



## Real Voices Radio

### New Technology, New Spaces for Community Voices



Kalivani conducts an interview with a local vendor in the East for Real Voices

Internews' Regional Media Initiative, funded by USAID / OTI, provides training and resources for local journalists to cover issues in their communities. The Initiative includes:

- Establishing local Media Houses as institutions providing training, production, and resource support for journalists across ethnic lines in the east and south
- Providing training and production support to other regional journalists through Colombo-based activities
- Providing grants and training to independent producers, with a focus on community coverage

Sri Lanka's media has limited space for community voices and local coverage. This means communities aren't able to develop dialogue at a local level, or be heard nationally. They become marginalized in debates on conflict, development, democracy and good governance – the issues that affect them most.

Internews' Real Voices Radio covers community concerns and local issues. It is being distributed on both established and new emerging technologies to get local stories out, and expand media space for community voices.

The latest outlet to carry Real Voices is the Sarvodaya satellite radio network. Set up by Sri Lanka's largest NGO, this pilot network broadcasts directly to 16 villages, with plans to expand to one thousand. 'Real Voices' has started broadcast as part of training and production collaboration with Sarvodaya.

Other outlets carrying versions of 'Real Voices' are:

- o Asura FM – national Sinhala-language radio station
- o Pirai FM – Tamil-language station covering the east coast
- o Ruhunu Sevaya – Sinhala-language broadcaster covering the south and much of the east coasts
- o Uva Community Radio 87.6 FM – covers the hill country in Sinhala and Tamil, and sections of the east and south coast
- o Voices of Reconciliation Radio – as podcasts on tri-lingual website run by the Centre for Policy Alternatives: <http://radio.voicesofpeace.lk>. CPA has also provided recording equipment to boost Real Voices production in the field.
- o Thaalam FM – Tamil-language Internet radio station with strong diaspora audience: [www.worldtamilarweb.com](http://www.worldtamilarweb.com)
- o Virakesari – as podcasts on the website of Sri Lanka's leading Tamil-language newspaper: [www.virakesari.lk](http://www.virakesari.lk)

Some journalists working on Real Voices have adapted radio stories for print, further increasing audience reach. Internews hopes to expand support for local story coverage in the press..