

Project TUPA 2006

Our financial goal for 2006 is to raise \$60,000 to \$75,000. This amount would underwrite the cost of conducting five radio camp workshops in Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina and several other countries. It would allow equipping 50 community radio stations with the basic transmitting and audio gear.

Current Activities

Our most current effort has been in the Mexican States of Oaxaca and Chiapas. A project volunteer, aka Pax, has been in Mexico since the first week of January working with indigenous community radio organizations. At this time there are approximately 32-37 indigenous radio stations on the air in Oaxaca. None are operating with approval from the Mexican Government. To discourage community radio stations from being established the government imposes very unrealistic technical requirements which create an insurmountable financial hurdle for most communities. A community radio station that should only cost \$1000 to \$1500 to create ends up costing many times that. Asserting their autonomy as indigenous communities, the people of Oaxaca persist in establishing these unsanctioned stations in the face of harassment and occasional raids by the federales.

Despite many obstacles, Pax has accomplished quite a lot. A 10 watt transmitter was sent down to Radio Huave to use as a mobile transmitter to broadcast local events and relay them back to the main transmitter for rebroadcast. Although totally unplanned, it was used to broadcast the appearance of the Zapatista Other Campaign when it rolled into the town of Juchitan, about 70 miles from San Francisco Del Mar where Radio Huave is located. Pax set up the 10 watt transmitter to broadcast from the town square. This allowed the Chiapas Independent Media Center to pickup the broadcast on an FM radio and feed the audio to their computer servers which broadcast the event to the rest of the world as an audio stream from their website.

Summary of Pax's report from Oaxaca:

Radio Huave is part of a collective currently consisting of five stations in the Mexican state of Oaxaca: Radio Huave, Radio Umalalang (San Dioniso), Radio Ikoots (San Mateo), Radio Ayuuk, (San Juan Guichicovi) and Radio Totopo, 102.5 FM (Juchitan).

When a community (not an individual) wants to start a station Radio Huave loans them a 40 or 10 watt transmitter. In addition,



they need to receive donations to get their own installation. Then the loaned equipment will be passed on. Radio Huave only supports community projects run by people considered to be trustworthy. Additional technical support is provided to help them get started.

Radio Huave operates on a budget of \$700-\$800 per month and the other stations average around \$300 per month. Most of this is generated by 'hola' messages. People bring 10-25 pesos into the station with a short note of thanks for the radio or a greeting to a friend. Most of the messages are birthday greetings. Radio Huave receives an additional \$100 per month from businesses for local advertising. They generate no money for repairs or upgrades and rely on contributions.

Radio Huave station serves 20,000 people in 15 towns within the station's 40km radius with a 40 watt transmitter. Radio Huave gets the most out of their 2 old computers, a small mixing board, speaker phone, etc. All equipment has been donated. San Francisco del Mar and the surrounding towns do not have their own newspapers. The 'presidente' (mayor) relies on the radio to get the word out.

The collective stations broadcast in local languages (as announcers are available) in Huave, Mixe, Zapotec as well as Spanish. Some of the subjects covered by Radio Huave include: Free Trade Area of the Americas, modified genetics and strip mining to mention a few. This is not done in a heavy handed way. In Juchitan they are more aggressive with their educational programs including the above listed concerns and the rights of women, the right to choose in the Zapotec language.

Our new use for the 10watt transmitter is to broadcast from a local auditorium or other venue to the station to re-broadcast. And with no newspaper this really is THE communication beyond the loud speakers that blare throughout the neighborhood at 7am, 1am and again at 6p.m. to announce who has tamales, or who this or that. Radio Huave also announces phone calls. Here, in San Francisco del Mar most communication is word of mouth. And radio is the most effective mode of communicating to the most people. The local president here, Cesar, supports the station. He thanked me personally for broadcasting the cultural activities. (End of Pax's Report)

(Over)





During Pax's time Oaxaca she worked with Radio Huave on planning the 4-5 day radio camp scheduled for August this year. It will involve participants from both Oaxaca and Chiapas. If fully funded, 10 radio stations will be created as a result. Pax went on to work with several communities in Chiapas and conducted a weekend workshop to establish a 40 watt radio station in Tselal Pueblo which is North of San Cristobal. A photo slide show of this effort is on the Project TUPA website – www.radiotupa.org. Go to the documents section. In addition, a streaming video is available documenting another community station, Radio Chanul Pom, a project of the Las Abejas organization. Project TUPA supplied their transmitter and continues to offer support.

Pax's efforts show what can be accomplished by ingenuity and determination plus a few resources. Our next step is to provide the additional training and equipment with the radio camp in Oaxaca this August. Monetary and material contributions will make this possible.

Material Donations

Project TUPA requests the donation of materials and equipment. CD and cassette players, audio mixers, microphones, cassette recorders, etc. are needed for community radio stations. Computers, especially laptops, (300 MHz and above) are required for audio editing and production. Also, electronic parts, test equipment, supplies and materials are welcome as well. Please give us a call or drop us a note if you have material donations to make.

Volunteering

Volunteers are needed for a variety of task and projects We need assistance in the following areas: translation of documents and training material - Spanish, French and Portuguese primarily; volunteer coordination; web publishing; document publishing; documentation and editing with digital still and video cameras; technical illustration and writing; fundraising and events coordination; engineering and design - RF, broadcast engineering and general electronics; electronic construction and fabrication; general office and project management skills.

We provide opportunities for community service hours for high school students and service learning for college and university students.

Also, if you would like to learn basic electronic and assembly skills as they apply to the construction of broadcast equipment, we have a volunteer apprentice program to teach you.

Two members of the TUPA project will be traveling to South America later this year to contact and work with community media organizations and indigenous communities in 3 to 4 countries, preparing the groundwork for the more extensive radio camp training sessions to be scheduled for the latter part of 2006 and early 2007. We have been contacted by the jobless and landless movements in both Argentina and Brazil requesting training sessions and equipment. Community stations are now being established in Peru which has had a total lack of community broadcast media. Your funding and support will further the spread of grassroots media democracy and ensure the continued success of Project TUPA.

Please contact us if you would like to get involved in Project TUPA:

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