

Benin

MEDIA FOR A STRONGER CIVIL SOCIETY IN BENIN

In Benin, Fondation Hironnelle, in close collaboration with its various partners (FeRCAB, Ekôlab, ODEM), has set itself two objectives. The first is to support local media in collaborating effectively with civil society organizations (CSOs) and reporting on citizens' concerns. The second objective is to improve people's access to local media content on local development issues and to strengthen their participation in these programs. This includes programs aimed at promoting a culture of gender equality, governance, the effects of climate and environmental change, and pre- and post-election periods.



Benin, 2025 ©Yanick Folly

ANNUAL budget

900'000 CHF

SOURCES of funding

- Switzerland (Project contributions)
- European Union
- Communication partnership agreements
- Switzerland (SDC core contribution)

Key figures 2025



18 radio stations
and 40 partner
CSOs



1,650 hours
of audio programs



127 people
trained



9 departments
covered



3 studies conducted
(editorial, viability, CSOs)

More information about the project is available at
www.hironnelle.org.

Context

The media landscape in Benin is dynamic and comprises a wide variety of actors. However, journalists must contend with a restrictive legislative framework and political influences that complicate the exercise of their profession, particularly over the past year. Indeed, 2025 was marked by preparations for the first general elections in the country's history and the reconfiguration of the political landscape. In addition, threats from armed groups in the north intensified, as did tensions in bilateral relations with certain neighboring countries, particularly Burkina Faso and Niger. All of these factors contribute to further complicating a media landscape already weakened by the rise of disinformation and various restrictions, leading to increasingly noticeable self-censorship.

Media and CSOs for high-impact productions

In 2025, in this challenging context, Fondation Hirondelle succeeded in establishing a constructive dynamic between civil society organizations (CSOs) and local media through the three projects it is implementing in Benin.

As part of the Mésocir (Media for a Strengthened Civil Society) project, CSOs and community radio stations engaged in collective reflection on issues of community interest during workshops. These reflections were translated into productions rooted in the realities of the territories. To strengthen their impact, Fondation Hirondelle combined media training (why and how to express oneself through the media) with advocacy training for CSOs and journalism training. A focus on fact-checking was also offered for the media. As a result, 60 pieces of content were produced and broadcast, 93% of which were devoted to local issues of interest to audiences.

MediaOS, a regional program developed in partnership with Equipop and CFI (the French Media Development Agency), aims to support the media in the production and dissemination of content that reflects the concerns and aspirations of young people in Benin, Togo, and Chad. In 2025, five partner radio stations were identified and the editorial teams received their first training sessions.

Finally, the BRAVE project, in consortium with BBC Media Action and eight other organizations, supported FeRCAB (the umbrella organization for community radio stations) and two radio stations in the development of micro-projects. A study on media sustainability was also completed.

OUR IMPACT

- 90% of journalists from partner radio stations have co-produced content with CSO actors.
- 30% of CSO representatives believe they collaborate better with the media.
- 53% of CSO actors and listeners believe that their concerns are taken into account in the media content produced.

TESTIMONIAL

"We are working better and better with radio stations. We are increasingly aware of the scope of what we can achieve by working together, particularly in terms of advocacy with local decision-makers to raise citizens' concerns."

CSO representative

In 2026, Fondation Hironnelle will continue to implement the MéSoCiR project by rolling out the training program for FeRCAB member radio stations in journalism techniques, content production, and media management. More specific training will be offered according to identified needs, particularly to women in the FeRCAB Women's Network and partner CSOs, on topics such as digital technology, advocacy, communication techniques, local development, and gender. Media literacy workshops will be organized for young people aged 10 to 15 to raise their awareness of the uses of information, the production of media content, and the role of independent, responsible, and inclusive information.

The BRAVE project will be dedicated to supporting partners in the implementation of their micro-projects (through a grant and a training and coaching program). As part of the MediaOS project, editorial coaching and production support will continue.

Finally, Fondation Hironnelle will lead the "SaWaRa" project on information integrity and social cohesion during and after elections, alongside partners CFi and BRUT and with local organizations.

PRIORITIES

- ▶ Support local media in collaborating with CSOs
- ▶ Improving people's access to media content and their participation

ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Producing media content in collaboration with CSOs
- ▶ Train and coach partner radio stations
- ▶ Organizing innovative radio co-productions

BENEFICIARIES

The project directly benefits around 20 radio stations in the FeRCAB network, which are present throughout the country, as well as 60 women involved in the FeRCAB Women's Network, whose skills and leadership are being strengthened. Around 40 local civil society organizations are also receiving support to structure their collaboration with the media. FeRCAB and Ekôlab are seeing their capacities consolidated. Through these actors, the entire Beninese population is benefiting, particularly young people and women, thanks to content that is more inclusive and rooted in their realities.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE

- Strengthening the media as drivers of local development
- Strengthening civil society actors and partnerships between local media and CSOs to influence public debate
- Inclusion of civil society and minorities in local governance
- Inclusive, high-impact radio productions

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