

CITIZENS CONNECTED: A CIVIC RADIO EXPERIENCE

After the January terrorist attacks that claimed 17 lives in/around Paris our project is deeply inspired by the "Je suis Charlie" spirit. "Citizens connected" is a brand-new civic radio experience in France. Its general objective is to encourage communities to work together to address and solve our country's greatest challenge: extremism on the rise, a lack of mutual understanding, and a consequent decrease in civic participation. Too many people feel left out of the democratic process, and our project aims at involving them in a new dialogue.

CATEGORY

[Civic Participation](#)

LOCATION

[France](#)

WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE OR NEED YOUR PROJECT WILL ADDRESS AND WHAT INNOVATIVE METHODS WILL YOU EMPLOY?

Describe the specific need or challenge that your team will address with this project

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Briefly describe the specific solution or approach to address the need or challenge and explain why it is innovative

Our project will address a need in France to encourage the exchange of pluralistic voices in shared debate about the pressing issues facing our nation and identity. We will create a temporary radio station which will run for 2 days in May 2015, transmitting FM programs made by volunteers from all communities, and based in a cabin located on a popular square in Bayonne, a city of the Southwest of France. To prepare, we will offer free training to volunteers throughout the year in all aspects of producing radio programs, including research, interview technique, recording, editing skills.

How will the project impact your community? What changes (in people, institutions, attitudes, practices) do you think you will see?

The city of Bayonne is a largely middle-class, rural & underprivileged community. It features an established Jewish community, more recent Muslim immigrant groups, and a Christian majority. In 2015, for the 1st time in this diverse city's history, the mosque was attacked and racial tensions appeared while the far-right party gained new ground in local elections. Our purpose is to achieve civic empowerment & dialogue between these diverse, sometimes divergent, ethnic, social, & religious communities.

We aim to create:

1. A decrease in social & racial prejudice by facilitating connections & dialogue among communities as well as between people and institutions, such as local governments, media, & police forces.
2. More and better civic participation: citizens from different social groups will build new bridges to strengthen our community & express themselves for the first time in the public arena.

MEET THE TEAM

Project owner

[Mehdi Ouraoui](#)

[France](#)

[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)

Project members

[Manage members](#)

[Haffide Boulakras](#)

[France](#)

[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Elise Vincent](#)

[France](#)

[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)

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[naima charai](#)

[France](#)

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[Karim Amellal](#)

[France](#)

[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Mahmoud Suliman](#)

[Israel](#)

[Fulbright Student Program](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Zahia Ziouani](#)

[France](#)

[International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#)

[\[remove from project\]](#)

WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?

Beneficiaries: who are your target groups (or communities) and how many people will directly benefit from your project?

Our target groups are classified into 3 categories:

- 80 core volunteers: citizens who will be trained in radio broadcasting
- General audience: local population involved during the 2-day final event, with a particular attention paid to diversity (suburban population, rural, ethnic or religious minorities to be connected with fully integrated citizens)
- Local community structures: NGOs, parent's associations, schools, local authorities, religious or faith-based organizations

We will reach a broad audience in a urban area of over 200,000 people. Instead of solely targeting historically underprivileged urban areas, we will target a middle-and working-class audience in rural areas, which is the demographic base traditionally drawn to the politics of the far-right, and are generally neglected in the dialogue about social demographics. However, social diversity is still key; we want people from different economic, social, and religious walks of life to find common ground through this project.

Local partners

1) PARTNERSHIPS

We anticipate establishing partnerships with:

- Institutions: French Ministry of Education, Ministry of the City, U.S. Embassy in France, Cercle Jefferson (the French IVLP alumni association). Partnership with each alumnus/a's respective company or organization (Ministry of Justice, French national newspaper Le Monde etc.)
- Local media: radio stations and newspapers (France Bleu radio, Sud Ouest newspaper): communication, technical training, broadcasting facilities...).
- Local educators and education institutions: workshops in schools, program-making with high schools...
- Local NGOs, community-based organizations, sports teams and clubs, parents' associations: public information, volunteering...
- Local governments (Regional Council of Aquitaine; city councils; District Council of the Pyrénées Atlantiques): public funding and administrative support
- Local decision-makers in various fields: economic (Chamber of Commerce), religious (community leaders)...

Involving local partners is a top priority of our project, as a condition for success, transparency and sustainability.

2) IMPORTANT: CO-FINANCING SOLUTIONS

In addition to the grant funded by the State Department, our team is confident in its capability to get co-financing solutions not only in the public sector (see above) but also in the private sector. Companies such as Twitter and Facebook are key actors in the debate in France about hate speech on social networks. We will offer them an opportunity to promote positive initiatives for a better understanding between diverse and apparently disparate communities and against extremism and towards cooperation and shared discussion.

Alumni team

The project involves leaders from a wide range of disciplines. Besides its own specific background, every team member has an accurate knowledge of networks in local/national media and public administration, and efficient communication and training skills.

MAIN TOPICS:

- 1) STRUGGLE AGAINST SOCIAL, RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS BREAKDOWN: Naïma Charaï, elected official at Regional council of Aquitaine, and Mehdi Ouraoui, lecturer at Sciences Po, political consultant.
- 2) JUSTICE MATTERS (INCLUDING RELIGIOUS RADICALIZATION AND JIHADIST TRAVELS TO IRAK AND SYRIA): Haffide Boulakras, judge, in charge of an important IT project for the DOJ.
- 3) CITIZENS AND MEDIA. By Elise Vincent, journalist (police/justice/immigration) for French newspaper Le Monde.
- 4) EDUCATION AND ARTS AGAINST EXTREMISM. By Zahia Ziouani, professional musician, conducts several orchestras, and Karim Amellal, author, lecturer at Sciences Po,

founder and CEO of the participative media Chouf-Chouf.com

Proposed Project Dates: May 31, 2015 - May 31, 2016

HOW AND WHEN WILL YOU IMPLEMENT YOUR PROJECT?

Implementing Plan and Timeline

Location: Bayonne (Southwest France, near Bordeaux)

Phase 1: May 2015-September 2015

- Building local partnerships and networking among local decision-makers
- Recruiting volunteers for the project's core team.
- First call for participation/information meetings.
- Developing communication tools (website, Twitter, Facebook page...).

(All alumni team)

Phase 2: October 2015-March 2016

- 6 dialogue sessions (5 days each) for the 80 volunteers held on a monthly basis, addressing the following issues: Justice (H.Boulakras)/ Media (E.Vincent)/ Education and arts (K.Amella/Z.Zouani)/ Minorities representation/ Interfaith dialogue/Women's rights (M.Ouraoui/N.Charai). Radio program will be elaborated on each of these issues.

- Training sessions (technical skills for program-making and radio broadcasting) for the 80 volunteers. (All alumni team)

Phase 3: March 2016-May 2016

- 4 meetings with the alumni team and the core volunteers to build the final event
- Recording non-live programs, interviews and reports
- Mass communication operations in all the city's areas (distribution of free printed materials, local media campaign...)
- Final event: 2-day temporary radio station transmitting live and recorded programs on May 15-16, 2016

IMPORTANT NOTE: no government authorization is required, as this temporary radio will be broadcasted online (and with podcasts) and will be hosted by a local media partner (France Bleu, French n°1 local radio network).

- Evaluation and sustainability

Communication Plan

Our main communication goals are to develop and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with all stakeholders to strengthen support for the project; to use a variety of media to maximize awareness and support of the project's objectives and events.

- Step 1: identifying and meeting partners and advocates
- Step 2: networking through local bodies, NGOs', institutions, decision-makers and specific communication targets (ex: local media to get support and free advertising)
- Step 3: developing a social media strategy (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, email database...)
- Step 4: communication to the public around events and workshops (distribution of flyers...), especially around the final event

Our "grass-roots" communication strategy not only aims at sharing information about our project, but also endeavors to reach the largest possible audience of prospective participants in this interactive community project.

For example, outreach events will be organized throughout the year on thematic sessions, such as a brown-bag lunch about interfaith dialogue involving different religious community figures.

Evaluation

- Evaluation at the end of each workshop or meeting (especially to measure how participants are involved).
- Analytics and metrics on our social media activity
- Post-project surveys among staff, beneficiaries, and partners
- Get official commitments for more democratic institutions: make community leaders sign a charter to pay more attention to underprivileged groups and to understand the benefits of

encouraging mutual understanding.

Sustainability

The aim of this project is broader than just a one-time radio experience. It is a long-term project aiming at recreating and strengthening dialogue between different communities.

To ensure the sustainability of the project:

-our team will hold discussions with several economic decision-makers, representatives of various religious faiths and NGOs, as well as with officials of decentralized state services.

-Podcasts will be broadcasted online in podcast form in order to be easily replayed by audiences.

-Locally, a significant part of the training delivered to the most involved volunteers will also aim at continuing the project for several years in the future (good practices, fundraising, partnership-building...).

-At a national level, we will also write and publish online a good practice guide to help people in other French cities to implement similar projects.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED

\$25,000.00

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT:

[Download budget](#)