

It's Good to Talk, but Better to Listen
"The Tanbou project harnesses people power to combat corruption in Haiti"

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Introduction

Under a blazing Caribbean sun, Sandra Félicien stood in front of a crowd of impoverished people, who like herself, have been homeless since the earthquake of 12 January 2010. After spending months living in tents or makeshift shelters, their patience was at breaking point. Voices rose in anger as they complained of their poverty and the constant gnawing hunger they suffered. They were fearful about living under canvas during the worst of the hurricane season. They wanted paying jobs to help them back on their feet,

pleading for her neighbors in the camp. By implication, she also wrote on behalf of more than one million

The contents of the letters are summarized and added to a database where they are available to users and the general public without the private details of the writer.

Background

Haiti's 12 January 2010 earthquake killed an estimated 250,000, left the capital in ruins, the government in disarray and displaced 1.5 million people. The October 2010 cholera outbreak, the first in many decades which has claimed the lives of 4,533 as of [26 February 2011](#), only added to the country's woes. Haiti's

effort in Haiti - run into the sands because they are insensitive to local customs and do not engage beneficiary populations².

Attempts to use communications to inform beneficiaries of humanitarian aid priorities, engage their feedback and promote behavior change typically fail. The most commonly reason cited is lack of stakeholder involvement. Despite lip service to “two way communication” most development and emergency actors pursue centrally controlled oneway messaging rather than an open approach with a mechanism to listen to beneficiaries at its (Development) Communication: The Lubricant for Running the Development Engine Only.)

A national tracking officer collects the verified and well documented complaints and communicates them to

Taking the project to the broader population to monitor aid and corruption is showing far more potential for success as there are deep concerns that aid to Haiti will be diverted, as has happened so often in the past. In a country that is for all intents and purposes a failed state, the only prospect for accountability is to engage the affected population directly as the eyes and ears of the reconstruction process.

Prezi of [The Tanbou Project](#)