentences.

6- Does the young girl foresee a solution? If so, what is it?

7- Which organisation is mentioned in the text? What is its mission?

8- The author says that she lives in fear. Try to imagine what it would be like to live in fear. How would your life be different? Are there any activities that you would no longer do?

AN INITIATIVE OF THE
In-Terre-Actif Network of the Comité de Solidarité/Trois-Rivières



PRODUCED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
THROUGH THE



Canadian
International
Development
Agency