



**Haiti  
Grassroots  
Watch**  
**Ayiti  
Kale  
Je**

# Reporting on “aid” and reconstruction in Haiti, from the grassroots

On January 12, 2010, an earthquake devastated much of Haiti’s capital and other regions, leaving some 200,000 dead and over a million homeless. Foreign governments, agencies and citizens from around the world showed their solidarity by pledging billions of dollars. Contractors, “non-profits,” “NGOs” and church groups rushed in and got to work – sometimes on projects called for by local citizens and government authorities, but sometimes not.



The foreign media also rushed in... and then rushed out. Nobody stayed behind to watchdog the cash being spent in the name of “reconstruction” and “development.” Haiti’s press has little tradition of investigative journalism. Also, the powerful local outlets – run by the government and by wealthy businesspeople – have little interest in digging too deep, since they often profit, even as hundreds of thousands of earthquake victims are left out in the cold and rain. Literally. As of January 12, 2013, the third anniversary of the tragedy, some 400,000 people were still living in squalid tent camps.

Ayiti Kale Je, meaning “Haiti Eyes Peeled” or “Haiti Grassroots Watch” in English, came together to address need for accountability. Over the past 28 months, this partnership of community radio station members, journalists and university journalism students have exposed corruption and waste as well as the cynical way in which at least some “aid” is carried out – with no input from Haiti’s poorest, the supposed beneficiaries.

Among other discoveries, Ayiti Kale Je has also:

- Uncovered the fact that Canadian and US companies control a massive part of Haiti’s mineral rights,
- Exposed the ugly underbelly of “cash for work” programs,
- And laid bare a cynical housing “exposition” sponsored in part by Bill Clinton.



By combining the best of grassroots reporting from farmers and coffee growers, careful research from students, and hard-hitting analysis from the Haitian journalists overseeing the work, Ayiti Kale Je has risen to become Haiti’s principal watchdog effort, putting out 24 reports since it launched. All of investigations are published as text in English as well as French, and almost are all accompanied by a Haitian Creole audio version that goes to over three dozen radio stations across the country. The consortium has also produced ten video documentaries which have been seen by tens of thousands on line and at screenings or on local television stations throughout Haiti. Staff and volunteers give journalism and “humanitarian industry” workshops throughout the country as well as at Haiti’s State University.

Ayiti Kale Je work has been carried by newspapers, radio stations and websites across Haiti and across the world, including *Haiti Liberté*, *Le Nouvelliste*, *Truth Out*, *The Guardian* and *Inter Press Service*, and on *Free Speech Radio News*, *Democracy Now!* and *Al Jazeera English*. The partnership has also attracted the attention of *Reuters*, *Investigative Reporters and Editors*, and numerous other media organizations.

## Ayiti Kale Je needs your support!

The effort is supported by foundation grants but these have almost given out.

No gift is too small. US\$30 will cover telephone costs for a reporter for one month. US\$100 will pay the office Internet for a month. US \$1,000 will pay a student intern’s stipend for five months. Budget and list of funders available on request.

To help AKJ, go to the “Support” page of the AKJ website - <http://www.ayitikaleje.org/apui-support-apoyo/>  
Donations accepted via Paypal or by check. Donations are tax-deductible in the United States.

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