

BENIN

MEDIA FOR A STRENGTHENED CIVIL SOCIETY IN BENIN

The media landscape in Benin is dynamic with numerous outlets, but civic space is shrinking under the pressure of restrictive laws and political interference. Self-regulation is challenging, and journalists face risks of self-censorship and poor working conditions, threatening media independence.

In September 2024, Fondation Hironnelle launched a new project aimed at supporting the advocacy capacities of Beninese civil society. This project, supported by the European Union, focuses on disseminating independent, responsible, and inclusive information, placing Beninese citizens at the heart of public debate. To achieve this, Fondation Hironnelle has developed key partnerships, notably with FeRCAB (Fédération des Radios Communautaires et Assimilées du Bénin), which was already a partner in a multi-country project to combat disinformation during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2021), and Ekôlab, a lab promoting quality journalism in West Africa that advocates for rigorous and informative reporting.

Fondation Hironnelle, in close collaboration with its partners FeRCAB and Ekôlab, has set two main objectives. The first is to support local media in effectively collaborating with civil society organizations (CSOs) and reporting on citizens' concerns. The second objective is to improve public access to local media content focused on development issues and to enhance their participation in these programs. This includes promoting gender equality, governance, and the impacts of climate and environmental change.

Key figures for 2024



18 partner radios



8 departments covered



24 journalists trained in fact-checking



3 studies conducted (editorial, technical, and management) (2023-2024)

FINANCIAL VOLUME 2024

270'000 CHF

SOURCES OF FUNDING

- European Union
- CFI via the Agence Française de Développement

Throughout the project, selected local media outlets are supported in producing media content both online and offline, in national languages and in French. Roundtables, magazines, and public programs are produced, bringing together various stakeholders in public debate (CSOs, experts, authorities, etc.). These media outlets broadcast the produced content on their stations as well as on digital platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, websites, etc.). Once a year, the radios elect the best content of the year, which is then broadcast by all FeRCAB stations.

Several training sessions and coaching opportunities are provided to FeRCAB radios on journalistic techniques. Specific training sessions are also offered, based on needs, to women in the FeRCAB women's network and to CSOs, particularly in digital tools, advocacy, communication techniques, local development, and gender.

Media literacy workshops will help young people aged 10 to 15 understand how information is created and used, as well as the role and importance of independent, responsible, and inclusive information. Throughout the project, Fondation Hironnelle will ensure the institutional strengthening of its partners, FeRCAB and Ekôlab, by providing specific support such as management tools and procedural guidance.

DRIVERS of CHANGE

- Strengthened media as actors of local development
- Enhanced partnerships and exchanges between local media and civil society to influence public debate
- Inclusion of civil society and minorities in local governance

PRIORITIES

- ▶ Support local media in collaborating with CSOs
- ▶ Improve public access to media content and their participation

ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Produce media content in collaboration with CSOs
- ▶ Train and coach FeRCAB radios

BENEFICIARIES

The project directly benefits the 18 radios in the FeRCAB network, around 60 women in the FeRCAB women's network, approximately 40 local civil society organizations, FeRCAB, and Ekôlab.

