

IN FOCUS  
*Funders' Briefing on the Earthquake Response in Haiti*  
*IHRFG's San Francisco Conference, January 25-26, 2010*

IHRFG held an urgent funders' briefing on human rights and the earthquake response in Haiti at our semi-annual conference in San Francisco on January 25th-26th. The briefing, sponsored by Wellspring Advisors, provided important insights from IHRFG member grantmakers as well as experts on the human rights landscape in Haiti.\*

Below are some key questions addressed by our participants:



Photo Credit: NY Times

**Q: How do human rights funders fit into relief efforts in Haiti?**

A: Human rights funders need to be mindful of helping fellow grantmakers understand *effective* disaster-relief giving. As such, human rights funders should make a point of participating in every aid-coordination conference call and every discussion regarding policy. It is also crucial to advocate for Haitians to be leading the process, playing a central role in every discussion.

**Q: Specifically, where are your grants for Haiti going?**

*American Jewish World Service:* We are funding eight grassroots organizations, five of which are in Haiti and three in the Dominican Republic. The organizations in the Dominican Republic are well placed to bring medical supplies, sanitation, and women's hygiene products (which are overlooked by many large aid organizations) into Haiti.

*Grassroots International:* We are supporting four grassroots organizations (long-term partners) in Haiti, and one in the Dominican Republic that is providing solidarity relief. We are also working with allies like AJWS to identify other organizations; and more importantly to work with Haitian partners to help long-term rebuilding and reconstruction.

*Haiti Emergency Relief Fund:* All our support goes to grassroots work. Funds are going to community medical clinics providing first aid, and towards purchasing water, food, and medical supplies for the local community. We helped a doctor get to a clinic and nurses get to Haiti. We also support the Aristide Foundation, set up mobile schools with local teachers, purchase generators for a couple of groups, support farmers directly as well as community organizations supporting farmers, and Bureau des Avocats Internationaux, a human rights law group.

**Q: What is an important element in the rebuilding process in Haiti?**

A: It is critical to listen to Haitians, to involve Haitians and allow them to lead the process of rebuilding

their country.

**Q: What is a human rights framework to relief and rebuilding efforts?**

A: [Some key human rights concepts to consider are:](#) accountability, transparency, participation, and capacity building. These elements need to be taken into account when programs are being developed. [Aid programs should rely on the infrastructure of the local community](#) and use local communities to distribute food and water. There are local organizations that can assist with this process.

**\*The following panelists led the Haiti briefing; please contact them for more information:**

- [Nikhil Aziz](#), Grassroots International
- [Blaine Bookey](#), Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti
- [John Harvey](#), Grantmakers Without Borders
- [Bess Rothenberg](#), American Jewish World Service,
- [Walter Riley](#), Haiti Emergency Relief Fund