

Development of Community Media – Radio Peace in Ghana

Community-based media ensure media pluralism, diversity of content, and the representation of a society's different groups and interests. Community media encourage open dialogue and transparency of administration at local level and offer a voice to the voiceless. They are established on the concepts of public access, sharing experiences and information.

Radio is by far the most favoured community medium in developing countries. Given its accessibility and cost-effectiveness, community radio represents a democratic and participatory medium. It is easy to operate and lies within the capacities of many local communities who are not often a subject of mainstream media and information channels.

Radio Peace FM is an example of project supported by IPDC in Ghana that have successfully used community media for development purposes.

Officially authorized in August 1996 the station, Radio Peace 88.9 MH-Z FM, was registered in April 1997. Test transmission began on the 1st of July 1999 and round the clock broadcasting started on the 1st of September 1999.

UNESCO/IPDC granted the project \$50,000 in 1998. The money was for training and adapting whatever facilities adopted for broadcast purposes, e.g. providing studio acoustics, furniture for equipment, stationery, portable recorders etc. The second benefactor was DANIDA, who provided essential equipment to the tune of 80,000 pounds sterling.

As the only operative and pioneer Community Radio station in the Central Region, Radio Peace covers more than three-quarters of the region. With an effective radius of about 70 km, it serves three linguistic areas, Mfantse, Effutu and Awutu.

The station employs a regular number of 20 volunteer workers, recruited essentially from the target districts. These are complemented with a further 20 volunteer artistes who service the different programmes.

The vision of Radio Peace is to address the hydra headed bane of the catchment area by pushing back the frontiers of superstition, ignorance and illiteracy, insanitary conditions and disease, poverty and hunger; by giving voice to the voiceless and empowering the vulnerable especially women and children. The purposeful development



oriented programmes are carefully put together to enhance functional education, information and edifying entertainments. Emphasis is placed on good food and nutrition, good fishing and farming practices as well as food security, good governance and democratic practices, conflict resolution and management.

Already, Radio Peace has significantly strengthened the pillars of broadcasting and enhanced the media landscape of Ghana particularly in the Central Region. Radio Peace has acquired the status of Centre of Excellence for Community Radio Broadcasting and for Broadcast Teaching, Learning and Research in Ghana. ■