



## **Radio Toco, Trinidad**

Vera Edwards, Manager of Radio Toco made the presentation and gave a background on the community of Toco and Radio Toco.

### Biography of Toco

Toco Foundation is situated in the centre of the County of St. David, commonly known as the Toco Region in the Village of Toco. The Toco region is generally taken to include all the villages along the Toco Main Road from Matura to Matelot. Toco is situated in the beautiful North-Eastern corner of Trinidad, bounded by the Caribbean Sea to the North and by the Atlantic Ocean to the East. It is 65 miles land route to the capital of Port-of-Spain, 22 miles by sea to the sister isle Tobago and one hour drive to the closest shopping town, Sangre Grande and two (2) hours from the capital, Port-of-Spain. The Toco region has a population of approximately nine thousand five hundred (9500).



Location of Toco in Trinidad

Toco is a coastal agricultural area, a very diverse community with varying socio-economic and cultural ingredients. These ingredients have influenced the attitude and behaviour of the people, both adults and youths.

One of the challenges Toco faces is the location and the ease or difficulty with which staff and volunteers can commute and general access to goods and services. Vera noted that for a resource person from Port-of-Spain, for instance, to visit Toco for an hour-long radio programme would cost them a day from work, traveling to and from etc.



Vera Edwards, Radio Toco, Trinidad

Valencia and Rio Riviere north

### Target Audience

Radio Toco has a surprisingly wide reach, past and Sangre Grande all the way down to Manzanilla Claro on the east coast, past San Souci, Grande and Matelot all the way out to Blanchisseuse on the coast, part of Arima. Radio Toco reaches all of Tobago and St. David in Grenada. These figures were confirmed by a recent survey. The community has been very supportive of Radio Toco and has embraced it. Their demand forced them to establish a larger transmitter and they can now reach approximately 100,000 listeners.

Radio Toco is very strong on advocacy matters including the social and natural environment. Radio Toco maintains close links with the community stimulating public opinion and fostering closer relations with the Radio Station.

With this in mind a radio programme entitled "Focus on the Family" was developed and produced based on the demands received through the Toco Foundation "Inreach Parenting Project". The project can only target a limited number of homes within the geographical scope. Vera explained

that they saw the need to use the programme as a tool to impact upon a greater number of households and in so doing involve more families.

### The Radio Programme

“Focus on the Family” is a 30 minutes programme aired once per week at 4.30pm.

The presenter, Jacqueline Jones, who is one of the Parenting Agents, does preparation for production. The production team at Radio Toco assists her.

The programme intends to address a wide range of topics relating to family issues. Each programme will address issues most common in the community.

She explained that the team has already begun to have community participation in the programme by way of interviews with parents, both male and female, children and other resource persons, e.g. nurses, doctors, counselors and storytellers etc.

From its inception, the programme has been informative and dynamic. The response to the call in component has been tremendous and includes letters from concerned parents.

Most of the data is collected through resource material obtained from various partners, interviews and storytellers. She said they are presently seeking sponsorship for the programme locally in order to continue being a partner in empowering communities.

Vera noted that the programme is organised (produced) in such a way that it is often repeated in part or whole for interactive listening audience participation during slotted times or on alternative days.

The recent activity sponsored by the CSI in relation to early parenting program and story-telling program places an additional focus on the approach that the Toco Foundation is using to engage the community in an interactive community based effort.

The programme broadcast on November 4, 2004 was played during the Consultation. It was a magazine-type programme, with a narrative section as well as an interview on the topic “Single Parenting”. This was followed by a reggae music selection and then a children’s story (from the RRP-STEPS workshop) on why the donkey brays. The programme would then have gone live for listeners to call in. The programme concluded with tips and encouragement from the narrator.



Michael Als, Director,  
Toco Foundation

Michael Als, Director of the Toco Foundation explained that the programme seeks to touch people. He mentioned the link between the RRP and the storytelling project (STEPS) and he spoke of the joint workshop, which was recently conducted.

Colleen shared the connection between RRP and STEPS in Toco. That workshop, she explained, concentrated on building stories. These stories would be collated by the STEPS project, but would also be used in programmes for children on Radio Toco. It was felt that by targeting the children, the parents would also tune in.