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"OUR INCENTIVE IS PEACE"

Promoting peace through radio

Wednesday, 2:40 P.M. A 20-member listener group at Torban Hansawe Kebele in Siraro Woreda, Oromiya Regional State (ORS) gathers around a small radio to follow the 20-minute Peace Radio program broadcasted by Radio Voice of South FM 100.9. Women, men and youth listen to the voice of journalist Membere Gebeyehu:

"Since a long time, the Manja community has been discriminated [against] because of ancestral belief. Now change is coming. The community is starting to see windows of hope that the neighboring community not only considers them as human beings but is also allowing marriage with them. In [today's] program we will hear a family biography that cracked the wrong attitude of the community. Stay with us..."

Days before the broadcast, a field team went to Kaffa region to gather information about the discrimination of the Manja by the Kaffa nationality. They visited a school where Manja and Kaffa children are educated together by teachers from both groups, and interviewed Manja community representatives and kebele officials. Finally, the team met the couple about whom Membere was speaking on the radio. The wife is from Kaffa and the husband is of Manja nationality.

Besides Torban Hansawe, listener groups follow the program in 13 other kebeles—nine in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) and four in ORS. Following the broadcast, a discussion is facilitated by the Woreda Peace Radio Coordinator. Once a month, eight listener groups (four from SNNPRS and four from ORS) jointly listen to the program. This brings together the bordering communities, which in some cases are in conflict.



Enhancing the culture of peace

After a six-month pilot phase in 2009, the Peace Radio project was jointly launched in June 2010 by the Resource Centre for Civil Society Groups Association (RCCSGA) and Council of Nationalities (CoN) with the financial and technical support of GIZ's Civil Peace Service Program (CPS). The CPS Program is implemented on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Oromiya Bureau of Administration and Security (OBAS), SNNPR Mass Media Organization, Mercy Corps Ethiopia and the SNNPR Bureau of Security and Administration joined the partnership shortly after. The six partners form the Peace Radio Editorial Team.

"Peace Radio plays a role in strengthening harmonious relationships between the different nations and nationalities who have varied interests," said Ato Lemma Gezume, the speaker of the CoN, during Peace Radio's opening program in June 2010.

The main objective of the program is to enhance the culture of peace among communities within SNNPRS and with the neighboring communities of ORS as well as fostering collaboration among peace actors, particularly between civil society organizations and government institutions. The program focuses on raising public awareness about the culture of peace, conflict prevention and transformation approaches and community experiences. It also promotes and shares best practices in peacebuilding.



Partnering for peace

The weekly program is facilitated by the CoN and coordinated by the RCCSGA. Each project partner proposes topics, prepares scripts, and has a

representative on the Editorial Team, which meets regularly for planning and follow up. CPS Program advisors provide technical and content-related backstopping.

Different methodologies are used for broadcasting: interviews or mini panel discussions with experts from all over the country, dramas prepared by youth clubs, audio documentaries, narrated scripts, and question-and-answer sessions where winners receive awards.

The knowledge and expertise of the implementing partner organizations form the source of information for most of the topics. Fieldtrips with these partners are another important source. Issues like gender and peacebuilding, harmful traditional practices, mediation/negotiation, concepts of peace and conflict, conflict sensitivity in development and humanitarian intervention, and federalism and conflict were broadcasted in the last six months.



Bringing change to people and communities

The program is enjoying increasing attention from listener groups and the wider public. The support and commitment of the partner organizations is very high. "Our incentive is peace," says Ato Tsehay Negash from the OBAS branch in Shashamene.

During its monitoring fieldtrip this past March, the Editorial Team discovered that the program has contributed to the community's increased knowledge on peace and conflict, to raising awareness for tolerance and to creating a better understanding of how to solve conflicts in a peaceful manner. Change is indeed coming.

"In previous times nobody gave attention to the role of women in peace-related issues. After listening to the Peace Radio drama and panel discussion on the relationship between

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Photos: CPS-RCCSGA archives

peace and gender, we discussed it and started to encourage women to participate in the peace committee at kebele level as well as to become members of the Peace Radio listeners group,” said Hanesa Bekele, a member of the Torban Hansawe Kebele listener group. Fellow group member Dekate Danke learned new skills thanks to the Peace Radio program: “Since I have been listening to the program I have become well aware how to negotiate with conflicting parties. I started to use the steps of negotiation to solve individual conflict at the family and village level. [Now] I know that conflicts can be solved through discussion.”



“I am proud to be part of it.”

Nearing the end of the program’s first phase, the Editorial Team is reflecting on the challenges faced during the implementation and how to improve the impact of the project. At a workshop with the Woreda Peace Coordinators last March, important questions were raised:

- How to improve listener group monitoring in order to maintain their attendance?
- How to improve communication between woreda coordinators and the project management team?
- How to increase women’s participation?
- How to transfer the knowledge to the community?

The findings of this workshop and the monitoring fieldtrip have been analyzed and follow-up actions are to be taken. The results will also inform the planning of a second project phase, which is highly anticipated by all. This phase will likewise take place in conflict-prone areas such as Wondo–Wondo Genet, where the Peace Radio program audience has been temporarily interrupted by a conflict between the two communities.

The partners are nonetheless convinced about the importance of the Peace Radio project; as expressed by Ms. Gebeyehu: “I am proud to be part of it.”

Simone Notz,
International Peace Advisor CPS-RCCSGA



Project Facts

- **Project partners:** Council of Nationalities (CoN), Resource Center for Civil Society Groups Association (RCCSGA), Oromiya Bureau of Administration and Security (OBAS), SNNPR Bureau of Security and Administration (SNNPR BSA), SNNPR Mass Media Organization and Mercy Corps Ethiopia (MC-Ethiopia).
- **Role of GIZ:** Financial and technical support through the Civil Peace Service Program (CPS) Ethiopia.
- **Project duration:** pilot phase April–September 2009; first phase June 2010–July 2011; second phase in planning stage.
- **Project management:** one Peace Radio Coordinator, Editorial Team formed of the six partner organizations, one International Peace Advisor and one National Peace Expert from CPS-GIZ.
- **Peace Radio Broadcast:** Every Wednesday, 2:40 P.M.–3:00 P.M. by Radio Voice of South FM 100.9, in Amharic language.
- **Listener groups:** nine in SNNPRS, five in ORS, four joint listener groups (Amaro-Gelana, Boricha-Siraro, Burji-Bule Hora, Wondo Genet-Wondo).
- **Targeted woredas and kebeles:** five in SNNPRS: Amaro Woreda (Jelo Kebele) Boricha Woreda (Yerba Gangesa Kebele), Burji Woreda (Bela/Goche Kebele), Halaba Woreda (Yaye, Shewako and Betena Kebele), Wondo Genet Woreda (Kela 01, Weshana Soyama and Edo Kebele); five in ORS: Bule Hora Woreda (Medeba Kebele), Dawa Woreda (Welena Bokosa Kebele), Gelana Woreda (Metri Kebele), Siraro Woreda (Torban Hansawe Kebele), Wondo Woreda (Entaye Kebele).