

Local voices are loud and clear

How R4P communities combat fake news and misinformation

The Resilience for Peace (R4P) project partners with twelve community radio stations along Cote d'Ivoire's borders with Mali and Burkina Faso. In these border regions' cellular networks are scarce, and local radio becomes the primary news source. With funding from USAID, R4P has launched 21 radio validation groups to vet programming in local languages.



Local Validation Group

In practice, community validation groups listen to proposed programming before sessions are aired and provide immediate feedback to improve or correct broadcasts. These community members identify disinformation, correct factual errors, improve content, and ensure that the nuances of local languages are respected. This also allows radio stations to diversify their outreach and build connections with local listeners.

“When you create a radio station, you do it for the people. But if your content is not sensitive to the context, listeners will not value their local station. That is a problem, and so -- congratulations to our listeners! We say thank you to (USAID) for this service (community validation), and we ask you to keep supporting our programming. We are open to all observations, criticisms, and suggestions from our communities!”

- Director of Radio Doropo

In one instance, Radio Doropo proposed a story, but the Lobi community found it susceptible to misinterpretation and with the potential to incite violence. A revised version was proposed and accepted.

“We've seen the effectiveness of this approach for ourselves. Farmers, housewives and sellers are giving their opinion on broadcasting in our communities, and our feedback prevents future problems or harm. Our local radio seeks our input and takes our suggestions to heart”

- Female president of validation group

In another instance, while promoting the government's provision of a “one-stop shop” to provide vehicle documentation, the validation group questioned the presenter's ability to communicate accurately in the local language, noting that poor translation can create misunderstandings and that some comments were misleading. The group then offered two local translators for future broadcasts.



Validation Group listening to proposed broadcasts

In addition, validation groups have encouraged women to engage in the complexity of community issues more closely and to present alternative viewpoints. Words that could be inflammatory are examined and adapted to local understanding and contexts. In every radio station the validation groups have been piloted, participants attest to the ability of direct feedback to bring local radio closer to the linguistic communities that comprise their target audiences and to provide more effective

programming. R4P works with radio stations to adopt this feedback loop for all future transmissions, independent of R4P. Furthermore, R4P hopes to formalize the use of these groups so that other agencies, including the government, will draw on this asset to enhance their own transmissions.