

## Giving voice to the voiceless in Kafolo

### *How local radio recognizes and empowers remote communities to tackle daily challenges*



*A Kong radio staff finalizing the setting up of the material before starting the community radio show in Kafolo*

The village of Kafolo, Kong region, sits right on the Burkina border, the site of two major extremist assaults in 2020 and 2021, leaving dozens dead and injured. A special military zone was declared following these attacks, and the security presence scaled up dramatically. Kafolo became known as a ‘no-go zone’, disrupting tourism to nearby Comoé Park and pushing local Fulani to flee from local hostilities and threats.

While these events put Kafolo in the headlines, residents were further isolated by their lack of media access and were unable to communicate their plight to the outside world. Telephone networks remain weak and unstable, and internet access poor. Due to low wattage and lack of a relay antenna the Kong FM radio broadcast do not reach Kafolo. Since 2018 when it began transmitting, Kong Radio occasionally ventures out for interviews and reports in remote areas, but had yet to do an interactive broadcast within a community and outside of their studio in Kong.

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*“We’ve never seen a radio station move so much equipment for a production in our village. It makes us happy to see that we also matter. After what happened in Kafolo, people are afraid to come here. This makes us feel forgotten, even abandoned,”* Activity participant.

To give Kafolo residents a voice and be heard across Kong, R4P equipped Kong Radio with the necessary skills and materials to produce local radio show. The Kong Radio team arrived in Kafolo with enough new equipment (mixing table, microphones, computers) to bring the radio experience directly to the heart of the community. At the town’s central commons, beneath the

shade of a majestic tree, residents were listened to a broadcast produced by Radio Kong on conflict management between herders and farmers.



*A villager in the audience sharing his opinion during the community radio show in Kafolo*

Next, residents were asked to react and debate the issues raised, creating a live recording of the exchange. This open-air, on-the-spot production is the first of its kind in the area, which is more familiar with individual interviews that are later edited in the radio’s studio.

This interactive production format attracted many participants, women and men, who came first to hear and then chose to participate. Many felt the need to voice their views on the problem of farmer-herder conflict, which they encounter daily basis and for which no ready solution has been found. Learning about farmer herder dynamics in other locales reassured them that their problems are not unique and can be solved peacefully, using a variety of techniques adapted to each context.

*“For the show you will notice that everyone who is present here is very concentrated because we are not used to seeing it and especially the fact that we take our opinions to allow other villages to know our realities of Kafolo through the radio touches us a lot. You see the white people who came to see me earlier are from a major international TV channel, but I told them to wait until I finished the show with you before responding to their concern. The theme of the program interests us a lot because since the attack all the journalists who come here are only interested in security, while you are interested in our social realities related to agriculture,”*  
Kafolo Village Chief

Following this success, R4P will repeat the activity with the other radio stations in all other programming regions: Kimbirila-Nord, Bouna/Doropo, Tehini and Tengrela.



*Kafolo Village Chief speaking during the community radio show in his village*

*“We listen to the Radio Kong broadcast because we learn about problems facing farmers elsewhere. We see how similar their challenges are to ours here. We often talk to each other about how to fix things, but today’s show on Radio Kong gave us new ideas on how to better manage our situation. Especially for us women, we fear for our safety when we go to our fields,”* Female participant in the radio dialogue

*“Our greatest hope is that after this activity [regional] radio will cover this area of Kong department. We plan to follow this program format in other communities,”* Director, Kong Radio



*Kafolo villagers gathered for the community radio show*