

Since 2010, the MIT-Haiti Initiative has been at the forefront of a movement to improve the quality of education in Haiti, with a scientific focus that promotes interactive pedagogy and the use of the mother tongue as tools for teaching and learning. The MIT-Haiti Platform is an incubator for the production and dissemination of Haitian Creole (Kreyòl) material on different subjects and at all levels. We contribute to the creation of high-quality educational material in Kreyòl, enabling teachers to teach and students to learn with pride and joy.

2010 – 2022

12 MIT-AYITI

12 years creating high-quality materials in Kreyòl — Haiti's national language — giving it its rightful place in classrooms and all other sectors of society.

GOAL :

MIT-Haiti's main goal is to assist in the production and use of high-quality educational materials based on the results of research in education, while enhancing and integrating the cultural dimension of Kreyòl. The Initiative makes these resources available throughout Haiti and abroad.

Our educational mission is based on three pillars:

1. Active learning whereby children participate in building their own knowledge;
2. Use of appropriate technology;
3. Use of the learners' mother tongue.

MIT-HAITI PLATFORM:

During the workshops and symposia that MIT-Haiti carried out between 2010 and 2017, participants confirmed the importance of Kreyòl as an indispensable tool for active learning at all educational levels. As a result, the Initiative launched a digital platform, <https://mit-ayiti.net>, where all learners and teachers in Haiti can find and contribute high-quality materials in Kreyòl. These materials are meant as models for the creation of more materials by teachers in Haiti.

This platform is a large and open forum that gathers teachers, learners and education professionals who, together, are building a new kind of school that welcomes and honors all children. It is used to create, collect, evaluate, curate, review, organize, and share materials in Kreyòl for the classroom.

The platform offers a variety of material: resources for use in the classroom, at all levels and in all subjects; examples for best teaching practices, such as sample lesson plans and teaching manuals; as well as interviews with artists, creolists and other activists fighting for high-quality education in Haiti.

LANGUAGE-RELATED CHALLENGES IN HAITI :

Poverty and language barriers exclude a large part of the population from high-quality education—especially those in remote areas and even many in urban areas.

Since Haiti's founding in 1804, Kreyòl has been mostly absent from documents and formal spaces that produce and transmit knowledge while French has been the language prevailing in schools and universities, public and private institutions, courts, banks, print media, and elsewhere. This creates deep division since 100% of the population speaks Kreyòl while only a very small percentage (in the single digits) speak French at home.

THE MIT-HAITI SOLUTION:

Our work shows how Kreyòl can be used in a robust teaching model based on interactive pedagogy to help more people get access to high-quality education. We also offer alternatives to the tradition of rote memorization with little understanding and to the social exclusion that has hampered the country's development for more than two centuries.

Since the launch of the MIT-Haiti Initiative in 2010, we have been creating, collecting, and curating high-quality educational materials to facilitate active learning at all levels. We are now reinforcing our communication and outreach strategy to raise awareness of MIT-Haiti's Kreyòl resources for learners, teachers and other education professionals.

THE INITIATIVE HAS PROGRESSED THROUGH FOUR PHASES:

2010 – 2016 : After a kickoff symposium at MIT in October 2010, we organized a series of seven intensive workshops in Haiti from 2012 to 2016, training some 250 teachers in modern pedagogical methods and supporting the development of Kreyòl as a language of instruction. Six of these teachers visited MIT in October 2015 to participate in specialized workshops on the production of active-learning materials in Kreyòl. Upon returning home, these teachers created the Konbit MIT-Ayiti offering similar active-learning workshops to their faculty colleagues in Haiti.

2017 – 2022 : We have been writing a series of guides to educational practice, with focus on physics (published in 2019), biology, chemistry, and mathematics.

2019 – present : Platfòm MIT-Ayiti was launched in 2019. Since then, we've been collecting, curating and sharing a wide range of free high-quality materials online in Kreyòl—in all disciplines and at all levels.

2022 – present : In the fourth phase of the Initiative, we seek to expand our communication and outreach efforts to reach more people. This will help more learners, teachers and other professionals in the education sector discover and use the resources represented on the MIT-Ayiti Platform.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

Some of the MIT-Haiti Initiative's main results:

- Organization of 7 workshops and 1 symposium in Haiti.
- Participation of more than 250 teachers in the workshops, from more than 150 institutions.
- Development of 50 apps and videos for active learning in Kreyòl.
- In 2015, 6 Haitian teachers visited MIT and, after they returned to Haiti and created *Konbit MIT-Ayiti*.

Since the launch of the MIT-Haiti Platform in September 2019:

- It has received more than 40,000 users who have viewed its pages more than 177,000 times.
- 57% of visitors to the website live in Haiti.
- More than half of its users are between 18 and 34 years old.

ABOUT ACTIVE-LEARNING PEDAGOGY:

Learning is “constructive” when learners actively participate in building their own knowledge. Research shows that, when learners use their mother tongue, the class becomes more lively, the learning deeper, and the students understand better.

We note that Haiti's 1987 Constitution recognizes Kreyòl as “the only language that links all Haitians together.” Teaching in the language that the community knows best makes all participants—both learners and teachers—more comfortable brainstorming, sharing knowledge, explaining more easily what they understand or do not understand.

Using their mother tongue as well as modern pedagogy provides children the foundation they need to learn all other subjects: science, math, and other languages—such as French, English and Spanish. With this solid academic foundation, learners are able to build a strong level of knowledge in order to become creative professionals who can help the country grow economically.

COLLABORATION

As MIT-Haiti is engaged in improving education in Haiti in the long term, we seek out possibilities for collaborations with any and all local and international stakeholders in the education sector that aim at improving the quality of their policies and projects. To date, institutions that we've engaged in conversations include (in alphabetical order): Agence Espagnole de Coopération (AECID), American Institutes for Research (AIR), Anseye pou Ayiti (APA), École Supérieure d'Infotronique d'Haïti (ESIH), Foi & Joie, Fondasyon Konesans ak Libète (FOKAL), Global Center for the Development of the Whole Child (University of Notre Dame, Indiana), Haitian Response Coalition (HRC), Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), Kalfou Richès Ayiti, Kean University, Lekòl Kominotè Matènwa (LKM), Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle (MENFP), MIT, MIT Jameel World Education Lab, MIT OpenCourseWare, MIT Open Learning, MITx, NATCOM, Open Society Foundations, Primature du Gouvernement d'Haïti, Pwofesè pou Ayiti (P4H), Solutions S.A., Turbo System, UNESCO, UNICEF, Université Caraïbe, Université d'État d'Haïti (Rectorat, Faculté des Sciences, École Normale Supérieure, Faculté Linguistique Appliquée, Campus Henry Christophe Limonade), Université Notre Dame d'Haïti, Université Quisqueya, USAID, U.S. Embassy in Haiti, Wade Foundation, World Bank.

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