

MAX JEAN LOUIS

Haiti

- *CCP Fellow 2021 at the German radio station Multicult.fm*
- *Journalist, blogger, filmmaker and social entrepreneur*
- *Founder of the community radio station Guacanagaric*



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Max, you studied film in Paris and then worked for an NGO in Canada. In 2017, you founded the Radio Guacanagaric in the North of Haiti – what led you there?

In 2011, I founded a non-profit organisation in the north of Haiti. I could see there would be challenges there but also recognised the potential. It's a very dynamic area with a new industrial park and university, so thousands of people moved there in recent years. Together with colleagues from the NGO that I worked for, I founded Radio Guacanagaric to offer an alternative radio station. The name comes from an ancient Indigenous Chief, who welcomed Christopher Columbus when he arrived in the Caribbean in 1492. He lived in the area where our radio is located.

What topics does your radio programme focus on?

It's a community radio, so besides broadcasting the news we also aim to educate and empower people. We practice constructive journalism and want to raise awareness for sensitive and disregarded topics such as natural disasters, women's rights, and diversity. I also want to focus more on the topic of mental health and talk about vulnerability, selfcare and anxiety. We have awareness trainings for our team as well. It is a joint adventure!

What are the main challenges you face in your work?

Because of the ongoing political and economic crisis in Haiti and the Covid-19 pandemic, we had some financial challenges. We are careful about what funding money we accept because we want to stay independent, so we don't take grants from the government or companies that don't align with our philosophy. Another challenge is finding staff in this area of the country

and people who dare to speak up and work for an independent radio station.

You are absolving your digital CCP Fellowship with the German radio station Multicult.fm – what are your expectations and experiences?

What I like about multicult.fm is that it is a small radio station like ours, so we understand each other. We are planning to do a show where I will talk about my home country and my experiences abroad. There will also be other podcasts, and I would like to present some music from Haiti.

The assassination of the Haitian president was another critical moment this year, and therefore I am thankful to be able to talk about topics such as freedom of the press, civil society and conflict resolution with my host organisation but also the other CCP Fellows in the workshops offered by CCP. I will certainly never forget this year!

<https://www.guacanagaricfm.com/>

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