



Indigenous People's Rally, Sandy Bay, 1995

moderate the mountainous terrain, although many of the small communities are deep in the valleys making them difficult to reach even with repeaters. The staffing of a permanent station would also be prohibitive. Another option would be setting up an air-conditioned van, equipped with a mobile studio — still expensive.

The least expensive possibility would be to continue transmitting with a low-power FM transmitter from a portable grassroots studio operated by youth and villagers on an as needed basis. A 20-watt FM stereo transmitter was used for the radio projects in 1995 and 1997. Ryakuga has loaned the NYC a 1-watt microtransmitter — suitable for small villages — while members seek funding for their own equipment.

The youth council's radio committee is seriously considering a proposal to implement a series of community transmitter projects around the country. The grassroots community transmitter approach — featuring local news and the discussion of issues — has already proven popular in two communities (Belair and Overland), making a case for the potential of youth community radio as a new model of FM radio programming throughout the country. Bobb reinforces this point saying that interactive, participatory community radio is "a powerful tool for educating people, building awareness, consciousness and people's involvement."

There are a number of local cultures co-existing in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines — from the Garifuna (the indigenous people of Sandy), to the local cultures of Union Island, Bequia, Barrouallie, or Kingstown

itself. The local nature of community transmitter projects means that each community would have the opportunity to express its differences on its own terms rather than hope for representation on a national station. Bobb provided a concrete example of the benefits of the portable model: although the current programming from Kingstown (including the weekly NYC program on government ra-

dio) is in English, programming in some communities would have to be in dialect — the people's language — helping sustain linguistic diversity.

What seems to be clear is the fit between community radio in general and the organizational goals of the youth council. "If you look at the structure of the council in SVG, and you look at the programming needs of the organization, it suggests that community radio is almost like something that should have happened," Bobb says.

"Community radio...would...challenge for change, create new possibilities and also create a greater possibility for communities to have a greater ownership of the youth programs that the NYC is presently engaged in," he adds.

So, what to do? In the short term, Colville says the NYC will start a process of community sensitization by doing radio demonstrations in various towns. Their latest broadcast was at the NYC's Biennial Conference of Delegates in Layou last November. While the precise unfolding of events is still to be determined, for now at least, NYC is clearly maintaining the direction of participatory mobile community radio projects.

As a fieldworker with Ryakuga Grassroots Communications of Newfoundland, Canada, Campbell has facilitated communications (radio, video, newsletter and photography) at the National Youth Council of SVG/Caribbean Federation of Youth work study camps since 1991. See <http://www.web.net/~ryakuga> for more information.

**"Even many "official" decisions are made by word of mouth negotiation."**

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