

BENIN

MEDIA FOR A STRENGTHENED CIVIL SOCIETY IN BENIN

Although Benin's thriving media landscape is made up of several media outlets, journalists must adapt to restrictive legislation and political interference that make their job more difficult. Self-regulation measures struggle to take hold, and poor working conditions can lead to self-censorship and threaten the independence of the media.

In September 2024, Fondation Hironnelle launched a new project, MéSoCiR (Media for a Stronger Civil Society), aimed at supporting the advocacy capacities of Beninese civil society. With funding from the European Union, the project prioritises the circulation of independent, responsible and inclusive information, placing Beninese citizens at the heart of public debate.

As part of its project, Fondation Hironnelle has developed key partnerships with FeRCAB (Fédération des Radios Communautaires et Assimilées du Bénin), already a partner in a 2020–2021 multi-country Covid-19 anti-disinformation project; and Ekôlab, a laboratory for quality journalism in West Africa.

Working closely with its partners, Fondation Hironnelle has set itself a twofold objective: firstly, to help local media work effectively with civil society organisations (CSOs) and report on the concerns of citizens, and secondly, to improve people's access to and participation in local media content focused on local development issues. This content includes programmes aimed at promoting gender equality and governance and raising awareness about climate and environmental change.

Key Figures 2024



18 partner radio stations



8 departments of the country covered



23 media professionals trained in fact-checking



3 studies conducted (editorial, technical and management)

Financial Volume 2024

53 034 CHF

Sources of funding

- Switzerland (Mandate via GFA)
- European Union
- Communication Partnership Contracts
- Switzerland (SDC Core Contribution)

In 2025, Fondation Hironnelle will pursue the MéSoCiR project with a training programme for FeRCAB radio stations on journalism techniques, content production and media management. More specific training sessions will be offered according to need—particularly to women in FeRCAB’s women’s network and to partner CSOs—on topics including the use of digital technology, advocacy, communication techniques, local development and gender. Media education workshops will be held for young people aged between 10 and 15 in order to raise their awareness of how information is used, media content production, and the role of independent, responsible and inclusive information.

Fondation Hironnelle will also conduct the MediaOS project, a regional program developed in partnership with Equipop and CFI (the French media development agency), aimed at supporting media outlets in the production and dissemination of content that reflects the concerns and aspirations of young people in Benin, Togo, and Chad. Between five and eight digital media outlets in Benin will be selected to receive tailored support.

Finally, Fondation Hironnelle is participating in a consortium-led project with BBC Media Action, which includes a specific component for Benin. This multi-country project notably includes an in-depth analysis of the media landscape in Benin.

DRIVERS of change

- Strengthening media as key actors in local development
- Reinforcing partnerships and exchanges between local media and civil society to influence public debate
- Promoting the inclusion of civil society and minorities in local governance

PRIORITIES

- ▶ Support local media in collaborating with civil society organizations (CSOs)
- ▶ Improve public access to media content and encourage audience participation

ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Produce media content in collaboration with CSOs
- ▶ Train and coach partner radio stations

BENEFICIARIES

Project beneficiaries include the 18 FeRCAB radio stations, around 60 women from FeRCAB’s women’s network, around 40 local CSOs, FeRCAB and Ekôlab.

