

## **RADIO LISTENING CLUB: AMPLIFYING CITIZEN VOICES AND PUBLIC DEBATE THROUGH COMMUNITY RADIO BROADCASTING**

**Project start and end dates:** March-November 2009

**PIWA Program** : Governance program

**Country/region:** Senegal: Rufisque (region of Dakar) and Thiel (Region of Diourbel)

**Partners:**

**CERFLA**

CERFLA works in the rural zones in the department of Linguère. It works on alphabetization and training of adults and development support in pastoral zones.

**ENDA 3D**

ENDA 3D works in the city of Rufisque (a suburb of Dakar). Among other actions, Enda 3D supports house-maids.

The objective of the project was to strengthen the capacity of community groups to express their views and be heard by local decision makers and it that way let arise citizen concerns and ideas on issues crucial to the community. The small-scale project was a pilot in the use of Radio Listening Clubs and took place in one rural area (Thiel) in the department of Linguère and one suburb in the region of Dakar.

**topic of the debate(s):** Thiel

- 1) Access to drinking water in pastoral areas, management of drilling and deficit of water wells.
- 2) Women's access to decision making

Rufisque

- 1) Alienating living and working conditions of house maids
- 2) Rights and duties of house maids
- 3)

**What was the problem the debate(s) helped to solve? (Include information such as geographic scale of the problem, number of people affected by it, why it is significant etc)**

Local communities do not participate enough in debate and citizen control of public action. The concerns and ideas of communities need to be better heard, particularly by authorities and local decision makers. This is a general problem in Senegal (and most countries in West Africa).

Community radio stations do not enough play their role of promoter of local development and are not always aware of the living situations of their community.

Also, radio stations in areas around the city are challenged by commercial ones. In this context, it is difficult for them to stay close to their mission as community broadcasters.

#### *Specific problems in the areas of intervention*

In Thiel the problems of the access to drinking water are central to the whole community: communication between the management committee of the drilling and the population is lacking, water in the distribution network is being wasted, an exhaustive census of populations and livestock is lacking and during the dry season, the use of water is abusive which results in wells that dry up. These problems are common in the pastoral areas with co-habitation between shepherds and farmers.

In Rufisque the problems of the living and working conditions of house maids concern principally a specific group in the community. House maids are one of the most vulnerable groups in the society, especially in suburbs around the capital where many of these often young women come from rural areas and live far from their families.

They face numerous problems such as the lack of respect from their employers, irregular payments, lack of employment contracts, insecurity, sexual abuses, lack of holidays, sick leave and retirement, etc. These living and working conditions are not enough known and debated in the surrounding community.

#### **How was the debate expected to contribute to solving the problem? (Theory of change)**

##### **Who were the stakeholders who needed to participate in debate/dialogue, or whose voices needed to be reflected in debate? What were the expected results/outcomes of the debate for each stakeholder group?**

Through the thematic and technical training, communities will be capable of setting up Radio Listening Clubs. The Radio Listening Clubs are groups in the communities (either living communities or communities by a common interest) that meet up to debate issues that they have decided themselves and that are central to their living conditions. Their discussions are then broadcasted in the local radio. In this way, their voices are better heard and their suggestions to resolve the problems can be taken into account. The possibility to be listened to and participate in the community debate also gives members of the community confidence in their capability to contribute to the development of the locality / the advocacy for change. In a long run, the increased and more participative debate in the community can also encourage and create interest within the population to follow the local leaders' actions. Through the organization of Radio Listening Clubs, the radio stations get to better know and interact with their audiences. They also better realize their mission as community radios and get more interested in understanding the concerns of their audiences and having different groups in the society them express themselves. The interest in the radio stations' broadcasting increase as the community feels more concerned as radio stations are more capable of talking of the problems of the community. In the long run, the role of the radio station as a democratic actor is reinforced and the community grasps the potential of the local radio station.

##### **Why was Panos intervention needed? i.e, why was this debate not happening already, or not happening effectively?**

The communities did not have tools to have their voices heard. The local radio stations were not enough capable of creating this interaction and did not that doing this would legitimize their existence in the community. Neither the local radios nor

other members of the community had been trained in the method of Radio Listening clubs. PIWA has the capability in training people to set up and use Radio Listening Clubs as a way of increasing local democracy.

**Baseline figures:**

- **How many media outlets is the project designed to targets, that will carry more debate programmes as a result of the project?**
- **Baseline figure: how many "debate" programmes did these outlets carry before the project?**

The project targeted two community radio stations.

None of the radio stations had done this kind of interactive debates in which people from the community participate directly.

Describe the activities Panos carried out to enable the debate(s), and the debate that took place / media outputs produced.

**Emphasise what was new, eg new voices, new relationships, new skills, new information, new focus/topic area, new opportunities/platforms, etc. (New to this particular situation, not new to Panos).**

**Give descriptive, quantitative and qualitative information**

- 1) Identification of the Clubs
- 2) Thematic training in order to decide what topics to debate and how to better understand them
- 3) Technical training on how to register sound etc. (36 persons trained in the thematic and technical trainings)
- 4) Production (the following steps were sometimes reduced): 14 productions
  - a) A first broadcasting with an expert
  - b) The Radio Listening Club listens to the presentation of the expert and reacts on it
  - c) The reactions/debates of the Radio Listening Club are broadcasted.
  - d) The expert reactions on the reactions of the RLC are broadcasted.
  - e) The second reactions/debates of the RLC are broadcasted
  - f) A final magazine is produced

The whole concept of Radio Listening Clubs was new to the two communities. It gave possibilities for new voices to be heard (ex marginalised house maids in Rufisque). The trainings and the interaction with an expert gave the participants new information and knowledge of the topic. A better interaction between the local radio stations and the communities was also created. The communities got the opportunity speak and have their voices heard through the local radio stations and the local radio stations got the opportunity to better know their audiences and produce quality content

Describe the debate that took place (for face-to-face or online debates) and/or the media outputs (for debates in media)

- A. the **number of media outputs.**
- B. the **number of radio stations /print outlets** in which they

- A. 14 radio programmes were broadcasted
- B. 2 radio stations carried them

### **Describe the results (outputs and outcomes) of the debate**

**Outputs:** (2 thematic and technical trainings, in total 36 individuals trained), 4 Radio Listening Clubs set up, 14 programs broadcasted

**Outcomes:** According to the communities, the project made them :

- Identify the problems of the community
- Talk of the problems of the living conditions of vulnerable groups
- Have self-confidence
- Have a framework for exchange and dialogue
- Mobilise around the community radio stations and strengthen its role as development actor
- Better get to know the socio-economic potentialities of the community
- Have their voices heard and value the local human resources
- Have a better contact with other rural communities covered by the radio
- Struggle against taboos

In Thiel, through the radio listening clubs people came to the conclusion that solutions to their problems could often be found within the community itself and that a lot of knowledge and ideas already exist. The debates made people mobilize around development issues. After the broadcasting, the president of the rural council called together the elected representatives in order to take decisions on the management of the drillings.

Also, the radio station in Thiel initiated a kind of general assembly meeting between members of the RLC, resource persons of the zone and radio staff in order to find ways of adapting the format.

In Rufisque, the broadcasting of the Radio Listening clubs created a trigger in the perception of the target by the staff of the radio station. It made the radio station and the community come closer and in that way the community of house maids could share their life experiences. During the training the radio representatives were taken by the descriptions of the living and working conditions of the female house maids and started question the trivialisation of this group. As a consequence, the radio made a supplementary information research and collection of ideas from other actors (such as Islamic experts) on the topic of house maids.

Other communities around Rufisque are interested in setting up radio listening clubs in order to discuss other topics such as how to tackle the problem of the rise of the sea.

**In what ways will this debate be sustainable, or produce sustainable results?**

**Eg have lasting dialogue/debate processes been established?**

**Has the debate resulted in actions or policy change?**

Both communities say that the topics were a factor of sustainability; because they were of interest and relevance to the actors and created a dynamic in the community (may it be the community of living in Thiel or the specific community of house maids in Rufisque).

In Rufisque, other communities are interested in setting up RLC. The radio is making supplementary research and collections of ideas on the issue of the living conditions of house maids.

After the broadcasting in Thiel, the president of the rural council brought together the elected representatives in order to take decisions on the management of the drillings. However it should be noted that the project was of a limited pilot kind.

**How has the debate contributed to solving the problem it was intended to address?** Radios have found ways of working on issues that are related to the local realities and interact with communities, in particular vulnerable groups. By giving communities the possibility to express themselves, the interest for the radio stations have increased. Also, related to the dynamics of promotion of communitarian radio stations, the project has made them see over their strategic position and it has given them a better meaning as community broadcasters.

The communities feel that they have had their voices heard and that they can contribute to the find solutions to the problems of their locality. Local political leaders in Thiel are acting in order to try to find solutions to the problems addressed by the Radio Listening Clubs.

**People: direct quotes from named people who have directly benefited from the project. Who are they (names and ages) and where do they live. Please provide photographs of them if possible.**

Khalil Ndiaye, director of the radio station JOKKO FM in Rufisque: « This is an ideal format for community radio stations because it gives them an opportunity to have more relevant content [related to their mission as community broadcasters]»

A villager in Thiel: « It is through these programs that I have understood that we have the human resources that we need to solve our problems ourselves »

Director of the radio station in Thiel: « After the broadcasting, the president of the rural council brought together the elected representatives in order to take decisions on the management of the drillings »