Katrina Uncovers: A special Making Contact series

In response to Hurricane Katrina, National Radio Project immediately began work on Katrina Uncovers, a set of special editions within the Making Contact radio series.

Katrina Uncovers explores racism, poverty, government misdeeds, environmental justice, health, gentrification, corporate profiteering, oil companies’ roles before and after Katrina, insular government, FEMA, and the personal stories of survivors trying to rebuild their lives. Programs offer a blend of human stories, thoughtful analysis and hopeful alternative rebuilding proposals. Long after Hurricane Katrina stories fell off the front pages of most outlets, we continued to produce programs that explored the race, class and gender dimensions of the situation.

Three more programs are slated for Fiscal Year 2006-2007 - topics include:

- Immigrant populations in the Gulf including underpaid and unpaid workers
- The deep, historical relationship African-Americans have to land in the south
- Environmental Justice post-hurricane affects and community responses

Our Senior Producer Wins Katrina Media Fellowship

In June 2006, the Open Society Institute (OSI) awarded 31 investigative journalism grants to promote a national conversation on racism and inequality in America. One of OSI’s Katrina Media Fellowships was awarded to National Radio Project’s Senior Producer, Tena Rubio.

“We felt it was critical to support journalism and media projects to help foster debate and inspire action to challenge centuries of inequality in this country,” says Erlin Ibrek, director of grantmaking strategies at OSI.

Tena will be able to return to New Orleans and will produce two new editions of Katrina Uncovers as well as a print piece on: the influx of immigrant labor in New Orleans and its impact on political, economic, and social conditions; the environmental impact of the storms and how race and class inequity affect environmental conditions and rebuilding efforts.

National Radio Project in New Orleans

After raising special funding in Fall 2005, the National Radio Project sent producers Tena Rubio and Justin Beck, to New Orleans, in February 2006. The trip resulted in one community report-back event and two in-depth radio productions. The producers were assisted by six volunteers, transcribing the many hours of recordings, and the resulting programs are truly labors of love.

Please see next page for a list of Katrina Uncovers programs.

“This series consistently produces high quality features about important issues and this episode (Katrina Uncovers: Exploited Workers and Endangered Wetlands #17-06) is particularly good. It combines the currently hot topic of illegal immigration with the seemingly under-reported follow-up to hurricane Katrina. Effective use of sound takes the listener on location and elevates the program above merely reporting facts. Experts are brought in at just the right points with relevant information but are not overused.

However, what makes the two segments both work so well are the engaging main speakers. The young Mexican worker, helping to rebuild a city and trying to support his family, maintains a simple dignity despite abuses by employers, police harassment and being perceived as a criminal. The old Cajun guide in the Bayou faces environmental disaster, which could destroy his home with equal doses of sadness, frustration and even humor...

The whole program is well paced, nicely written and warmly narrated. Important issues presented from a personal perspective, it should have broad listener appeal.”

– Public Radio Exchange (PRX) review by David Swatling, Radio Netherlands producer
Katrina Uncovers: A special Making Contact series, continued...

Programs Produced in Fiscal Year 2005-2006

Katrina Uncovers: Exploited Workers and Endangered Wetlands [#17-06]
Migrant workers cleaning up and rebuilding New Orleans struggling for better wages and working conditions, then Louisiana bayou locals trying to preserve wetlands as natural hurricane barriers. Featuring: Israel Mijares, migrant worker; JJ Rosenbaum, staff attorney, Southern Poverty Law Center’s Immigrant Justice Project; Albert Pellegrin, tour guide; Bill Munson, owner, Munson Swamp Tours.

Katrina Uncovers: Rebuilding Hope in New Orleans [#14-06]
More than six months after Hurricane Katrina, we go to New Orleans, where we hear from local people working to rebuild their communities. We also discuss water quality and Environmental Justice. Featuring: Floyd Brooks, Ninth Ward homeowner; Malik Rahim, co-founder, Common Ground Relief; Gabriel Cohen and Rebecca Mintz, Common Ground volunteers; Diamonds Eugene, New Orleans resident; Wilma Subra, president, Subra Company; Cynthia Fanning, information officer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Ken Ford, founder, St. Bernard Citizens for Environmental Quality.

Katrina Uncovers: Poverty in a Land of Plenty [#02-06]
For many people, Hurricane Katrina was a wakeup call to a long-standing problem: why is there so much poverty in a land of plenty? Through the lens of Katrina, three of our journalists look at the poverty and homelessness of Katrina victims in New Orleans and those who relocated to New Haven, Connecticut, as well as the plight of long-term homeless people in Seattle.

Katrina Uncovers: Structural Injustice [#45-05]
Activist Damu Smith speaks about the structural problems of systemic poverty, environmental racism, and a government, which cannot or will not respond to the urgent needs of millions of Americans. Damu worked tirelessly on the frontlines of the anti-war and environmental justice movements for more than three decades. Founder of Black Voices for Peace and the National Black Environmental Justice Network, Damu died of colon cancer a few months after this program was released.

Katrina Uncovers: Those Left Behind [#43-05]
A look at those left behind and the organizations working to help them: the elderly - including grandparents who parent their grandchildren, and companion animals rescued from Gulf Coast areas devastated by Katrina. Featuring: Donna Butts, executive director, Generations United; Lenora Poe, leader of grandparent support group; Esther Jones, grandmother; Sarah Cowen, executive director, Hopalong Animal Rescue Center; Jillian Wolkowski, Shail Bardger and Leslie Estes, Hopalong volunteers; Laura Harris, San Francisco SPCA; Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO, Humane Society of the United States.

Katrina Uncovers: Activism, Racism and Environmental Justice [#39-05]
This program explores grassroots organizations doing work the U.S. government cannot or will not do, and environmental justice - the roles race and poverty play in where Americans live. Featuring: Van Jones, Executive Director of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights; Curtis Muhammad, Organizing Director for Community Labor United; Dr. Craig Colten, professor Louisiana State University; The Legendary K.O., rap group from Houston.

Katrina Uncovers: Environment, Health and Rescue [#38-05]
This first program in the series highlights stories of Katrina survivors, how to help in relief efforts and a water expert explains the dangers of water contamination. Featuring: Dr. Joan Rose, professor, Michigan State University; relief volunteers Joanne Lyons, Leslie Toy and Regina Reynolds; Cecil Kirkpatrick, registered nurse and Red Cross volunteer; Curtis Washington, survivor of Hurricane Katrina; Cecile Eugene, born and raised in New Orleans.
EDITORIAL AND TRAINING DESKS, COLLABORATIVES AND INITIATIVES

National Radio Project Desks are production, training and networking hubs that create material for broadcast. Each Desk focuses the energy of volunteers and grassroots activists, creating teams with roots in the community. The Desks train community members to produce shows on the topics they care about. The capacity and productivity of each Desk fluctuates according to funding availability. Restricted funds earmarked to specific Desks continued to decrease in FY '05-06. Despite that, we continued to create important radio programs on traditional Desk topics: Environment, Globalization, Prisons, Labor and Women, and involved community members and trainees as much as possible.

The Prison Desk produced The Juvenile Injustice System [#30-05], Debating the Death Penalty [#06-06], Tased and Abused [#07-06], The Long Walk to Abolish the Death Penalty [18-06] and The War on Torture: U.S. Policy Exposed [#27-06]. In September 2006, Making Contact will present Freedom Archive’s documentary, “The Attica Rebellion,” to mark the 35th anniversary of that prison revolt and massacre. Programs next year will cover topics ranging from torture/human rights abuses, to transgendered prisoners, to pregnant women in prison.

Our Labor Desk offerings include: The History of Class Struggle in the U.S. [#15-06], Daze of Labor, Days of Change [#35-05]; Harvesting Justice [#04-06], about underpaid/overworked farm laborers that are exposed to toxic chemicals; and Katrina Uncovers: Exploited Workers and Endangered Wetlands [#17-06].

The Environmental Desk covered global warming in, What’s up with the Weather? The Politics of Climate Change [#29-05]. We addressed land rights in The New Green Revolution [#05-06] and Cow Heaven: Saving Agricultural Land [#16-06] and explored covert nuclear testing in Nuking the Neighborhood [#12-06].

Intersecting the Environmental Desk with the Globalization Desk, we worked on water issues. Water Woes [#32-05] addressed core water issues of privatization and clean-water access.

We received a small grant from Public Radio Exchange (PRX) to begin work on an hour-long water program, to be released in time for World Water Week August 21-27, 2006. We will tackle privatization, clean water access, desalination, bottled water, and non-point source pollution. Lester Graham of the Great Lakes Radio Consortium (GLRC) will be contributing two segments, and we will include Robynn Takayama’s 2005 story on water privatization in Hawaii, “Maui Water Issues,” which won a National Journalism Award from the Asian American Journalists Association.

This program will be marketed to NPR stations that have expressed the need for hour-long programs. We will also be releasing a half-hour Making Contact version to our member stations.

Women’s Desk productions continued to shine in FY 05-06. We continued to emphasize women’s health and human rights including reproductive rights and justice; international women’s activism; and women’s economic rights.


We addressed women’s health issues with Enduring Choice [#33-05], which focused on the links between reproductive health, civil liberties, the environment and economics; Got Rights? Global Women’s Voices for Health and Humanity [#09-06] which featured speakers from the 10th annual International Women and Health Meeting in New Delhi; and WomanSpeak - Talking About Our Good Health, short, original radio pieces about women’s health. WomanSpeak was co-produced by the Women’s Health Collaborative and National Radio Project with a grant form the Community Technology Foundation of California.

We wrapped up our work in the Welfare Radio Collaborative and completed that three-year joint effort with the Women of Color Resource Center by:
- Updating the May 2005 release, Children Denied: Family Cap and Foster Care [#18-05] for distribution by sister organization Women’s International News Gathering Service (WINGS).
- Creating short news pieces for Free Speech Radio News
- Providing web design training.
- Added development and fundraising training to the mix, thanks to a Technical Assistance grant from the Third Wave Foundation.

We are excited to see the Welfare Radio Collaborative transform into the TEMPO program now functioning from within the Women of Color Resource Center. We look forward to any ongoing assistance or distribution we can provide for these powerful women’s voices.

(continued)
EDITORIAL AND TRAINING DESKS, COLLABORATIVES AND INITIATIVES, CONTINUED…

Our Media and Democracy work is another of our many community collaborations (see this year’s newsletters archived on our website for more examples). Building upon what we produced in FY 2004-2005 with Media Justice: Access and Accountability [#19-05], Globalizing Media Reform [#23-05] and our participation in the National Conference on Media Reform conference, we worked closely with Media Justice groups across the country to help us frame Unplugging a Media Giant [#52-05]. This program looks at how Clear Channel came to be the largest radio station owner in North America and highlights the many people fighting it. We hope to continue this interaction with the community groups in this movement, and build upon our ‘05-’06 productions, even while the existing productions remain in use.

ACHIEVING MISSION WHILE TRIMMING EXPENSES

The public’s appreciation for our work is greater than ever. We are reaching more of the country and getting great responses from listeners and community groups. However, the current funding climate poses some significant challenges. Foundations and individuals are being called upon to pick up where government support for social programs leaves off, which intensifies competition for funding. Larger media groups, often with fewer community roots, tend to capture greater attention. Fortunately we have a very loyal, engaged and motivated donor base and an expanding development team.

National Radio Project, with its bare bones budget, tightly manages its financial affairs. In May 2006, funding shortfalls prompted us to look to the future and trim expenses. Our largest cost is payroll, so we made the very difficult decision to pare back staff. We eliminated one full-time producer position and 32 hours from administration.

Our organizational strengths allow us to continue to meet our weekly deadlines. Our 12-year history of working with freelance journalists gives us the flexible people-power we need to get the job done. The multiple skills and upbeat attitude of the remaining staff, along with our fleet of volunteers and interns, (as well as the commitment of the board and founder), have helped us achieve our core mission and to keep our commitments to stakeholders: progressive social change movements, stations/listeners, trainees, donors/supporters and those who span several of these categories.

Individuals and Donor Advised funds have always been a great strength of ours providing a combined 82% of our funding for FY05-06 – while Foundations provided 15% and earned income 3%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>2005-2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>$290,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>$329,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Income</td>
<td>-$38,911</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since expenses exceeded income, we temporarily drew from our savings account. The balance sheet shows a total equity of $48,543 to take us into FY ‘06-’07. We head into our new fiscal year with a restructuring that is feeling like a healthy and promising adjustment.

We have a team of development consultants (many of them donating their services) assisting the Executive Director, Founder and board members. We continue to carefully recruit for our board of directors with an emphasis on fundraising skills.

Our development plan for the coming year includes continuing to grow our individual donor base especially in the $250 and up category and making every effort to attract more foundation funding. We continue to build organizationally-sustaining relationships and alliances with other independent media and community groups; carefully engage in well-scaled fee-for-service opportunities; and enhance the web-driven aspect of our base-building and fundraising. Since we had success with matching funds campaigns this past year, we will now combine that approach with a “Friends of Making Contact” campaign in order to gain multi-year-pledges and greater long-term financial stability.