

DRC Radio Branching Out in Kivus

Author: [IWPR](#)

Following the completion of internships for two Congolese journalists in The Hague, the producer of IWPR's radio programme in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, has returned to the region to spearhead upcoming developments in the project.

Mélanie Gouby will work alongside the presenter of Face à la Justice, **Charles Ntiricya**, and the project coordinator Guelord Mbaenda, to improve the skills of the reporters and increase the reach of the programme in the eastern DRC.

Over the coming months, the team will focus on the expansion of the exclusively female journalist network, a new mobile phone reporting project, and the launch of the project's new website which will provide multimedia reports on human rights issues in the region.

IWPR recently hosted two reporters - **Passy Mubalama** and **Espérance Nzigire** - at its office in The Hague where they received further broadcast training and gained experience of covering international justice issues including the trial of DRC former vice-president Jean-Pierre Bemba at the International Criminal Court, ICC.

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Espérance Nzigire, an IWPR trainee

Gouby will now work closely with the entire network of 15 female journalists who currently report from the Kivu region of eastern DRC. She will provide tailored mentoring for reporters as they work on the programme enabling them to receive critical feedback on their reports and develop them further before broadcast.

IWPR's training has been in demand among partner radio stations and reporters in eastern DRC.

"Before she received training from IWPR, our reporter could not [compile] field report[s] or go out to interview people. But since she got trained, we have a different person who is no longer scared to go in the field and who brings pertinent elements every time she comes back," said Pasteur Mabutwa, the manager of RAO FM, which partners with IWPR and broadcasts Face à la Justice.

"We can discuss our reports in-depth and receive immediate feedback," said Espérance Nzigire, an IWPR trainee who also works at RAO. "Working with the IWPR trainers in The Hague taught me a lot and it is good we can carry on working closely with Mélanie here in Goma."

Accompanying journalists on their patch has enabled Gouby to guide them every step of the way, improving the quality of reporting for Face à la Justice.

"It is great to be able to go on the ground reporting with the journalists and then help them to put their reports together. It is easier to understand the mistakes made and correct them at the beginning rather than at the end when interviews have already been done," Gouby said.

The project will now expand its reporting base to work with journalists in the regions of Butembo, Bukavu, Uvira and Nyamilima, thus covering all principal areas of North and South Kivu.

Covering remote areas is important as most stories involving human rights violations happen outside major towns, but the logistics of reporting them can be challenging.

The expansion of the journalist network will provide more reports and harness the expertise and insight of local reporters in rural areas. Expanding the network of radio partners in South Kivu will also ensure Face à la Justice can be heard everywhere in the region.

A private Facebook page will be created to maintain contact between all the journalists across the two provinces, allowing them to discuss story ideas and issues that arise from their reporting, as well as exchange documents and information. The page will also be used as a further teaching tool by IWPR trainers who provide editorial input.

IWPR's mobile phone reporting project is also being launched, in partnership with Voices of Africa, a training programme initiated by the Voices of Africa Media Foundation. Ten reporters will be trained to shoot and edit videos with their mobile phones and post them on the project's new website. Through the site, the project will integrate video reporting with print and radio to facilitate access to all three mediums through one local portal.

"This is a first in Congo and for all the reporters here. Eastern DRC is becoming more and more connected to the internet and we want to make sure the journalists we work with are up-to-date with modern techniques of reporting. There will be technical challenges at first, but these will improve in the future and we want to be at the forefront [of multimedia journalism]," Gouby said.

The journalists will learn to become multimedia reporters and manage the website. The site itself will be aimed at an educated audience in DRC as well as the diaspora and will provide high quality reporting on human rights and justice.

"Videos are important for stories we cover. It will complement the print and the radio by giving a more immediate and raw impression of the human rights situation in eastern DRC," Gouby said.

As the project expands, IWPR's radio reporters will receive advanced, follow-up training in July this year. These journalists will further their skills in technical production as well as develop their ability to investigate more in-depth stories on crucial human rights issues.

"We have learnt to research a story, record clean sounds, edit them and write structured reports. All of us have improved and benefited from the past nine months [working with IWPR] and we are now ready to learn more," Lucie Bindu, an IWPR trainee, said.

Face à la Justice was re-launched in June 2010 following a week-long training for 15 female reporters from the Goma region of eastern DRC. Reporters were taught basic production skills and given an introduction to reporting human rights issues, including sexual and gender-based violence and access to justice.

The east of DRC is still affected by sexual violence and conflict and through the programme IWPR is empowering female journalists to report professionally on issues concerning women's rights and justice.

IWPR currently partners with seven radio stations in North and South Kivu which air Face à la Justice in French and Swahili twice a month.

Besides sexual and gender-based violence, stories covered by Face à la Justice have included other important topics such as land rights.

More recently, Face à la Justice reported issues related to the forthcoming elections, such as voters' registration and constitutional changes, as well as corruption in the judiciary system and the prosecution of sexual violence at the ICC.

Location: Democratic Republic of Congo

Topic: Radio

Focus: ICC - International Criminal Court

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