

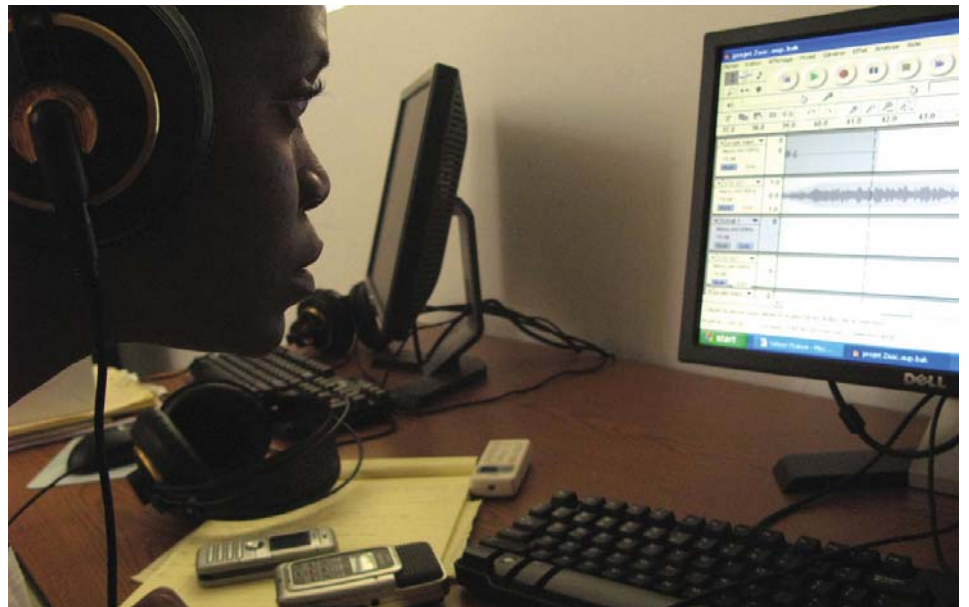
## Strengthening Community Radio in Haiti

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with the bulk of the population living on less than two dollars a day. Severe infrastructure problems hamper media development: electricity and Internet service are unreliable or unavailable in many places, impeding radio production; many roads are in dangerously poor condition; and sometimes chest-high rivers must be forded on foot, with goods and equipment held overhead. Civil unrest and natural disasters such as hurricanes also create significant challenges. However, the Haitian people are very resilient and resourceful and their thirst for news and information is great. Internews works in this challenging yet ultimately hopeful environment to empower Haitian community radio stations to serve the information needs of their communities.

Internews began working in Haiti in 2007 under a three-year grant from the US Agency for International Development. The project builds the technical and journalism skills of 40 community radio stations throughout Haiti that form a network called RAMAK (*Rassembleman Medya pour Aksyon Kominoté*).

Project goals are: greater independence, professionalism, and financial sustainability of the community radio stations; increased citizen involvement in community affairs; and public dialogue on key issues affecting communities.

Specific activities include: journalism trainings (including debate and talk-radio programming, community-based reporting, and Internet research); training-of-trainers; material and technical assistance to the stations; building advocacy skills of journalism associations; assisting with program production; and expanding and reinforcing the network of stations.



PHOTOS BY: INTERNEWS NETWORK/HAITI

A trainee learns sound editing during an Internews reporting training.

### INTERNEWS ACTIVITIES IN HAITI

Internews opened an office in Port-au-Prince in December 2007 and built a radio production studio to serve as a training and production facility. Internews activities include:

- Organizing a two-day conference of leaders of 40 community radio station representatives from all over Haiti
- Conducting a baseline study of each of the participating stations for journalists and technical staff to assess needs for training, equipment, and other assistance
- Developing a radio sponsorship project to foster financial viability of radio stations
- Mentoring 15 journalist associations from around Haiti to support quality journalism



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Journalist Fabienne Viltis (left) conducts a radio interview.

### “Radio Has Given Me Back My Dignity”

Fabienne Viltis spent many of her school days dodging gang gun battles in Cité Soleil, one of Haiti’s poorest, most dangerous slums. Even so, she was determined to finish school. She caught the attention of the cultural affairs manager of a popular community radio station. He sent Fabienne to intensive trainings, including an Internews-led seminar on debate and talk radio programs. Today, Fabienne produces her own cultural affairs radio show. “Before, I was ashamed to say I lived in the zone, but no longer,” she says. “Radio has given me back my dignity.”



Rommel Pierre (right) and engineer Chandler Aimable (left) interview a community radio journalist during a needs assessment by Internews.

## The Internews Team in Haiti

**Louise Brunet**, Internews’ Chief of Party in Haiti, has extensive media experience. Following over 20 years as a journalist, director, and producer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, she trained women communicators in Chile. She later designed and implemented a media and civic education campaign on peace and tolerance in Haiti and conducted a voter registration communication campaign for the 2005 Haitian elections for the Organization of American States.

She is joined in Port-au-Prince by a staff of seven Haitian nationals with extensive experience. They include Training Coordinator **Rommel Pierre**, a journalist with over 20 years of experience in radio, TV, and print media, including training journalists and providing media support. Assistant Coordinator **Kettia Marcelus** has 10 years’ experience in journalism and communications and an extensive network of contacts in Haiti.

### ABOUT INTERNEWS

Internews is an international media development organization whose mission is to empower local media to provide people worldwide with the news and information they need, the ability to connect, and the means to make their voices heard.

Formed in 1982, Internews Network is a 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in California. It has worked in over 70 countries, and currently has offices in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America. Internews Network is a founding member of Internews International, an umbrella organization, based in Paris, made up of 12 media development NGOs.