

Empowerment Radio

Written by Birgitte Jallo

Reviewed by Martha Allen

Radio is one of the most crucial empowerment media because radio reaches so many people – including rural and poor communities. Community radio allows people to speak for themselves and effect change, not just experience a one-way communication. As Birgitte Jallo writes, “Throughout my adult life, working with community radio and communication for development, I have seen that giving people a voice, and an opportunity to speak for themselves, is what – better than anything else – leads to the empowerment required to trigger an avalanche of positive personal and community change” (p. 5).



Jallo with Martha Allen, 1982

In *Empowerment Radio*, Jallo not only shows the benefits and potential of community radio, she describes how to develop and sustain that community radio. Examples are given of how communities are changed as a result of having a community radio station. Human rights issues

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get dealt with.

Jallo writes, “In Tanzania, ORS FM, the Teerat Maasai community radio is one more example of a station being used as

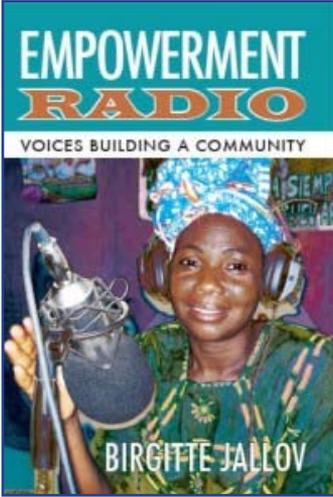
the refuge and human rights defence during personal emergencies within its community, due to the full confidence it enjoys, where the community relies fully upon the solidarity and readiness by the radio to support

and defend them.” (p. 124) She provided the story of Naserian who experienced severe violence and abuse by her husband for standing up for justice for her young daughter. The court supported her husband. The community radio station assisted Naserian and was able to finally win in the court on appeal.

Women’s rights are human rights. Jallo sums this up well: “In many communities all over the world,

women and girls are suppressed and exposed to demeaning treatment. This is an important issue for all community radio stations all over the world to be alert to and to include in their programming: Which are the human rights violations against women and girls in the community? What is already being done to address these? Who/which institutions are responsible for the violations? What could be done to counter them? What could the role of the radio be?

Violations of



on the air. She includes a brief history of community radio. The book even includes a chapter on technical aspects. Yet the layout and organization of all the information she shares is provided in such a way that the book is very readable and interesting. It is a valuable contribution to media democracy efforts and radio specifically. Community radio empowers individuals and their communities and brings us closer to a world where people can speak for themselves.

Birgitte Jallof's book is a handbook that both provides crucial information for what we need to know now as well as records for

history the stories and specifics of the importance of community radio. At the same time it is an inspiring story of how people can utilize media to change their lives and the world around them.

Birgitte Jallof is a long-time Associate of WIFP (1982). She has a master's degree in mass communication and strategic communication as well as a bachelor in linguistics and civic movements, civil society.

Jallof began to focus on community radio in 1980 when she was involved in the budding community radio movement in Denmark. She started Empowerhouse to meet the needs in and around development of sustainable community radio.

For more information, for valuable resources, or to order the book, go to www.empowerhouse.eu

women's and girls' human rights are, in many communities, expressed through violence in general as well as sexually through rape (including inside marriage), incest; lack of rights over one's own body for instance not being able to request protection against the risk of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases from infidel husbands or boyfriends. Violations of human rights can also be denial of the right to an education, to proper health attention including around pregnancy and childbirth, to land, to inheritance; and in general to live a life in dignity and peace" (p. 124).

Jallof shares insights that can help get a community radio off the ground and keep it



Jallof today