



GENERATION GRANDS LACS

Weekly Dialogues for Peace, Live on the Radio

Generation Grands Lacs (Great Lakes Generation) is an hour-long weekly radio program produced by Search for Common Ground, working with local radio stations in Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The project supports peace between countries in the region, breaking down stereotypes and encouraging dialogue between Rwandan, Burundian and Congolese university students – the next generation of leaders in the Great Lakes. The program is recorded live every Saturday, hosted by a partner radio station in the region, and features interviews with key experts on a theme in the news. Young people are invited to call in, debate and share their – sometimes surprising – viewpoints. Through these on-air discussions, listeners discover the diversity of opinions both within their own country, and in neighboring countries, revealing that monolithic stereotypes of “others” oversimplifies the real challenges facing the region, and presents an impediment to a brighter future. Since August 2008, the program has begun to incorporate a Great Lakes Action segment – prerecorded journalistic reports on youth taking this spirit a step further and taking action to improve among the region’s diverse residents.

Search for Common Ground In the Great Lakes

Rwanda

Search for Common Ground
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Kigali, Rwanda

Dem. Rep of Congo

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Burundi

27 Avenue de l’Amitie
Bujumbura, Burundi
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GGL Partner Stations

Contact FM, Kigali

Radio Salus, Butare

Radio Isanganiro, Bujumbura

Radio Maendeleo, Bukavu

RTG@, Kinshasa, Matadi,
Boma, Mbuji Mayi, Kananga,
Lubumbashi, Kindu, Bukavu,
Goma, Kikwit, Mbandaka,
Kisangani

TOPICAL AND RESPONSIVE

Since its inception, GGL has tackled more than 130 topics of particular interest to youth, including political questions as well as shared social and economic concerns. A representative sample includes:

Freedom of Expression in the Great Lakes. In April 2009, GGL addressed freedom of expression in the region, a shared challenge in all three countries highlighted by recent arrests and crackdowns.

Expulsion of Foreigners in the Great Lakes. Also in April, GGL tackled the topic of deportations and refoulement in the region, devoting a two-part series to this hot-button issue following Burundi’s decision to expel many Congolese. The debate surprised many, as many “native” youth opposed expulsion, while some Congolese callers expressed understanding for the Burundian government’s position.

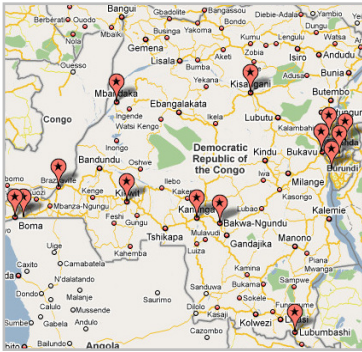
Youth and Armed Groups in the Region of the Great Lakes. Broadcast in February 2009 from RTG@ in Kinshasa, the show tackled the feelings of young people against the backdrop of Rwanda-DRC military cooperation, which was a source of fear, suspicion and rumors among many Congolese youth.

Young People, No Credit. An episode focused on the shared challenges that young entrepreneurs in the region face when trying to get loans, and sharing tips and experiences.

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

GGL is broadcast on five radio stations in Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC. The popular Kigali station Contact FM and the Butare University station Radio Salus cover nearly the entire country of Rwanda. SFCG’s longtime partner Radio Isanganiro in Burundi covers nearly all of Burundi. In





the DRC, SFCG works with the Bukavu community radio station Radio Maendeleo, and recently began collaborating with RTG@, an apolitical religious station covering Kinshasa and 12 of the country’s biggest cities. Audience surveys in the six Congolese cities found that GGL reaches more than 1.7 million listeners, and significantly, has a strong following in western cities like Kinshasa (17%) and Mbuji Mayi (8%), where listeners rarely have any other opportunities to meet Rwandans or Burundians. Because the program is also broadcast via satellite, callers have come from as far afield as Diaspora communities in the Netherlands, the UK, and Canada.

GGL is broadcast simultaneously each week in 14 cities in three countries, and around the world by satellite.

IMPACT EVALUATIONS

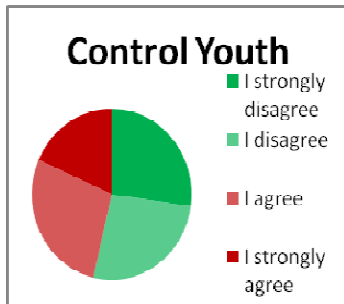
SFCG has conducted extensive evaluation of this project through focus groups and surveys of listeners and non listeners. It has found that the Program’s reach among its target audience is enormous. The program is listened to by more than 90% of university students in Kigali, Butare, Ngozi (Burundi), and 86% of students in Bujumbura, as well as 57% of students in Bukavu (DRC). Of these listeners, 20% listen regularly in Bukavu, 36% listen regularly in Kigali, and an astounding 60% listen “every week” or “almost every week” in Butare, Ngozi and Bujumbura. The program similarly reaches between 30 and 60% of non-university youth at the survey sites. Survey findings shows a strong correlation between listenership and reduced prejudices and positive attitudes.

What do you think of this statement: *“There is just one group that is responsible for all of the problems in the Great Lakes region?”*

The program gives students hope for a brighter future. Whereas only 25% of non listeners “strongly agree” that youth can contribute to peace in the Great Lakes Region, 54% of young listeners strongly agree that they can contribute.

The program leads to a reduction of negative attitudes, and tolerance. Whereas 46% of non-listening youth surveyed accepted the proposition that “If someone from my country criticizes it in front of someone from another group in the region, that person is a traitor,” 75% of listeners disagreed or disagreed strongly.

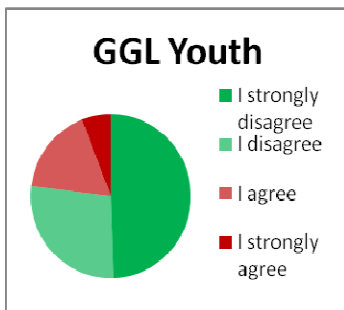
The program equips youth to constructively address conflicts. When asked what they would do in a hypothetical situation where someone was spreading false rumors against them, nearly 26% of non-students chose to either avoid the situation or fight with the alleged rumor-monger, while 90% of listeners opted to either dialogue with the accused or seek a third party to help resolve the conflict.



LISTENER FEEDBACK

SFCG invites listeners to share their thoughts with the program through SMSes, and emails, as well as calling into the show. Here is a representative selection of some of the listener letters and calls:

I wondered if your can give us some contacts, even to help set up pen-pal programs, to have better relations between our three countries. –Matabishi, Goma



Young people are easily manipulated, especially in our society where there are so many problems. They easily believe those who promise them positions, promotions and wealth once the war has been won. – Chantal, Butare

Our governments should first try and understand what young people want before deciding on their policies. Young people in armed groups are attracted to them for certain reasons, and so the government should try and find a way to attract them to civilian life. These young people are our brothers and so we can’t support the government going to war against them. – Tony, Kinshasa