

The Transistor Radio is 50 years-old - and helping more children than ever to have their voices heard!

The international children's organisation, Plan, is celebrating 50 years of the transistor radio **by celebrating its work with children's radio projects.**

Fifty years ago, on 18 October 1954, the first transistor radio became available to consumers. It transformed the way radio was used, by turning it from a bulky and expensive piece of furniture, into a cheap personal accessory that can be run off battery power and listened to almost anywhere.

The power of the radio is in its low cost and portability, its suitability for remote areas which are not served by electricity, and its accessibility by people who can not read. All of which make it as significant today as it was in 1954. Plan's media projects in Africa, Asia and the Americas, which give children the opportunity to become broadcasters, have embraced **the power of radio to reach out to whole communities and demand change.**

As fifteen-year old Arnaud, participant in Plan's child media project and radio host in Burkina Faso says: *'It is important that children instead of adults do the shows because children know what their problems are and adults do not.'*

Plan's radio projects focus on all children's rights, as embodied by the Convention, covering issues such as AIDS, child trafficking, violence and exploitation. Some examples of recent media projects include:

**'I am a child but I have my rights too!'** is a radio programme produced by children and aired across West Africa by Plan. Broadcast since 1998, the show informs parents, children, and authorities about their roles and responsibilities to respect children's rights. The radio campaign project is broadcast in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Togo, Mali, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, and Benin. Up to 10 radio stations in each country (including public, private, rural and

community radio stations) air the programme, adapting the programme to that particular country's culture.

**Our Own Voice** is a half-hour radio program supported by Plan in a small town in north-west Haiti, children and parents are learning new ways to communicate. This programme, broadcast through Radio Gama every Sunday afternoon in Fort Liberté, is designed, produced and aired by 25 boys and girls. They write news and stories, play songs and recite poems which touch on the issues that are important to them. The youths receive training in radio techniques from Radio Netherlands, and in journalism from the Panos Institute.

*'In school, I have become a role model,' says 17 year-old Jessica. 'One day a fight broke out in the classroom and one of the children said 'Hey, we have a journalist here – she can solve the problem.'*

For more examples of radio projects to inspire you to organise your own, see [MA GIC](#), a portal website for all kinds of child-led media projects.