

# The Article 13 Initiative

Open Source, Open Access, and Open Media



Project Overview and Briefing on Open Source and Media in Chad



Project OSJOA

**Rafigui**  
Presse Jeunes Tchad



five minutes to midnight

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**Please note:** this report is current as of February 13, 2006. Please visit [www.fiveminutestomidnight.org/a13i](http://www.fiveminutestomidnight.org/a13i) for the latest updates to this report and other details about the project. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Wojciech Gryc at +1-416-897-1344 or by e-mailing [feedback@fiveminutestomidnight.org](mailto:feedback@fiveminutestomidnight.org).

## Introduction

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Community-based media projects are often effective ways to strengthen bonds and provide members of a community with a means to share information, educate themselves, and even develop business ventures. As technology becomes more prevalent worldwide, developing nations stand to benefit in many ways. The Article 13 Initiative (A13I), run by Five Minutes to Midnight (FMM) and named after the 13th article of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, explores how technology could be used in developing nations to help implement stable media operations. The first major task within this project was a trip to N'Djamena, Chad, where two researcher-volunteers, Emanuele Lapierre-Fortin and Wojciech Gryc, worked with Rafigui, a youth-led organization that promotes social and cultural interaction between Chadian youth.

The Chad-based project was a pilot run by FMM to see how well Open Source Software (OSS) could be used within media development. The project, taking place from September 2005 to January 2006, had three specific goals:

1. Researching OSS and developing a software package that could be used by organizations interested in graphics design, web development, or print media.
2. Visiting Chad and running seminars on OSS to teach Rafigui volunteers how to use the software for their newspaper. A further benefit of the trip was to allow FMM volunteers to learn about journalism within Chad, and how OSS can be used to meet the needs of media-based organizations.
3. Writing a final report, presented here, which uses Rafigui as a case study to outline the challenges and difficulties of OSS adoption in developing nations, and how OSS could be used to cultivate media development.

While a great deal of research has been conducted regarding how OSS meets the needs of corporations and organizations, youth-led media organizations like Rafigui face unique challenges that, if overcome, stand to benefit many projects in similar situations. With this in mind, the trip was designed to teach Rafigui volunteers about OSS while allowing the volunteers to examine the effectiveness of such software. The research culminated in over 60 pages of notes, 45 hours of workshops, two in-depth surveys, and interviews with media activists in N'Djamena, Chad.

## Background on Rafigui

Rafigui Presse Jeunes was created in March 1996 in N'Djamena, Chad. The association was originally a social club, uniting youth across the French Sahel to share cultural experiences, creative writing, and ideas for peace and development. Since then, the organization has grown to become a well-known agent for youth mobilization, be it for the organization of socio-

*“Thank you for having  
crossed half the world to  
give us a hand in our  
organization's take-off.”  
- Julia Koutou,  
President of Rafigui*

cultural events, educational activities, or awareness campaigns. However, Rafigui's main preoccupation now consists of the publication of a magazine which boasts colourful pages presenting cultural events concerning youth and thereby educates local readers about social issues such as HIV/AIDS, gender equality, and sanitation. Rafigui's training in journalistic techniques triggered the formation of ten college-based newspapers in neighbouring towns.

## **Mission Statement**

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The Five Minutes to Midnight mission is:

*To give youth a voice and media outlet that will allow them to become aware and get involved in human rights and international issues.*

A13I keeps this mission strictly in mind, and all efforts will be made to ensure that FMM remains neutral to the social issues within Chad and other countries within which the project operates.

A13I takes the FMM mission a step further. The project takes it from Article 13.1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states:

*The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.*

FMM works to get youth involved in the world around them through media and journalism. A13I aims to give young people in N'Djamena and other locales access to technological and print media while encouraging them to take part in its creation. By ensuring that costs remain low and through harbouring an inclusive project environment, FMM as a whole is working to give many young people a chance to learn, access information, and express themselves.

## **General Methodology**

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The A13I is based on a 'Needs Assessment' carried on between Emanuele Lapierre-Fortin and three members of Rafigui in October 2004. These interviews set the basis for the actual content to be covered during the training, but they did not account for the diversity of computer knowledge among its 15 participants. A first survey was thus conducted to determine the level of familiarity of each participant with different types of software such as word processing, spreadsheet, web browsing, etc. This first survey also allowed each member to voice their expectations with the FMM volunteers and what they wished to get from the collaboration.

In response to this first survey, the members were divided into two groups, further referred to as the general group and the focus group. The general

group was comprised of all 15 members that were required to attend to previously scheduled training sessions. The focus group was comprised of the three main executives of Rafigui who, because of their administrative tasks, had a more extended background about computers and were thus in a position to better understand maintenance and troubleshooting issues. This group was tutored by the FMM volunteers outside of formal training sessions.

Finally, an extensive evaluation questionnaire was passed on to all participants, who were asked to rate different aspects of the training according to criteria of clarity, interest and relevance. They were also prompted to express their critics of scheduling, settings, teaching styles, etc. as well as give their comments about the overall learning experience and how it can be ameliorated through an ongoing collaboration between Rafigui and FMM. The major findings for this questionnaire are reported in the Findings section.

## **Workshop Structure**

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The key to successful adoption of OSS and technology in general is to be able to use it and maintain it properly. This is a unique pedagogical challenges, exacerbated by the political tension and technical shortcomings of a poor country like Chad (see Challenges and Shortcomings for more information).

The training style consisted of running two categories of workshops: general and technical. General workshops were open to all Rafigui volunteers, and focused on the daily use of OSS. The average attendance of these workshops was 12 people, with various technical experience: some students have never used a computer before, though most had limited experience with Microsoft Word and Internet Explorer. These workshops focused on general lessons, and the following outline was followed:

- Introduction to the OSS philosophy
- Working in Linux
- OpenOffice Writer
- OpenOffice Draw
- GIMP
- Scribus
- Inkscape
- Digital Cameras

A detailed outline can be found in the *Guide de l'utilisateur*, which may be found online at <http://www.fiveminutestomidnight.org/a13i/guide.pdf>

The workshops were run with three computers, all running Fedora Core 4. Workshops were often done like interactive lectures, with the speaker giving instructions for the software being taught. Many workshops were activity-based: workshop participants learned best when they could actually apply the software to tasks important to Rafigui, such as making a layout, Rafigui-themed new year cards, and editing images for publication. Furthermore,

participants were encouraged to switch seating positions, to ensure that all participants had a chance at actually using the computers. A secondary focus of the workshops was team work, and participants were encouraged to explain concepts to each other rather than have FMM volunteers explain them.

More technical workshops were run for three Rafigui staff members in the evenings. These workshops were not included in the preliminary version of the *Guide de l'utilisateur (User's Guide)*, and focused on specific technical issues while using Linux, from installing the operating system to explaining how files and folders work in Linux. Below is a short outline of the workshops run:

- Installing Linux
- Using the digital camera (advanced features)
- GIMP (advanced features)
- Linux file system
- Burning CDs
- Using Google
- The Super User
- Using YUM
- Using Knoppix
- The Terminal (Konsole)
- Inkscape
- Deleting Linux

Exams and tests were given to both general and focus groups to ensure that the information was retained. The *Guide de l'utilisateur* was also used as resource for participants, since French tutorials were difficult to find and obtain while in Chad.

## **Achievements**

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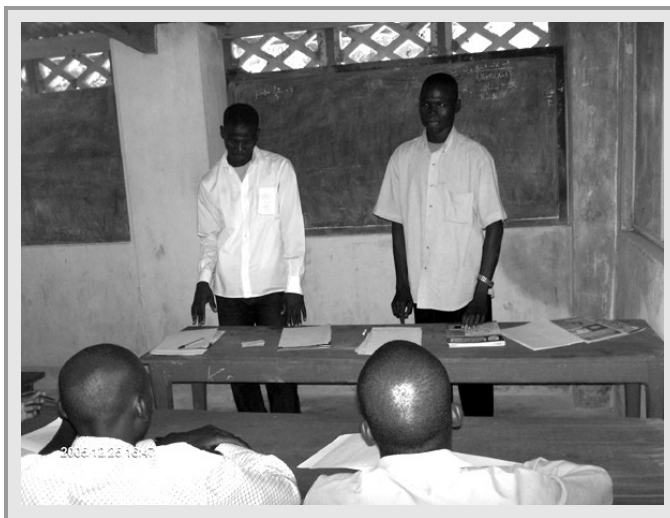
*"I hope the contact between FMM and Rafigui will be maintained for further training and common projects."*

*- Jean-Claude Djerobe,  
Financial Manager of  
Rafigui*

The A13I in Chad was extremely successful, and exceeded the expectations of everyone who attended and worked on the workshops. While it was initially planned that two computers, a printer, scanner, and digital camera would be donated to Rafigui to continue its work, effective lobbying for donations and fund raising allowed the number of computers supplied by FMM to increase to three. An additional three computers were also provided by French donors. While an Inkjet printer was initially planned for, thanks to the support of the German Development Agency (DED), Rafigui was able to purchase a black and white laser printer instead. Detailed technical specifications of all the donations can be found in the *Appendix B*.

Workshops were originally planned to last 40 hours. A total of 45 hours of workshops was run instead, with 6.5 of those hours coming from Rafigui itself, whose members ran workshops in the village of Kelo, for volunteers working at a youth newspaper called *L'Avenir*. The material presented at workshops varied quite a bit, and included everything from using

OpenOffice Writer to installing Linux and partitioning hard drives. Workshops were split into two types: general workshops for all volunteers, which had between 10 and 14 people at every workshop, and advanced workshops for key volunteers and those who would be in charge of the computers following our visit.



Rafigui volunteers run journalism works in Kelo, Chad, for *L'Avenir*, a youth-based newspaper in the village.

Based on workshop outlines and recognizing a need for French software tutorials, a French user's guide was created for Rafigui. About 20 pages in length, this guide provides a summary of the workshops and allows readers to acquaint themselves with the software without the need of a workshop facilitator.

Additional successes during the trip included working on the upcoming cross-cultural issue of Rafigui, as well as the publication of their latest issue, which included information on this trip. Interviews with media were also carried out – this included meetings with journalists where the volunteers were able to ask questions about the state of media in Chad, as well as journalists from the radio station FM Liberté interviewing the volunteers.

## **Challenges and Shortcomings**

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The project was a great success in terms of how people responded to the technology and workshops. People were very open to the idea of OSS and their using it for their newspaper. Indeed, adoption of OpenOffice, GIMP, Scribus, and other software tools was extremely efficient and quick, even by people who were not previously familiar with closed-source versions of these tools.

The biggest technical obstacle was Linux itself. Fedora Core 4 was used as the distribution of choice, and while simple tasks like running programs and using them were easy, there were a few problems with the actual system.

Three key problems were found:

- *Installation of software on the computer.* Without Internet access, it is extremely difficult to install any software, due to the great deal of dependent packages in Linux that one needs to download and compile.
- *Hardware Installation.* The laser printer that was purchased was not compatible with Linux, and one had to download source code from websites that only had tutorials in English. Compiling and installing the source code was difficult, and still did not work. In the end, the printer was not installed. Due to lack of selection, it is not acceptable to force volunteers to look for Linux-supported printers – most stores only have one or two models.
- *KDE.* Due to its apparent ease of use, KDE was used as the desktop environment. However, it has inadequate support for external memory drives – it crashed every time one inserted a drive into the USB port.

To mediate some of the problems above, two computers were set up to dual boot both Windows and Linux. One computer was dual booting Windows XP, which came pre-installed with one of the laptops brought from Canada, while the second was dual booting Windows 98 SE and Linux. The computer using Windows XP was infected with a virus within two weeks, even without access to Internet, due to the prevalent use of USB drives between cyber cafes and home computers.

Two other major problems were prevalent during the workshops, both of which are external to A13I and Rafigui. The first is electricity supply: there were many days where electricity was not available, and workshops could not continue. It was extremely beneficial that we had laptops, as this afforded us time to work with the computers when electricity was down, and recharge the batteries when it returned.

The second major problem was the external political climate. The government of Chad feels threatened by rebels and has come into conflict with the government of Sudan, who it says supports the rebels. During our time in Chad, the government began forcefully recruiting young, able Chadians into the military, to fight what it feels is an upcoming war. These recruitments were often done in evenings and at night, meaning those attending our workshops had to go home, to ensure their safety. This made it extremely difficult to run more workshops, as most people had to leave around 7:00 pm. A further problem with the politics of Chad was the ending of a nation-wide strike that involved teachers at schools. Because the strike was over but had lasted a long time, the winter break was cut short, and the volunteers attending our workshops who were also attending school had to choose between the two.

## **Rafigui's Response**

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FMM was thrilled to discover the enthusiasm of Rafigui members with regards to OSS. There are many reasons to believe that such a philosophy

*“What I liked most was the discussion on the presentation of Linux and OSS; it gave us the possibility to learn and give our opinions on OSS, which is a wonder and revolution for computer science.”*  
 -Bruno Fangbo,  
 Director of Rafigui

relates with Chadian values of solidarity and community and corresponded very well with Rafigui's practice as a newspaper encouraging creativity, brainstorming, and group writing with little mention of notions of copyrights or intellectual property.

A13I received a warm response from the participants, according to oral comments and the evaluation questionnaire. The latter tool permitted FMM to quantitatively assess its performance in providing OSS training, a success reflected by the following figure :

Software	Clarity	Relevance
Open Office Writer	4.27	4.36
Open Office Draw	4.27	4.27
GIMP	4.05	4.45
Scribus	3.33	3.88
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>4.24</b>

Table 1: software ranking, with 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the best.

Two points were repeated regularly within the questionnaires given to participants:

- Advanced drawing functions (for example, filters) and layers in GIMP were the least understood feature of the training, and most members felt that although exciting, they were not totally essential;
- A systematic exploration of Open Office Draw, combining both drawing and text functions, was especially liked and acted as a buffer that permitted a better understanding of Scribus, more advanced publishing software.

The following comment seem to be representative of the group:

*I liked the practical courses because I think that's how humans remember the most of what they learn.*

– K. Sarzan

## The Future

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With the successful completion of the project in N'Djamena, Five Minutes to Midnight hopes to continue the project through direct support for Rafigui, as well as expanding the technical package and workshops to other organizations working in media and youth development.

## Sustainability in Chad

A13I did not end on January 10 with the end of the trip in Chad. Both FMM and Rafigui are committed to working together, mainly in the area of troubleshooting and continuous training. They intend to do so by maintaining ongoing communications via phone and e-mail to address any

technical issue that should occur. FMM is willing to provide that support at least until Rafigui's associate computer scientist returns from temporary leave, though long-term options are also possible. Rafigui will also provide workshops on word processing to 50 young people in N'Djamena, and will strive to develop semi-commercial income-generating activities to help cover the printing costs of their newspaper.

In response to the vivid interest manifested by Rafigui members to the idea of perfecting their computer skills, FMM decided to offer additional lessons to supplement the material covered. These more advanced features will be annexed to the final version of the French OSS CD, and shall encompass different areas of computer science which Rafigui members identified as relevant during the evaluation questionnaire. This shall include :

- Interactive tutorials about software OpenOffice Base, Mozilla Firefox and Inkscape;
- Detailed explanations about transferring files from a desktop to a USB key;
- Introductions to web development and blogging;
- Explorations of elements that were previously included in the curriculum, such as OpenOffice Calc and Impress, but that were not covered in lecture due to time constraints
- Description of the activities that were undertaken with the focus group, such as the double installation of Linux and Windows and the installation of the printer, in which members of the general group also expressed an interest;
- Visual examples and templates of publishing possibilities in Scribus.



Working on the upcoming issue of Rafigui.

## **OSS, Media, and Development**

Media plays a crucial role in politics, culture, and the developing world. By allowing young people around the world to get involved in the media by creating their own programs and writing original articles, young people become proactive and more informed about the issues that affect them directly and indirectly. The media holds great promise in helping promote understanding between cultures, the dissemination of information, and

*“Technology has always been a tool of social inclusion, but now this acquires a new profile, no longer merely as incorporation into markets, but as incorporation into citizenship as well, granting access to information and reducing the costs of multimedia through new instruments that increase the creative potential of citizens.”*

*- Gilberto Gil,  
Brazilian Minister of Culture*

increased awareness and education.

With the success of A13I in Chad, FMM hopes to expand its projects and formalize the technical package designed for Rafigui. The next steps within the project are much more ambitious than those for the Chad project, but those working in Chad are confident in the project's potential, and with a concerted effort of organizations and individuals, such work has a good chance of promoting positive change.

The formalization of the technical package is being done through a partnership with the Tactical Technology Collective. The group is a cross between civil society and technical experts, and runs workshops and events for promoting the use of OSS to meet the needs of organizations in the developing world. The group has great technical skill, and has already developed a package called *NGO-in-a-Box: Security Edition* to provide organizations with security tools to protect themselves and their work. An Open Publishing edition is planned as well, and FMM will be taking part in its creation.

FMM has also formalized a partnership with Toronto-based Journalists for Human Rights (JHR), a journalism organization that provides training in human rights reporting for African journalists. FMM will be designing an OSS-based technical toolkit for African journalists working on the web, in radio, television, and writing for newspapers. JHR will be providing consultative support to FMM for the development of the package, to ensure it meets the needs of journalists. Once the package is developed, JHR is willing to provide FMM with access to its partners, to have FMM actually test the package on the ground, in a similar way to what was done with Rafigui.

## **Conclusion**

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Overall, the project was an extremely positive venture. Due to its success with Rafigui, and the attention it has received from other organizations, it is likely to continue, both in Chad and around the world. At this stage, FMM is working with Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) and the Tactical Technology Collective (creators of *NGO-in-a-Box*) to develop a media package and toolkit for developing nations. The project is currently in its infancy, but all partners are hopeful from their own experience, as well as the work done in Chad.

Overall, there are some key challenges that must be overcome. First and foremost, the Linux operating system must become more user friendly and supporting for those who lack Internet access. Moreover, support for internationalization must be improved to ensure non-English speaking organizations may benefit from open source. By creating an all-inclusive technical package for organizations, it may be possible to overcome these challenges.

FMM is happy to report that all went well in this project, and that everyone participating felt the project concluded successfully. A final Thank You goes out to all those who supported us.

## **Acknowledgments**

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The Article 13 Initiative is an ambitious project that brings together development workers, technical specialists, and media activists. The wide range of skills required to make such a project successful depend on a large group of people. Five minutes to Midnight wishes to thank the following organizations for their support of A13I:

- Open Source | Open Access at the University of Toronto
- Council on Student Services at the University of Toronto at Scarborough
- The Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Furthermore, Five Minutes to Midnight is grateful for help and support from the following people:

- Professor Leslie Chan
- Professor Ronald Deibert
- Jacques Gérin
- George Roter
- Professor Paul Kingston

## **Appendix A: Five Minutes to Midnight Background**

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Five Minutes to Midnight (FMM) is a youth-led organization that works to promote youth involvement in human rights and cultural affairs through media and journalism. Started in July 2003, the organization publishes an online magazine read globally by over 1600 students. The magazine focuses on international issues and its articles have been reprinted in magazines around the world.

In August 2004, FMM self-published *The Youth*, an anthology of its best articles from its first year of operations. The book was officially endorsed by the United Nations Association in Canada - Toronto Region Branch (UNACTO), and has been shipped to youth-focused organizations in Nepal, Ghana, and Pakistan. Articles in the book include writing from young human rights activists, refugees, and development workers in developing nations.

The organization has been recognized for its work by merit of its rapid growth and positive responses from volunteers. It has readers and volunteers in 25 countries, and Wojciech Gryc, the founder and current President, was awarded the Top 20 Under 20 award in May 2005 for founding FMM.

## **Appendix B: Donations and Supplies**

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There are a number of donations provided to Rafigui by Five Minutes to Midnight. These include:

- HP C618 1.9 mega pixel digital camera, with 256 MB memory card.
- Toshiba laptop: 1.13 gigahertz CPU with 256 megabytes of RAM and dual booting Fedora Core 4 and Windows XP.
- Toshiba laptop: 650 megahertz CPU with 196 megabytes of RAM.
- 100 € donation for publishing the cross-cultural issue of Rafigui.

## **Appendix C: Software Package**

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The recommended technical package for this trip was dependent on the offerings made available in the Fedora Core 4 full installation, along with a few custom installations. This is a four CD offering. A fifth CD was created with the following packages:

- Digital Camera software
  - DigiKam 0.8.0
  - GPhoto 2.1.6
  - libart 2.3.17
  - libkexif 0.2.2
  - libkipi 0.1.2
- Inkscape
  - autopackage

- autopackage-gtk 1.0.7
- gucharmap 1.4.0
- inkscape 0.43
- Scribus 1.3.1
- WinLibre