

Title: **Bridging the Communications Gap in Northern Mali**

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Department: **ComDev**

Description: **New FM Community Radio Stations Provide Information in Northern Mali**

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Geographic area: **Northern Mali**

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Photo: <P:\INFO Public\PARTNER AGREEMENTS\AFRICARE\OTHERS\Alex at Radio Bourem Inaly.JPG>

Photo by: **Dennis Bilodeau, USAID Mali**

Photo Caption : « Mission Director Alex Newton at inauguration of Radio Beeray in Bouram Inaly »

Content:

One of the many dreams of the communities of Bourem Inaly, Lerneb and Almoustarat came true this June. USAID and its partner Africare inaugurated three new radio stations in these communities, opening the door to new means of sending and receiving information, thus bridging the communications gap between people of these communities.

USAID and Africare decided to create 14 new FM radio stations in northern Mali because this region is remote, prone to conflict, and suffers from extreme poverty and scarcity of natural resources. The 14 selected communities are provided with comprehensive community radio “packages”, including FM radio transmitters, 2-way communication radio transceivers, WorldSpace satellite receivers, televisions, satellite dishes and VCRs. These packages are designed to create multi-purpose communication centers, allowing the stations to communicate with each other, provide pre-recorded development messages broadcast via satellite on the WorldSpace network, and play video cassettes on health, education, governance, conflict-management and other development-related topics.

The radio stations broadcast programs on anti-terrorism, religious tolerance, peace building, civic education, voter education, democracy and decentralization, women’s empowerment, agriculture and natural resources management, health, children’s educational topics and local and world news. Africare provides managerial, technical and journalism training to those communities, and trains local NGOs in the production of radio programs on peace building. It also works with radio theater groups and youth listening clubs. The project also provides training for the communities in the creation of management committees, which oversee all aspects of the administration and financing of the radio stations, and includes income-generating activities to ensure sustainability

In the words of Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Mohamet, the Program Director of the radio station “Al Lafia” in Lerneb, “Thanks to this radio station, we can now disseminate information on vaccinations or any health-related information to the people. I am very pleased with the project...”