

Background Information

REFRAKA was created in 2000 with the support of Haiti's largest community radio station network, SAKS, and Enfofam, one of Haiti's foremost women organisations. It aims to strengthen the role of women in the management, operation and programme content of community radio stations and to raise awareness about women's rights and gender equality. It produces programmes tackling issues of gender justice, special programmes for use in schools, and awareness-raising radio "spots" aimed at influencing people's behaviour in relation to women's rights. REFRAKA's programmes are broadcast over 22 community radio stations in 9 Haitian *départements* and re-broadcast by some commercial radio stations.

A recent project provided training to strengthen Haitian women's competency in radio broadcasting. REFRAKA put in place a radio-telephone training programme aimed at 25 women working for local radio stations. They produced a series of broadcasts of 8 to 60 minutes concerning the problems faced by women in Haiti and elsewhere. These programmes were broadcast throughout the country. REFRAKA organized awareness-building seminars between members of women's networks to define a women's rights strategy in rural areas. The meetings raise awareness of violations against women within communities and encouraged women's participation in managing community radio.

During the 2010 earthquake, REFRAKA's office was totally destroyed and its director, Marie Guyrleine Justin, injured.

Due to the economic situation in the country REFRAKA has had to cut personnel. There are currently 3 members of staff: an Administrator, a Production Manager and an Executive Director. The law on Community radio presented in 2011 has not yet been ratified, meaning that until this happens, REFRAKA is unable to access State funding for its work.

Community radio stations represent the voices of people in ways that commercial radio stations either cannot or choose not to. Community radio plays a major role in linking remote locations, covering issues such as community welfare, and responding to natural disasters.

With funds raised, REFRAKA will organise three training sessions on digital production techniques for 15 women from five of the country's 27 community radio stations. They will also be trained in how to integrate questions of gender into programming. The project will need to purchase five laptop computers, 10 digital recorders and 5 USB sticks. Experienced radio technicians will be brought in to provide training which will result in the production of six radio magazine programmes and 12 broadcasts on each of the five community radio stations.