



Overview of *Improving CTN's Broadcast Reach through Mobile Phone Technology and Other Recent Broadcasting Innovations* for the Fondation Hironnelle

Many community radio associations and networks have evolved over the past 70 years. New digital technologies and mobile phones have resulted in diversified networking options over the last few years, as well as the creation of new networks, new kinds of networks, and the expansion of existing networks. This, coupled with the tremendous growth observed in mobile phone adoption and innovations, led to the CTO exploring how mobile telephony could be leveraged by radio stations, especially since convergence in technologies and services is generating a wealth of new innovations and opportunities. Hence, it is fitting that the CTO provided support to Cotton Tree News (CTN).

CTN is a radio broadcasting institution was built by Fondation Hironnelle, Media for Peace and Human Dignity, a global non-profit based in Lausanne, Switzerland. CTN is operated in partnership with the Mass Communication Department of Fourah Bay College at the University of Sierra Leone, one of the oldest and most highly respected academic institutions in West Africa. In February 2009, CTN celebrated its second year on-air, providing citizens of Sierra Leone with daily access to professional, relevant and unbiased news and information in multiple languages.

The CTO provided technical assistance to CTN at a time when the institution began focussing on running the station as a business and sought to introduce cash generating activities like advertising, sponsorship and marketing. CTN also required advice on alternative technical solutions to continue broadcasting. As a consequence, the CTO, provided support to CTN by investigating alternative and durable technical solutions that will enable it to continue providing radio programming within a sustainable business model.

Research questions addressed in the final report include: innovative and effective broadcasting networks from different parts of the developing world, detailing technology and business/marketing plans; costings, reach, and summary of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the alternative technical solutions proposed by satellite operators, mobile operators and equipment manufacturers and a summary of the findings on alternative broadcasting technologies applicable to realities in Sierra Leone, among others.

The CTO hopes that the findings presented in this report will help other stakeholders in the broadcasting sector of developing nations to take advantage of the diverse range of innovations in technology and mobile telephony in broadcasting and radio stations.

Highlights of the report include:

1. Innovative broadcasting networks around with case studies on stations in Afghanistan, Indonesia and Peru
2. Recommendations on expanding CTN population Coverage
3. A list of alternative satellite service providers for CNT. These include VT Communications, Intersat, SAB Technologies and Dash Telecommunication.
4. Ways of using mobile operators' microwave backhaul infrastructure for CTN's Broadcasting

5. Alternative mobile phone technologies that can be used by CNT for broadcasting with recommendations.
6. A Note on Internet Streaming and Podcasting.
7. Recommendations for a CTN marketing Strategy.