

RADIO AS A TOOL FOR CHANGING WOMEN'S STATUS IN SIERRA LEONE

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Commissioned by Developing Radio Partners

CURRENT SITUATION

Women in Sierra Leone are essentially disregarded in the legal sector. Like many post-colonial states, there are two sets of official laws: unwritten customary law that changes from district to district and formal law that was left in place by the British and fashioned with vague and arcane language, such as “unlawful carnal knowledge” instead of rape. Both sets of laws affect every aspect of a woman’s life and laws regarding marriage, inheritance rights, and violence routinely disfavor women, meting out arbitrary punishment. There is tremendous pressure on women to resolve their legal cases within their families and local chiefdoms rather than turn to the formal legal sector, and they have no legal jurisdiction over issues of gender based violence.¹

Socially, women have traditionally existed within a culture of silence. Sexuality, gender-based violence, and even notions of equal rights are traditionally taboo subjects.

Politically, women are still fighting for a seat at the table. Most government ministers are men. One female member of the government-sponsored “Law Reform Commission” told me that none of their recommendations to change laws and policies to advocate for the rights of women would be heard because the commissioners are all traditional “old men.” She said that one minister told her they would do nothing until they heard a “public outcry” for change. Radio, she believes, is one means of generating that outcry.

Meanwhile, the war has, ironically, opened up many opportunities for women to mobilize; educate themselves about their legal rights; fight to change laws (especially those regarding gender-based violence and inheritance rights); and form groups such as the “Women’s Market Coalition” and “50/50,” an organization that trains women in political participation and demands equal gender political representation – *a seat at the table*.² Women have formed cooperatives to help other women affected by the war, and worked with NGOs to initiate sensitization campaigns about gender-based violence (GBV), HIV, the education of girls, literacy, and other topics that disproportionately affect women. Women have begun to break the culture of silence and talk openly about subjects previously regarded as taboo, such as sex and sexually transmitted

¹ “No One To Turn to: Women’s Lack of Access to Justice in Sierra Leone,” Amnesty International report (2005) [electronic copy]. [cited May 31, 2006]. Available <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR510112005?open&of=ENG-SLE>>
- See also: “Sierra Leone: Women Face Human Rights Abuses in the Informal Legal Sector,” Amnesty International report (2006) [electronic copy]. [cited May 31, 2006]. Available <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf510022006>>
- For a synopsis of Sierra Leone’s legal structure and laws regarding GBV see: Danielson, David.2003. A Primer on the Criminal Law of Sierra Leone as it Relates to Women and Girls. Report published for the International Rescue Committee.

² For more information on 50/50, see The Fifty/Fifty Group – Sierra Leone website <<http://www.fiftyfifty-sl.org/>> and the Sierra Leone Encyclopedia 2006 website <http://www.daco-sl.org/encyclopedia/4_part/4_5ffg.htm>



diseases. Since 80% of Sierra Leonean women are illiterate, radio has facilitated this women's movement in countless ways.

A note on Gender-based Violence (GBV):

The broad UN definition for gender-based violence is “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”^a

In traditional culture, GBV generally refers to the rape of girls under the age 16, the age of consent, which is categorically considered a crime. One aim of women's advocates is to change community attitudes and broaden this definition to include such acts as: spousal abuse, forced marriage of young girls, non-consensual sex against women of any age, FGM, depriving women of food and shelter as a means of punishment and control, and depriving women of their inheritance.

^a For more information, see the United Nation Population Fund's State of World Population (2005) report, “Gender-based Violence: A Price Too High,” Available <<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/english/ch7/index.htm>>

HOW RADIO SUPPORTS WOMEN

Throughout Sierra Leone, radio has been a primary means of mobilizing and educating women about their rights as well as sensitizing men and government officials to issues such as gender-based violence and women's equality. Radio is also being used as an empowerment tool, bringing examples of successful women and successful project models to a mass audience. It is important to note that radio in Africa, in addition to being the primary means of communication and information, often serves a community building and organizing function. Part of the reason behind radio's capacity building role is that independent radio stations as well as Search for Common Ground's Talking Drum Studios production hub are among only a few fully functioning institutions in an otherwise failed state. These independent stations play a significant role in holding the government accountable to the people and they fill many of the roles that institutions might play, including conflict mediation.

This report highlights a selection of examples of radio programming in Sierra Leone and the border areas of the Mano River region. The degree to which these programs are successful is directly related to the resources of the broadcasting station and how well that station is connected to other West African stations and communities. As I spoke with programmers and producers at these stations, the most commonly identified needs were for more training, an ability to hire more female stringers, and in the case of remote areas, the capability to send and receive valuable programming from more populated areas. (Programming produced in the border town of Kailahun must be hand carried by motorcycle to Bo or Freetown. During the rainy season, this trip can take two days.) Therefore, much of the programming that contains solutions to problems, information about GBV and a woman's legal rights, for example, that could be shared,



remains local. Some areas of the country are beyond radio reach altogether, leaving women isolated, victimized, and disempowered.

So I see the following examples of programming that supports women as fertile ground that, with the right support, will allow the entire region to blossom.

NATIONAL PROGRAMMING EXAMPLES

Nationally, much of the development and peace-oriented programming is produced by Talking Drum Studios (TDS), which operates multimedia production studios under the auspices of Search for Common Ground (SFCG). A primary aspect of TDS' mission is to use programming to address issues affecting marginalized populations, namely youth and women.³ Among their most popular programming they produce radio soap operas, host panel discussions, and present news and features. For example:

Atunda Ayenda/Lost and Found⁴

Since the time when this radio soap opera was launched in 2001, it has been by far the country's most popular radio program. Atunda Ayenda runs fifteen minutes a day, five days a week. One day a week, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) radio station plays all the programs back to back. One listener told me, "it teaches us a new way to behave." A large percentage of the program is devoted to issues pertaining to women and girls. And because the writer depends on the public to tell him what issues to write about, the stories have credibility and are perceived as relevant to the entire population.

One female character in particular, Makuta, has inspired women throughout the country to break the culture of silence, stand up as leaders, and educate girls. Her actions break many of the cultural taboos that have oppressed women and her story evolves as the country's situation and level of awareness has evolved. These are some of her groundbreaking choices:

First, as with a large percentage of women in West Africa, Makuta was brutally raped during the war. (This was played live on the radio.) Traditionally, women do not speak out about sexual violence in fear of ostracization by their communities and abandonment by their husbands.

But Makuta choose to speak out about what had happened to her at the Special Court. And even more boldly, she chooses to return to her village. Many women who have been sexually violated do not return home because they will be ostracized.

³ Fortune, Frances. Conversation with the author, 2005.

⁴ The radio soap opera has become a widely used and effective means of imparting information in developing, oral cultures. Though I never heard this term used in relation to programming in SL, "edu-tainment" has become a household word in the development sector. It involves using a culturally specific storytelling approach though is not always developed by local people. A list of links to programs meant for both education and entertainment can be found on the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health: Center for Communications Programs website <<http://www.jhuccp.org/cgi-bin/htsearch?config=main-htdig&restrict=&exclude=&method=and&format=builtin-long&sort=score&words=entertainment+education>>



Later in the program, Makuta decides that women should be more self-sufficient and less dependent on men. She opens a school that teaches women a trade and basic literacy.

In an interview with the woman who plays Makuta, she tells me that people come to the studio asking to see Makuta, believing that she is a real person. And though her visual identity is a secret, women recognize her voice and regularly approach her, saying that Makuta has changed their lives by inspiring them to make brave decisions, fight the status quo, and stand up for themselves. In our interview, the actress tells me she believes she has one of the most important jobs in Sierra Leone.

Other topics in the soap opera also break the culture of silence in the country.

One series of episodes addresses the issue of forced marriage. A young girl is forced by her father to marry an old man. In exchange, the father stands to reap a financial reward. Slowly, by standing up to her father and convincing him through bible stories, the girl gets her father to relent his wishes.

In another series of episodes, the soap opera tells the true story of one man in Pujeun district who raped and impregnated several girls. The local community asked the writer to put the show on the air to get the authorities to act. Though I wasn't able to confirm the police record (though similar stories are a matter of record), the writer told me that the authorities finally did arrest the man.

Several episodes have also been devoted to topics such as teen pregnancy and HIV.

Salon Uman (Sierra Leone Woman)

Salon Uman is directed at issues affecting women. It airs twice a week on 12 stations. The program is produced in partnership with local women's groups and airs voices of women throughout the provinces of Sierra Leone. It is known to be an important catalyst in breaking the culture of silence and empowering women. In one program, women tell their stories of being brutally raped during the war. Through features and actualities, they also address such issues as the education of girls, literacy and HIV (which disproportionately affects women).

A unique aspect of Salon Uman is that it also presents empowering testimonials and solutions to longstanding problems. Women leaders such as Zainab Bangura (among the first to run for president in Sierra Leone and now the director of a campaign for good governance), leaders in the 50/50 movement, the electoral commissioner, and heads of the Women's Market Associations – many who come from traditionally oppressive families – explain what they've accomplished and how they did it.

I had the opportunity to accompany one of the producers of women's programming as she produced a feature for Salon Uman about a group of women in Kailahun, a remote border area where women were among the most brutalized during the war. These women organized a farming cooperative where each woman grows vegetables on her land and sells them at market. The profits go to helping women who were abducted during the war and now living in Kailahun return to their homes. Each woman would receive a bus ticket and some spending money.



Follow-up interviews indicated that these women were accepted back into their communities. The problem of single, abducted women is a huge one in Sierra Leone. Many abducted women were abandoned after the war or when the men who captured them were killed. Traditionally in Sierra Leone, only blood relatives will fight for you in legal disputes, protect you, and feed you. Therefore, these women are among the most vulnerable because they have been taken from their families and then abandoned. The success of the women farmers in Kailahun was played nationally in hopes that other women would come up with similar solutions to this common problem.

One of the directors of women's programming, Princess Cokel, claims that as a result of these sensitizing programs, women are getting married later and remaining in school longer. Additionally, several communities have established Family Support Units and the rates of domestic violence have decreased.

TDS also regularly airs panel discussions on specific topics affecting women. I have personally heard recordings of discussions on gender-based violence and the 50/50 movement and was impressed by the diversity of panelists – from government officials to activists to opponents of various elements.

Uman to Uman (Woman to Woman)

This was a program that aired during the disarmament and reconciliation phase of the war to help women see the importance of their role in rebuilding their communities.

COLLABORATION WITH NGOS

An excellent example of effective radio-NGO partnerships, particularly in relation to women's issues, exists in Kailahun, where the GBV unit of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Radio Moa, and the Center for Victims of Torture are part of a consortium called Na Wi Pot (all one pot). While deep cultural traditions make the process of change slow, there is evidence that the outreach power of radio merged with an organization that has the power to intervene in legal and health matters holds great potential. And because radio in this region also serves as a community-building institution, all members of the consortium have effectively mediated community conflicts and then broadcast the solutions over the radio, hosted women's empowerment and GBV-sensitization programs.

Nganoh Bockarie, one of the directors of the IRC program, described the programming structure to me. The IRC brings women's issues to the air at least monthly. These programs include radio discussions among the 350 women leaders of women's groups in the area; the women take turns presenting issues such as property owning, inheritance rights, increasing the number of girls in schools, and violence. Program formats range from call-in programs, panel discussions, and information about women's legal rights delivered in the form of songs and stories. The women frequently work in partnership with the Minister of Social Welfare and Gender Working Team. Radio Moa reaches four communities and border areas of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea and broadcasts women's issues of concern in the various communities. Much of the radio time is devoted to educating women about the issues of GBV and informing them that they have legal



rights beyond their families and chiefs. The radio station also participates in community efforts to engage women in the political process.

This information is critical, as Mr. Bockarie states that only about 5% of women in this area (and similar rural areas throughout the nation) know their legal rights, or even understand what constitutes rape. Currently, very few women take part in local decision-making. Many women are widowed or displaced and do not have the protection of family. There is enormous pressure for women to resolve their GBV cases through the chief, who often charges a fee, and the woman is rarely permitted to speak. Frequently, rapists are known by the community but women are pressured to not report the incidents to the police.

There is evidence of slow progress. For example, rather than shun women who have been victims, women are beginning to intervene when cases are brought to the chiefs. They will support the survivor and offer her protection and also help make more equitable contracts with the chiefs.

The alliance is broadly credited with reducing the number of rape cases, pressuring medical facilities to offer free services to rape victims, reducing the incidents of police demanding payment for processing rape cases, and raising the community's tolerance for rape victims – all allowing women to speak out more confidently.

The number of gender-based violence cases being reported to IRC's GBV team has increased exponentially.⁵ Whereas at first, only the least taboo forms of rape (war related rape and the rape of young girls) were being reported, now the number of adult women reporting non-war related rape is increasing, as is the number of women choosing to take men to court. This has resulted in a rising number of convictions. One woman on the IRC team, who is also a member of the "Law Reform Commission," stated that in 2002, if you brought a man to court, nothing would happen. Now, 30 convictions have been documented – a low number by American standards, but a great victory and evidence of a growing trend by Sierra Leonean ones.

When a woman who has been educated about her legal rights comes to the IRC GBV team, an IRC-appointed counselor accompanies her through the process of medical examination, police reporting and prosecution. For her protection, the woman may stay at the local women's center. If she has no local family, the IRC will pay the cost for her to return home.

While in Kailahun, I was able to see this process at work. A young woman bravely came into the office and reported that she had been raped and beaten by her husband. Because she had been abducted during the war, she had no family to protect her and her mother-in-law did not intervene. I accompanied the girl and counselor to the hospital where she was examined. The counselor went back to the girl's home so she could retrieve her baby. That night, she slept in the women's center. Like many women, she decided not to prosecute, but the IRC paid for her to return home.

⁵ See Rainbow update (enclosed)

LOCAL PROGRAMMING EXAMPLES

Mile 91

The radio station at Mile 91, Radio Gbafth, is located in an area that was highly strategic during the war. The station now produces two important women's programs. In an interview with Fatimata, the women's health program producer, she says much of her programming covers health issues. She frequently invites guests to present and discuss information on HIV/AIDS, sex and health, and family planning.

Florence, who produces a program called "Woman in the House" which discusses the responsibility of men for the welfare of their wives and children and the topic of violence towards women. The program also covers specific rape cases in the community. When Florence alerted listeners to a situation in which a 45 year old man raped a 9 year old girl, the man went to prison. Another major topic on "Woman in the House" is the education of girls. Even though the government now pays school fees for all students, girls often drop out after primary school because of early pregnancies. Both Fatimata and Florence's programs instruct women on how to successfully talk to men.

Additionally, programs about a woman's role in agricultural production have increased men's understanding of the burden that women face by performing hard manual labor and caring for a home and children. The success of this program was determined by a household survey conducted by Mile 91 reporters.

Both producers said they know that women are responding to their programs because of the feedback they receive from regular call-in programs.

Women's issues are also woven into other educational storytelling programs. In Mr. Spider, Foday Sajuma, weaves classic "Spider Stories" where Mr. Spider is always trying to seek advantage through trickery. Sajuma told me one story where Spider tries to deny his wife and children food by tricking them. Eventually, he is discovered and humiliated before the entire community.

Radio Moa – Where Can I Find You

"Where Can I Find You" is a regular call-in program heard along the borders of Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. People who are still looking for their families call into the show to ask if others have seen their relatives. This show specifically targets women because many of them are widowed, abandoned, or have been taken from their families, and many of their children were forced to fight as soldiers.

I personally witnessed the importance of this program when I visited a Liberian Refugee camp outside Bo. Hundreds of people looking for their families shouted into the microphone. One of the most telling examples the impact such a program can have occurred when I met a woman living alone in the refugee camp who called into the microphone, "I am looking for my children. I want to find my children so I can raise them."

Radio Moa - Women's Election Programming

In the local elections in 2004, women were apparently uninformed that they were allowed to run for office. In response, the local Sierra Leone Women's Forum in Kailahun worked with Radio Moa to saturate the airwaves with information about the importance of women playing a role in politics. An unprecedented number of women ran for office and eight women were elected to local councils.

Bo

In Bo, the organization of women is unprecedented. Several sources gave me examples of how women's groups have used the local media to fight acts of discrimination against women. These groups are widely credited for naming rape perpetrators on the air, raising awareness and creating consequences for the perpetrators, even if the local authorities will not intervene. I have been told (though have not confirmed) that much of this is done through KISS FM's program, "Mr. Owl."

Collaborative Projects

In 2001, in celebration of the 40th anniversary of Sierra Leone's independence, women from Sierra Leone, along with the Women's Radio Group in the UK, produced a radio documentary called "Looking Through Her Eyes" that included Sierra Leonean women's voices from around the world. The program was aired nationally on BBC International, which is widely listened to throughout Sierra Leone. The project was the brainchild of Yasmin Jusu-Shariff, a founding member and Vice President of MAWOPNET, a multinational women's peacebuilding organization.⁶

In my research I also came across a project called "Development Through Radio," a woman-focused radio project that had a significant presence in rural Sierra Leone at one time. Though all the links to the site itself are broken, I've enclosed a PDF of a report on the project.⁷

CROSS BORDER COLLABORATION

Just as the wars in West Africa showed no respect for political boundaries, women had to mobilize across borders to create peace and bring their issues onto the political stage. They formed coalitions which, with time, became larger, better organized, and more sophisticated. Current radio collaborations are a result of the media savvy that women developed while coming

⁶ See <http://www.refugeesonline.org.uk/slwf/sierraleoneat40/>

⁷ Wambui, Mercy (2005). "ICT for Development: Case Studies / Development Through Radio: A Case Study from Sierra Leone," The Communication Initiative website, Available <<http://www.comminit.com/ict/ictcasestudies/ictcasestudies-17.html>>



together to stop the wars. The organizations that sprung out of these mobilization efforts are now adapting their wartime media strategy for peacebuilding and development. They are creating “early warning” systems, where women in the most vulnerable border areas can alert people in other regions to signs of potential violence, are engaging women politically, sharing solutions to common problems, and broadcasting peace education throughout the region.

MARWOPNET - Keeping the Peace

The Mano River Women’s Peace Network (MARWOPNET), winner of the UN prize for Human Rights in 2003, brings together several women’s organizations throughout the Mano River Union (Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea) under one umbrella. Saran Daraba, the organization’s founder has repeatedly cited the use of radio as one of the primary factors contributing to the successful signing of the Peace Accords by mobilizing thousands to women to protest and by pressuring the stakeholders to come to an agreement. For example, in 2003 they facilitated a panel discussion of Liberian refugee women living in Sierra Leone that was broadcast throughout the region.⁸

A current aim of MARWOPNET is to keep the peace by mobilizing women as a cross-border early warning system, since women are uniquely involved in all aspects of their communities. An early warning post has been set up in Kambia and though it is at the beginning stages, plans are underway to set up radio posts along the three borders.⁹

Building civic participation – WIPNET

Liberian Elections

A Liberian Women’s Organization, Women in Peacebuilding (WIPNET), partnered with the United Nations in Liberia to carry out voter education campaign before the 2005 elections. In the face of great inertia among women, WIPNET underwent a massive campaign to get women to register to vote. In addition to such efforts as babysitting and doing women’s chores while the women registered, WIPNET members also supported their efforts with a radio public information campaign in the same way they launched the protests that stopped the war. WIPNET is widely credited for women comprising 51% of all registered voters. I interviewed women at several polling places on election day. Nearly all told me they had heard WIPNET’s radio spots and many said that the broadcasts provided the necessary catalyst to get them to register and then to go out and vote.¹⁰

“Voices of Women”

In 2004, with funding from Oxfam America, WIPNET, launched a region-wide women’s radio program called “Voices of Women,” implementing the next critical step in the peace process. The program focuses on women’s roles in conflict resolution and peacebuilding and airs in local languages in Liberia (three locations), Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, and Nigeria, targeting

⁸ For one example, see “MARWOPNET: Interview with Saran Daraba,” USAID interview (July 14, 2004), accessible online at <http://www.usaid.gov/sl/sl_democracy/news/040715_saran_daraba/index.htm>

⁹ Sirleaf/Sirleaf, Yasmin, VP MARWOPNET in Sierra Leone. Conversation with the author, 2005.

¹⁰ <http://www.wanep.org/programs/wipnet.html>



rural areas. “Voices of Women” is an example of how radio is being used as part of a larger effort toward increasing levels of civic participation and introducing new approaches toward conflict resolution throughout the region.¹¹

TIPPING THE SCALE: THE FIRST WOMAN PRESIDENT

The 2005 presidential election in Liberia bears special mention. Even though the aforementioned broad network of women’s organizations was crucial to the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf,, her success relied on multiple supporters who effectively delivered their message through radio to a largely illiterate listening audience. I compiled the information below through a combination of interviews with leaders of women’s groups, individual radio station managers, UNMIL Radio Staff, and Frances Fortune, director of Talking Drum Studios.

Getting women to register was a critical first step in this process. An initial survey revealed that very few women were interested in participating in the election for a variety of reasons. Besides the complications associated with leaving their children and other work, women, on the whole, did not believe their voice would make a difference. Additionally, few women had any knowledge of what to do. Because Africa is a storytelling culture, radio was the best means to inspire and educate women. In coordination with women’s organizations, the UN, and NGOs, messages were repeatedly played on the various stations in the form of mini dramas and songs. This was followed up with billboards, posters, and in-person canvassing. The high percentage of registered women has been attributed with some regularity to President Johnson-Sirleaf’s success.

The next step was getting women, who are used to leaving public decisions up to their husbands, informed about the candidates’ platforms and the issues. Talking Drum Studios (TDS) played a significant role in this process, allowing each of the candidates to deliver their message to the public. TDS hosted regular round table discussions and debates, and held a debate between the final two candidates.

A similar media campaign was used to get women to vote and vote properly. Strong messages appeared in all media saying such things as “Women are the future of this country. We are in the majority.” One spot that really hit home with the voters I interviewed asked Liberian women to remember the war: “Last time women stayed home and we lost our children. It’s time to exercise our power and choose our leader.” The women with whom I spoke felt their previous silence and apathy led to many of the atrocities that ensued after Charles Taylor was reelected in 1997. Radio spots also emphasized that women were to keep their choice of candidate a secret, so as not to allow their husbands or tribal connections to influence their vote. This was considered a large problem in the 1997 election. And due to the large percentage of female illiteracy, instructions on how to cast their ballot were given repeatedly. Lastly, women were told that they would not face the traditional obstacles. They could bring their children to the

¹¹ See attached article, “Community Radio Provides a Way to Have Their Voices Heard” for a general discussion about empowering rural women through radio
I am not certain if this program is still being produced in all countries.



polling stations and they would be permitted to vote first so they could get home and take care of their families.

It's important to mention that, while many organizers I spoke with had a strong political preference, the public messages, especially those broadcast on the radio, were non-partisan, emphasizing a woman's power and responsibility to vote and make her own choice.

NOTE: In Liberia, there is a network of small, low wattage stations called the Association of Liberian Community Radios (ALICOR) with six rural member stations: Radio Gbezhohn-Grand Bassa County, Radio Kergheamahn-Nimba County, Radio Peace-Margibi County, Radio Bomi-Bomi County, Radio Gbarnga-Bong County, and Radio Harper-Mary Land County. Though I did not have an opportunity to visit them, I've been told by several sources told they have helped facilitate the broadcasts for the "Voices of Women" and election projects.

OTHER GOOD EXAMPLES OF WEST AFRICAN NATIONAL PROGRAMMING

In Liberia, the 30 minute radio program "One Step Beyond" recently broadcast a round table discussion about gender-based violence

Also in Liberia, a recent episode of the children's drama, "Ju Jay" stressed the importance of educating girls.

A soap opera in Guinea, similar to Sierra Leone's popular "Atunda Ayenda," features the lives of two teenage girls: one whose parents died of AIDS and the other who is being forced into early marriage.

About the Author

Rachel Leventhal developed her interest in community radio straight out of college in 1992 while working as a researcher for a CPB funded project about global radio, directed by Bill Siemerling. Since then, she has worked as a freelance journalist focusing on human rights issues, particularly those affecting women and girls. She has produced stories for New York Times Television, National Public Radio, and her photographs have appeared in several international publications.

Among her most notable projects, in 2000, she received a fellowship from the Soros Foundation to support an ongoing project that weaves text, photos, audio, and diaries and follows the journeys of women who have been incarcerated and have made the (often recurring) journey between prison and their families and communities outside. The initial project appeared as an eighteen-page story in the documentary magazine, Doubletake. She has also produced a fourteen-minute story about female restavecs (child slaves) in Haiti, along with a companion web presentation.

In 2005, she covered the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in Liberia for the photo agency, Redux Pictures and also produced a radio documentary about the mobilization of women in West Africa during and after the wars, which led, in a large part, to Ms. Sirleaf's success. Currently, a life-



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

sized print of one of Rachel's images from September 11th is on display at the World Trade Center Site as part of the Build the Memorial Foundation's "Here" exhibit. A companion audio story entitled "Memory" will be part of the WTC Memorial Museum's permanent collection.

Rachel is currently completing a multimedia story about her trek across Tibet as she accompanies a 19 year old girl who navigates the underground and Tibetan black market while escaping to India in hopes of going to school.

Rachel received a BA in Political Science in 1991 from Brown University.

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