

The Voiceless Claiming the Microphone to Speak Up

How a young Fulani women took the courage to host the first ever radio show in Fulani language at the radio station in Togoniéré

In Togoniéré, a northern town in Côte d'Ivoire near the border with Burkina Faso, the Resilience for Peace (R4P) media team and its partner radio station Wo Kala openly acknowledge the limited inclusion of local languages in the broadcasting program. Since the start of Radio Wo Kala ten years ago, there has never been a Fulani-speaking radio host.



Zeinab in a radio studio developing her broadcasting skills

According to the Radio Director, the Fulani community had expressed the wish to hear programs in their language, but the difficulty of finding a Fulani-speaking host made it impossible to satisfy the demand. In the current security dynamic the stigmatization of Fulani as associates of armed groups is intensifying. It is now more important than ever to ensure that Fulani community members take part in public debates, in this case via the radio, to ensure community cohesion and solidarity.

The R4P media “ecosystem training” in Kong from September 27 to 30, 2021 was an opportunity for the radio station to find a response to this need. The community ecosystem approach employed by R4P facilitates the awareness of both radio teams and community members to collaborate closely in order to use the local radio station as a joint tool to advance the community’s development and cohesion. With this objective, R4P and radio Ko Wala had invited Zeinab, a dynamic young Fulani woman from a village close to Togoniéré to join the training.

Despite initial hesitation, and after repeated encouragements, Zeinab finally participated in the four-day workshop, which also accompanied each participant in the production of one radio spot in their own local language. The practical experience and the connection with the radio staff gave Zeinab the final courage to start hosting her own weekly radio show in Fulani every Saturday. According to the Director of Radio Wo Kala, already the second show saw a remarkable increase in Fulani community members calling into the show and expressing themselves on community issues.

My radio broadcasting helps me reach my community in ways I could not achieve on my own, to convey my message of peace. I can also serve as an example that a Fulani girl can work in radio, have a career, and still represent our traditions and culture. Fulani communities everywhere can understand that all Fulani children should be educated.

Zeinab, radio host at Radio Wo Kala

