

Rickshaw Radio: Information in a Crisis

When civil war broke out in South Sudan, Internews responded with information



Children walk alongside one of the Boda Boda Talk Talk motorbikes.

Since 2006, Internews has worked to strengthen local media outlets across what is now South Sudan. But in December 2013, civil war broke out in the country putting an estimated 4.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and causing the internal displacement of more than 2 million citizens, marking an unprecedented scale of human displacement in South Sudan's history.

Relying on the existing local media to provide information would not suffice as hundreds of thousands moved to United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) Protection of Civilian sites (PoC) where radio had limited access.

Internews immediately sought solutions to the ever-increasing information needs of the population with a series of new activities, establishing Humanitarian Information Services in several PoC sites throughout Juba, Bor, Malakal, and Bentiu. Interventions ranged from emergency "Radio-in-a-Box" kits, to local projects such as Boda Boda Talk Talk (BBTT), an audio information program played for community audiences through a system of mobile speakers on the back of motorized bikes.

Program Highlights

Internews Humanitarian Information Service (HIS) in South Sudan has produced more than 620 programs through thousands of broadcasts, **servicing up to 617,000** displaced persons in the UN PoC sites and refugee camps since 2014.

A baseline assessment and follow up surveys demonstrate the impact that BBTT programming had in Tong Ping, the first PoC in South Sudan and Internews' first project site:

- More than 97% of the respondents listened to BBTT and over 70% reported it as their source of the most important information
- More than 94% of listeners reported changing their behavior some way after hearing the program
- 94% of frequent listeners reported sharing the information they heard on BBTT with others
- The majority of frequent listeners found the information they heard on BBTT very interesting (85%), very helpful (82%) and highly relevant to their daily lives (79%)
- Frequent listeners also reported high rates of trust (71%) and understanding (89%) when it came to the information they heard on BBTT

Boda Boda Talk Talk

With tensions high, the rumor-mill rampant, and the humanitarian situation in the PoCs rapidly declining, it was clear that a timely, trustworthy and conflict sensitive source of information was urgently needed. “Boda Boda Talk Talk” (BBTT) is a twice-weekly community-led 25-minute audio program distributed through simple-to-use mini-media tools, such as USB sticks or memory cards, and played on speakers on the back of quad bikes that move between designated listening stops. BBTT also acts as a useful accountability mechanism by gauging the perceptions of listeners.

Listening

To reach the individuals who are unable to get BBTT broadcasts, due to flooding and other obstacles in the camps, Internews established listening groups, 6-10 individuals who agree to meet regularly to listen to each HIS program. Each group is provided a solar-powered radio and has appointed a team leader to be in charge of it. The sessions made it easy for staff to visit and elicit discussion, collect feedback, and assess the impact each episode.

Static Sites

In addition to these mobile programs, HIS broadcasted from static sites around the camps through large, portable speakers provided to partner humanitarian agencies such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM). During the cholera outbreak in Juba and Malakal, Internews partnered with Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to broadcast special public health announcements through these speakers.

Radio in a Box

Radio-in-a-box is a set of easily deployable equipment that is ready to assemble in the midst of an emergency to provide a fully



Children surround a BBTT motorbike in the Tong Ping protection site.

“Boda Boda Talk Talk has become the main source of our communication. We send greetings to friends, family, and relatives through BBTT. The program gives us [news] like new distribution of food, shelter, resumption of classes, and preventing diseases.”

— Boda Boda Talk Talk listener

functioning radio station anywhere it is needed. It was set up to support full-scale radio broadcasting stations in Mingkaman (Mingkaman 100 FM), Malakal (Nile 98.0 FM/100 FM Malakal), Ajuong Thok (Jamjang 89.4 FM), and Bentiu (Kondial 97.2 FM).

Mingkaman 100 FM

In February 2014, Internews set up Mingkaman 100FM, the radio-in-a-box that broadcasts humanitarian news and information 11 hours a day, seven days a week, to the communities in Mingkaman that fled the fighting in Jonglei state. By incorporating contributions from community members and UN and NGO representatives, the station

encourages the exchange of views and opinions on thematic areas like protection issues; disease prevention and health services; and even plays great music! Today Mingkaman is an independent radio station serving more than 200,000 people.

Measuring impact

In addition to the BBTT surveys in Tong Ping, nine quantitative surveys in six different locations and numerous in-depth interviews were used to demonstrate the positive impacts of HIS projects in South Sudan, including their unique capacity to reach displaced and vulnerable communities with lifesaving information.



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