

Mexican Women Radio Journalists Strengthen Their Alliances

One hundred twenty women radio journalists (“radialistas”) from across Mexico, who work in university, public, community, indigenous and commercial radio, met in Xalapa, Veracruz on May 30 to June 3 to further their radio production and journalism skills and to discuss the role of journalism and its challenges in an emerging democracy.

The conference was organized by the Colectivo de Investigación, Desarrollo y Educación entre Mujeres (CIDEM) and Internews Europe with financial support from EuropeAID (the European Union Program Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights) and the National Endowment for Democracy.

EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN NETWORKS

The conference, which was also CIDEM’s 7th annual meeting, had as one of its goals to expand and strengthen the National Network of Women Radio Journalists of Mexico, an offshoot of CIDEM, so it can better advocate for gender and human rights as well as specific media laws and press freedoms. The women presented a resolution to the Governor of the State of Veracruz calling for laws to protect the rights of women, for increased investigations into incidences of violence against women, and to enact changes in the media laws to guarantee access to information and freedom of expression.

The conference included two forums dealing with reporting from conflict zones, one led by Washington, DC-based journalist Jeff Kamen and the other by Peter Laufer, Internews Europe Project Director of the New Radio in Mexico project, and George Papagiannis, Internews Director of Media Development.

North American trainer Steve Savage



Amalia Tello Torralba from indigenous radio station “La Vox del Valle San Quintin” recording in CIDEM Studio in Xalapa. Amalia is bilingual and working both in Spanish and Mixteco., CIDEM Studio was constructed as part of the Internews-CIDEM project.

explained the physical nature of sound and how to use and manipulate sound to optimally communicate news over the radio. “The workshop attendees were active participants in the discussion and showed a strong interest and good understanding of the issues involved,” he said. “This was clearly an outstanding and committed group of radio producers.”

Vicky Quevedo, a former director of Radio Tierra in Chile and current director of Foro Ciudadano (“Citizen Forum”), made a spirited presentation about the development of her nationwide radio program production and distribution project, providing step-by-step instruction on how such programs can be created and find audience acceptance.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Ernesto Villanueva, president of Libertad de Información-México, A.C. (LIMAC), a lawyer and university professor, advocated strongly for the need in a democracy for

freedom of information and presented a guide for how to obtain it.

Other trainers included Fresia Camacho, Director of Voces Nuestra in Costa Rica and trainer for Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación Radiodifónica (ALER), Elena Fonseca, Director of Radio de Cotidiano Mujer de Uruguay, Klaus Funke, from Radio Kassel in Germany, and Aurora Velasco, Director of EPOCA A.C. in Mexico.

All of the 120 attendees participated in a group exercise in empowerment led by Mayela García, Director of CIDEM.

Practical sessions included the recording and editing of an interview of each woman at the conference. The women answered two questions – “What has radio meant for you?” and “What is your dream as a woman in communications?” The interviews are posted on the CIDEM web site at www.cidem-ac.org. Look in the Multimedia section and click on **Entrevistas grabadas Mujeres Radialistas**.