

# TV AROUND THE GLOBE

**C**anadian children love to watch Bibi the puppet and his human friend Genevieve on the French-language cable Canal Famille. Children all over Europe enjoy this Canadian production on TV5, an international French-language channel that is one of the big success stories of La Francophonie. This channel is truly a window on the world, offering news and entertainment via satellite to viewers in North America, Europe, Africa and the Caribbean.

TV5 started in 1983 when three French channels, along with French-language channels in Belgium and Switzerland, formed a company to distribute programs by satellite throughout Europe and the Mediterranean region.

The idea of television as a means of communication among people who

share the French language and as an instrument for multilateral co-operation appealed to La Francophonie leaders. Summit participants supported and expanded the project.

In 1986, the Canadian and Québec television industries formed a consortium and joined TV5. As well as the CBC, Radio Québec, TV-Ontario, and several private broadcasters are involved. Broadcasts started in 1988.

Today, through cable, TV5 Québec-Canada reaches 1.6 million homes in Québec, 3.4 million in the rest of Canada, and another 3 million in the United States. TV5 Europe reaches 40 countries in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. TV5 Africa and TV5 Latin America and the Caribbean have been on the air since 1992.

Eventually, TV5 may also reach other countries.

From the Canadian perspective, viewers here have a chance to watch international programs, while our producers benefit from exposure abroad.

Canada has also played a big part in getting TV5 Africa on the air. ACCT pays the cost of African programming contributions to TV5. Funds were also

set aside to put TV5 Africa on satellite.

TV5 Africa staff worked with Canadian experts to study a cheap method of distribution through microwave transmission in Dakar, Senegal. Now at least 5000 homes in that city receive TV5.

Gilles Desjardins, vice-president of DTI Telecom Inc., a Montréal consulting company, helped get the project started with Canadian government funding. His solution was to use a satellite dish to receive the TV5 signal from space. From the dish, the signal goes to a large antenna, which re-transmits it. Any home with an inexpensive antenna can then receive the programs. So far, similar projects have been installed in the largest cities of Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin and Ivory Coast.

"TV5 is a big success in Africa," he says, because, while colour TV sets are popular consumer items (more people have TV sets than telephones), there isn't much choice in programming. In some countries, there is only one national TV station, broadcasting for a limited time each day.

And, Desjardins suggests, "opening a country to the world" can help strengthen newly-established democracies. ∞

