

CHAPTER 8

Case Studies

**Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng; Mfundo Majozi; Jean-Pierre Ilboudo;
Jennifer Sibanda.**

CASE STUDY 1

The Development of Community Media in Uganda

Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng
ISIS
Kampala, Uganda

Information has become a sophisticated commodity, and the value attached to it has apparently begun to affect other related economic activities. The information technology has proliferated to the level that we no longer talk about nuclear or star wars but about information wars. In all this, the development prospects have largely become linked to the ability to impart and access information and all the processes that go with it. Nations, societies, communities, groups and individuals today appreciate information as a magical wand to give an insight into development related intricacies.

Then what is the problem? The problem is the realisation by the majority of the population in Africa, the rural, illiterate, disabled, that their opportunities to share,

disseminate and manipulate the information available to them for profit and advancement is still a myth. Communities therefore perceive community media as a system of communication that could solve the fundamental problems of development and ensure that correct information reaches those who need it most.

In Uganda, community media are seen as appropriate alternatives to the serious failures of the public service broadcasting. However, the option that the Ugandan government took to open up airwaves to non-bureaucratic monopolies has not improved the situation, especially among the poor, the women and persons living in rural areas. Given Uganda's political history and the interruption in the development of traditional media in favour of media that would keep the colonial *status quo* in place, the majority of Ugandan communities have remained uninformed and, therefore, lacked empowerment. Most of them cannot make well-informed choices about important aspects of their needs. Therefore it is pertinent that this situation is addressed so as to make democratic and manageable community media accessible to all communities.

Structures of Media in Uganda

To understand why the situation of community media in our rural areas has remained what it is today, it is necessary to have an overview of the existing media in Uganda and the existing guidelines and policies that govern these media.

Pre-Colonial Era: Ugandan communities in the pre-colonial era had community media structures that enabled interaction between the rulers and the ruled, as well as interaction among all community members. The interactive nature of this communication allowed individuals and groups to live in a dignified and harmonised manner and brought the ideas of the rulers and the ruled together to be discussed within the community so that consensus could be reached in the majority of cases.

Colonial Era: Colonialism established the present information and communication infrastructure with the introduction of regular radio broadcasting in 1954¹. Though radio broadcasting was intended to solve important social and economic problems in the development of the colonial territory, it was also important in linking capital enterprises in both countries for marketing the coloniser's products and

encouraging the local people to produce more raw materials for the industries of the colonisers, and for the control of power. Radio broadcasting also had the public service role of educating, informing and entertaining. With changes that took place in the social, economic and political structures, the rural indigenous communication structures were isolated and had no linkages to the institutionalised structure of communication.

The 1958 report of the committee of inquiry into the organisation, policy and operation of the government's information services² proposed an information policy which began a fundamental shift in the involvement of communities in media policies. This policy excluded the majority of the people from participating in originating, processing, producing and disseminating information; it left the information and communication process in the domain of government so that it became vertical rather than horizontal in nature. Thus the present top-down information and communication strategy was created by the colonial misconception of the role the population could play in the information and communication process, if they were to participate at the initial stages.

Post Independence 1960s-71: After independence, successive governments maintained the colonial legacy with similar beliefs that media were only useful to the government machinery which is to provide relevant information and ideas to the masses. In general, the governments did not attempt to expand media linkages to rural areas, nor to involve rural communities in the communication process. The most notable community media of the late 1960s were the introduction of educational programmes for schools radio, the mobile libraries and cinemas which were aimed at rural communities. However, even these initiatives did not take root because the rural communities were not in the first instance involved in the initiation of the programmes.

The Era of Idi Amin 1971-1980s: Idi Amin's dictatorial era is remembered for the destruction it did to the social, economic and political development of the country. The information and communication sector was one of those most affected since the rule was by decree and thus the freedom of opinion and expression by the people of Uganda, let alone marginalised groups, disappeared. Instead, the military regime opted for prestigious investments which were targeted to foreign audiences, like the construction of the 250 kW Radio Uganda external broadcasting service at

Soroti in Eastern Uganda and the Arua Domsat-B Satellite in Northern Uganda³. These developments were not appropriate for the needs of the people in the communities where they were established. To date, they remain white elephants, and even post-Amin governments have made no effort to rectify the situation.

The Present Situation: The information and communication systems and services have remained to a large extent, urban centred, fragmented, individualistic and elitist in nature. They leave the majority of the population, the labour force of the economy, uninformed, illiterate and with no effective means of imparting and accessing relevant information. Coupled with the diversity of languages, weak economy and endless armed conflicts, even the few systems and services that are in place have remained too ineffective to support and encourage development, especially among the marginalised rural communities.

However, with the coming of the global liberalisation and privatisation of electronic communications, the present government, in an effort to improve the situation of information communication for the people of Uganda, liberalised the broadcasting media⁴ and privatised the telecommunications sector⁵. It was perhaps hoped that new actors in the communications field, such as private radios, new telecommunications and telephone services, would take services nearer to those who need them most.

The dream did not come true. The commercial attitude of the new players has made them to decide to remain where the market is, that is, in the urban centres; hence they have made little or no improvement to the situation of the disadvantaged poor in rural communities. This has left the information and communication system to serve the few who can afford it and are urban centred, while leaving rural communities more as recipients than participants in the sharing of ideas, processing and dissemination of information for development. To date, most of the means of communication have remained in the hands of the government and a few foreign conglomerates.

The 1998 UNESCO/UNDP/Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Study

Having realised that the liberalisation and privatisation of the media have left many gaps in enabling communities in Uganda to access and disseminate information, the government tried to find ways and means of correcting the situation. A good

example is the multi-purpose rural centres, which have been established with assistance from UNESCO and the International Development Research Centre. One of the aims of these tele-centres is to provide a physical focus for communal debates and action on a self help basis. It is important to note, however, that there is a lot to be done to enable these centres to effectively provide appropriate services to these communities, especially to the women who have not related well to the centres. They still perceive them as government institutions of use only to literates.

In 1998, UNESCO, UNDP and the Government of Uganda conducted a study intended to assist in the formulation of an information and communication policy framework for sustainable development, with specific emphasis on the disadvantaged communities and groups. One of the objectives of the study was to conduct a survey in 12 pilot districts: Arua, Bugiri, Gulu, Kampala, Kumi, Mbale, Mbarara, Moroto, Mpigi, Mubende, Nakasongola and Kisoro.

The survey aimed to investigate the following aspects:

1. the available sources of information for development in the rural communities;
2. the adequacy, relevance and accessibility of these sources of information;
3. information gaps between information users and providers;
4. problems faced by rural communities in receiving and disseminating information;
5. the role played by decentralisation in the collection and dissemination of information;
6. the channels used to receive and disseminate information by the rural communities;
7. the training needs of the rural communities in the collection, processing, designing and dissemination of information; and
8. the government's role in collecting, processing and disseminating information for development to the rural areas.

The survey findings indicated that people in rural areas have about 30 types of sources of information available to them, though these varied from one locality to another, and they ranged from modern to traditional media. In all areas, radio was the leading source of information, followed by interpersonal interaction. Libraries did not feature, even among rural literates, and teachers indicated that, although

libraries are useful to schools and a few literate people in the communities, they no longer provide up-to-date relevant information. There were shacks serving as video halls in communities without electricity in 11 districts, though there were complaints about the content of the video shows.

Most of the radio stations available were regarded as limited in terms of adequacy and relevance. Radio Uganda, which was the most accessible among the modern media, had some development programmes that were relevant to the day-to-day needs, e.g. in agriculture and health. However, reception was poor and the timing of the broadcasts, especially those relevant to women listeners, was inappropriate, as was the language – English. FM radio station programmes were not development oriented and thus were irrelevant to the community needs. In addition, there were complaints about the use of bad language which, it was asserted, would destroy the cultural norms and dignity of their communities. The few developmental programmes on some of these FM stations were out of the reach of rural communities since access to a telephone is needed to participate in the few development dialogues.

The only FM radio station with a positive rating was Radio Freedom in Gulu district which was established in 1996. It was considered to be a community radio as it covered a specific target community using the local indigenous language. The focus of the programmes is on conflict resolution which is the major concern of the people in this area. It involves community members in the production of programmes that relate to their immediate needs. This has given confidence to the people who now know it as their radio. The programmes were said to be very selective in what was disseminated and messages were aired in various forms, e.g. songs about the ills of war, discussions to mobilise innocent people to abandon insurgency, dialogues on how to rebuild Acholi-land so as to enable people at all levels to internalise the messages. Radio Freedom was observed to have brought some peace in Acholi.

Print media were found to be limited in terms of their coverage. Although the circulation of some newspapers was quite wide, very few were available in rural areas since few could afford to pay for them. With poor road communications, newspapers only reach those who can read and afford the newspapers two or three days after publication. The language of communication was said to be inappropriate for the most community members, especially women, felt that some of types of articles were offensive.

Although television was highly regarded, it was not a common source of information among the rural communities. The few who have struggled to acquire television complained about the language and content which violated the dignity and cultural norms of their communities and did not seem to answer most of their information needs. The cost of batteries was a problem and even among the few who have television sets, many could not afford to change the batteries regularly.

Postal services were reported to be slow and many communities had no service at all which they regarded as a form of marginalisation, denying them even the ability to use the services. Telecommunication services, telephone, fax, e-mail and Internet were not available in rural areas due to a lack of infrastructure. There was a call for government to provide these services since they are the quickest way of interacting with relevant actors involved with the development of their communities, i.e. their representatives in Parliament.

Interpersonal sources of information were found to be the most interactive among the rural population but information distortion was identified as a major drawback to the use of this type of communication. Folk media which are rooted in rural communities was found still to be a strong source of information. It was noted that the abandoning of community centres had reduced the impact of folk media, especially drama, which were limited to urbanised centres and only treated as a source of entertainment.

Seminars and workshops have an impact that is limited to specific target groups who regrettably do not share the information they acquire with the rest of the community members. Participation among the targeted groups, especially of women, was poor, largely because most seminars are conducted in English which is not well used even among the literates living in rural communities. Another factor was the created culture of connecting allowances to seminars and workshops. This has had an effect on the attendance at valuable local rural seminars organised by local leaders who have no such budgets.

Information on agriculture, AIDS, hygiene, immunisation, political campaigns and income generating activities was considered appropriate. However, there was need for a continuous flow of information and awareness raising to enable rural communities to fully understand the messages. At the same time, there were reservations about the timing of some radio advertisements (e.g. on the use of con-

doms), and about musicians with indecent dancing attires which would increase immorality, and opinions that children should not be exposed to such shows/films. The mushrooming of video halls was decried as was the negative influence of videos on the psycho-social development of the youth since violent and pornographic films and anti-social behaviour like drug abuse dominate the screens in the makeshift video halls throughout the country.

The survey indicated that the major language of communication by most of the structured sources of information was considered inappropriate and that local dialects or languages should be used instead. Communities called on government to help them set up their own local radio stations. The country's gender sensitive constitution of 1995 calls for women to be accorded full and equal dignity with men and the government has committed itself to enabling women to realise their full potential and advancement.⁶ However, women in Uganda are far from realising the right to access information relevant to their needs and to freely express their views and problems due to some of the reasons already highlighted.

The mainstream media has done very little to help women organisations and women at large to demystify stereo-typical thinking. Instead, they have actually fuelled the marginalisation of women which has affected women's ability for self determination. Although there are many women's organisations making an effort to change the status quo, e.g. Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), Uganda Media Women's Association and the Uganda Women Writers Association among others, it is very difficult, especially in the print media, for these organisations to have adequate space to disseminate information that would change attitudes in the society. In most cases, the information produced by these organisations was not seen to be marketable or even as news. Due to the high illiteracy rate of 59.1% in rural areas, and 23.7% in urban areas⁷, the majority of women in Uganda cannot access the information that is available through the print and electronic media.

From the survey findings, channels for dissemination were found to be synonymous with the sources of information, but with variations in transmission, as indicated above. Districts whose areas cover islands such as Bugiri district in Eastern Uganda indicated delays in receiving information from both district and central government. The communities in this particular district have easy access to radio

and television from neighbouring Kenya, and they use Kiswahili which is a national language in both Kenya and Tanzania. Thus their social and cultural behaviour is more similar to that of Kenya than Uganda. These islands are so isolated that the mainland population knows very little about what goes on there.

The following inadequacies in the available channels of communication were highlighted: the language barrier; lack of resources; illiteracy and therefore ignorance of the role of information in development; timeliness of official letters and newspapers which arrive too late and developmental programmes that are aired very late in the night; lack of trained information personnel; distortion of information; lack of appropriate information and communication techniques and postal services that are limited to urban centres; male local council chairpersons who do not invite women to local council meetings; and competition among information providers affecting the flow of information within rural communities.

After the study had been completed, a workshop of key players in the production and dissemination of information based in rural communities was held in Kampala to react to its findings. The workshop found the results of the study valuable and that, although government has until now attempted to play a role as a facilitator and co-ordinator of information for development, it is still a long way from providing disadvantaged groups with appropriate, timely, relevant and adequate information to win the fight against poverty. This, it was argued, is due to inadequate or inappropriate content and channels of communication for the rural situation. In view of the above, the following key observations and recommendations were presented in an effort to come up with an objective and strategic information and communication policy to serve all the people of Uganda⁸.

1. Any attempt to formulate communications policies must begin with a clear definition of the Ugandan development approach. It should be formulated with the participation of the whole population to ensure that it caters for existing needs and promotes the well-being of the country's population.
2. Policy makers in Uganda need to consider information and communication as a priority area in national development. Any attempt to make information and communication part of development and poverty eradication will only be successful if the spirit among policy and decision makers and the publicity is supportive.

3. Policy decisions for national public information and communication structures have to be based on people's real needs and approaches. Thus regular assessment of the needs, such as that undertaken by the study, is crucial. Moreover decision-making about implementation procedures should also take place in consultation with the population concerned.
4. An Information and Communication Development Policy approach entails the establishment of an independent public information and communication structure, the facilitation of low-cost access to public sources of information, and improvement of people's communication capacities. It also requires the support of an institutional framework with professional and well trained officers who can recommend guidelines for communication and development policy reforms.
5. Financial resources are a pre-requisite for the effective implementation of an information and communications policy. Adequate funds have to be made available and donor agencies have to be attracted to provide financial and/or technical assistance for implementing communications policy.
6. Folk-art has proven to be very efficient in participatory communication. There is need therefore to optimise and expand the existing alternative traditional infrastructure by stimulating and supporting national and local cultural performers, encouraging and subsidising the use of small audio-visual equipment for communicating development information, promoting the creation of community media (multi-purpose centres, community radio stations), re-establishing community centres in all districts and enhancing them as hubs of communication exchange on development issues.
7. Given the convergence of information technologies, libraries, archives and museums are capable of improving and maximising their services as gateways and information and documentation places where other communication channels are available (TV, radio, Internet and folk arts). There is need, therefore, to expand the availability of the library services via innovative and interactive approaches as perceived by the communities, and create one-stop information centres at all district levels which would network the different information providers.
8. The local council organisational framework in Uganda is an important structure which, if assisted, is able to generate participation in the dissemination of information for development, as well as being an ideal model to generate feedback

and enhance two-way communication. Priority should be given to the efficient use of local council and institutional networks such as health centres, agricultural extension networks, schools and workers labour groups for information dissemination and data collection.

9. It is clear that market forces in the communication industry will not satisfy government's aim of every Ugandan having access to information for development, especially the poor in rural areas. It is important, therefore, that the government commits itself to development of universal service and coverage to help achieve rural development and poverty eradication. To achieve this, the government needs to put communication infrastructure at the centre of its development projects.
10. The rural community respondents indicated that they lack skills in the collection, processing, repackaging and dissemination of information and that there is need for empowerment and technical training of all actors at all levels. Given that there are multiple modes of communication, there is need to co-ordinate and ensure collaboration among training institutions of these various media.
11. Information without the relevant infrastructure to disseminate it has no value per se. In the absence of reliable and extensive communications infrastructure, information for development and poverty eradication can not be successful. Communications infrastructure is a strategic source for economic growth and for development. The goal must, therefore, be to improve and maintain the current infrastructure and to extend it to all of Uganda's inhabitants. One of the most pressing challenges, however, is the constraint on finances to invest in infrastructure. To maximise the use of scarce resources, restructuring of the communications sector is a critical feature. Also the arrival of new communications technologies such as the Internet can empower local communities further, but should be seen as a complementary to the existing local communications outlets.

Conclusion

Community media are applicable and reliable means of communication that satisfy the needs of a viable communication process. It is important to stress that modern media have very important attributes that could be relied on to perfect

communication in rural communities. However, it is crucial to note that the use of community media complements and reinforces the use of modern media in communication.

Notes

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The Development of Community Media in South Africa

Mfundo Majozi

NATIONAL COMMUNITY RADIO FORUM

Johannesburg, South Africa

Background

Community media in South Africa have come a long way. They have emerged as the voices of the oppressed and have played a significant role in informing and mobilising communities, at the grassroots level, against the oppressive system of apartheid. Progressive media were banned in South Africa until the early 1990s. Before this time, vibrant underground communication existed in the form of graffiti, pamphlets and posters. The realisation came that mass media go beyond the printed media, and indeed printed media have their own limitations as they require a certain level of literacy. Electronic media were options to expand the information and mobilisation campaigns of underground movements, and they proved to be an effective and cheap means of communication.

A number of organs of civil society, both in and outside the country, played a significant role in breaking the monopoly of the airwaves exercised by the then South African Broadcasting Co-operation (SABC) which was state owned and controlled and served as the mouthpiece of the Nationalist Party as well as the government propaganda machinery. Among the initiatives by exiled South Africans to force changes in the country was the Freedom of the Airwaves conference held in the Netherlands which began to conceptualise South Africa's future broadcasting environment. Recommendations from that gathering laid down the foundation of the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act, which includes a serious commitment to community broadcasting.

The National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) was officially launched in December 1993 after years of advocacy for a sector representative body. Its role is to lobby for the diversification of the air waves and the creation of a dynamic broadcasting environment in South Africa. This is to be achieved through the establishment of community radio stations throughout South Africa. The aims and objectives of the NCRF are to:

1. promote the ideals, principles and role of community radio as an integral part of the broadcasting environment of a democratic South Africa;
2. promote the participation of historically disadvantaged communities in all levels of community radio;
3. facilitate the establishment and development of community radio stations throughout the country;
4. advocate the role of community radio within the institutions responsible for legislation and regulating broadcasting policy as well as to popularise the value of community radio within the reconstruction and development of South Africa;
5. facilitate the funding, training and resource sharing needed by community radio stations;
6. encourage networking and co-operation between community media structures; and
7. promote the production of high quality and innovative programming from diverse sources to serve local programming goals.

The NCRF is a membership-based organisation representing a total of 75 stations. These range from stations that are on air and broadcasting, through to mere community radio initiatives which are at the early stages of their development. The NCRF renders a wide range of services to its affiliated members, from organisational development, training on management, marketing and advertising through to news gathering and programming. All of these are done in collaboration with accredited institutions in South Africa. The NCRF seeks funding from donor agencies to execute its plans and programmes.

The South African broadcasting landscape has seen significant and interesting changes over the past five years, with the establishment of an independent regulator to ensure that broadcasting is free from state interference. The Independent

Broadcasting Authority (IBA) was established through an Act of Parliament which guarantees its independence, which is also guaranteed in the constitution. The IBA's primary role is to level the broadcasting playing field and regulate the air-waves in the public's interest. This is achieved through very strict licensing conditions. Since its establishment, the IBA has licensed over 80 community radio stations, 10 independent commercial radio stations and one free-to-air television station. It has also sold off five former SABC radio stations to independent commercial operators, and re-licensed the subscription-based commercial television operator.

Recently, the South African president signed into law the new Broadcasting Act. The NCRF played a significant role in its formulation and shape. This law commits the South African government to community radio and this has been shown by the support which the government is making by providing basic infrastructure to a few deserving community radio initiatives. The support however is limited and the NCRF looks to the international community for further assistance in this regard. The government support will need to be augmented by the provision of human resource development programmes as well as self-sustainability programmes.

The broadcasting law also establishes the National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa (NEMISA) which will, together with industry players, develop a human resource development programme and formulate curriculum, set standards and deliver certain training programmes for the industry. At present the broadcasting stakeholders in South Africa are discussing the formulation of a policy frame work for the regulation of satellite broadcasting. Community radio through NCRF is also in the forefront of these discussions with the regulator and other stakeholders.

Despite these positive national initiatives, community radio exists under very tight and stringent competition. Indeed, all media are competing for survival. Community radio has been advised by international donor agencies to develop self-sustaining mechanisms as they will not be able to fund them continually especially now that South Africa has a popular legitimate government. The reality on the ground is that things are not all that rosy for community radio as the government must give priority to the provision of basic services for its citizens - water,

primary health care, electricity and housing – and support for community media has been pushed down the government’s priority list of things to do.

Given the multitude of information sources, people exercise their right to choose. They listen to community radio not because it is there but because it provides good quality, locally relevant programming which has a definite community flavour. In addition, the culture of ownership and control of the media by communities is only settling in slowly.

The main sources of funding for a community radio station are advertising and donor funding. There is tight competition for the former whilst for the latter, stations must show a clear business plan and a self-sustainability programme to be free of donor dependency over a certain period of time. This is a very challenging situation for the community radio sector now that every one is pondering over whether the economy is mature enough to sustain all of these players.

The NCRF believes the South African economy is mature enough at present to sustain the current players. However, the recent economic slow down caused by the global economic upheavals has contributed negatively to the South African advertising industry which in turn reduced their advertising budget, particularly in the so-called non-traditional or new media which includes community radio and the Internet. These were the two media sectors which suffered most from cutbacks of advertising revenues. Advertising agencies preferred the traditional stable media with which they have developed certain relationships over the years.

Community media in South Africa need to be seen in the context of the following macro-broadcasting environment.

The Economic Framework: In the five years since the first democratic elections, the Government has transformed South Africa through a range of national initiatives, specifically the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and a macro economic strategy. The key aspects of the RDP are to satisfy basic needs through the provision of basic services, develop human resources, expand the economy and address racial and gender inequalities in ownership, employment and skills, and democratise the state and society through transparent and accountable governance. The government’s macro economic strategy is designed to stimulate economic growth as well as redistribute wealth and basic services over the medium term.

Since 1994, South Africa has become increasingly integrated into the global economy. Trade barriers have been steadily lowered and industries that were previously closed to local and foreign participation such as broadcasting have seen increasing levels of investments and productivity. As the service sectors continue to gain in importance within the economy, broadcasting has grown from 0.27% of GDP in 1990 to 0.6% in 1997. In 1998, the total size of the South African broadcasting market is estimated to have been about ZAR 6 billion, from advertising, subscription revenues and licence fees, with further growth estimated for the sector in 1999.

The Social Framework: The legislation governing broadcasting in South Africa includes responsibility by the regulator for addressing social objectives including providing access to under-served and historically disadvantaged groups. Other public interest policy objectives identified by the regulator are the promotion of universal access to communication technologies, content and services, freedom of expression and creative endeavour, effective and sustainable competition, protection of a distinctive role for community broadcasters.

The Legislative Framework: The fundamental principles of the South African Constitution and the Broadcasting Act are to guarantee the freedom of expression and the journalistic, creative and programming independence of broadcasters. These principles recognise that the South African broadcasting system comprises community, public and commercial elements which make use of the radio frequencies that are public property. It provides, through its programming, a public service necessary for the maintenance of South African identity, universal access, equality, unity and diversity.

The framework further affirms that the South African broadcasting services are owned and controlled by South Africans, and, realising that the broadcasting system must reflect the identity and diverse nature of South Africa, are controlled and managed by persons or groups of persons from a diverse range of communities, including persons from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. They must therefore reflect the multilingual and diverse nature of South Africa by promoting the entire spectrum of cultural backgrounds and official languages. They should also encourage the development of South African expression by providing a wide range of programming that refers to South African

opinions, ideas, values and artistic creativity by displaying South African talent in radio and television programming.

The South African broadcasting industry is undergoing very rapid changes and developments. It is through a positive political will and a patriotic commitment that all South Africans move together for a common purpose. Community media in Africa are here to stay, and it is up to all in the continent to prove that community media are indeed a necessity and an important catalyst in the African renaissance.

**Local Community Radio in Southern Mali: Implementation Methodology
and Lessons Learned**

Jean-Pierre Ilboudo

EXTENSION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION SERVICE
FAO, Rome, Italy

The Southern Mali zone stretches over part of Sikasso and part of the Ségou, Koulikoro and Kayes regions. The area has an adequate water supply and the populations are self-sufficient in terms of food. The area produces cotton and food crops, particularly market garden produce. It is in this area that FAO, with financial support from the Netherlands, provided assistance to grass-root communities to establish four local community radio stations, to be managed by the local communities themselves. The four rural community radios have recently come on the air, bringing to over one hundred the number of radios in the rich, varied and pluralistic radio communication landscape which now characterises this part of Western Africa.

The project, which started in June 1997, brought concrete results after 18 months, during which a methodology for the installation of radio stations in the rural environment was developed. This case study describes this experience and retraces the different stages through which these community radios were established.

Project Background

Following the events of March 1991, political pluralism was established in Mali. It was the end of the state monopoly of information and communications. This led to an explosion of the media, and most particularly of radio communi-

cation. The project to re-launch rural radio thus benefited from an unprecedented climate of liberalisation of the wave-bands on the part of the political authorities in Mali. This liberalisation was accompanied by:

1. the definition of a national development communication policy, as a result of the workshop organised by the Mali government on 4-11 October 1993, with the technical and financial support of FAO and UNDP;
2. the adoption of a master plan for the development of radio in Mali over the period 1993-1995 on the basis of studies funded by UNDP, ITU and UNESCO which made an inventory of all existing radio and television frequencies over the whole territory of Mali;
3. the start of the first phase of the rehabilitation of rural radio in Mali under a Technical Co-operation Project funded from FAO resources. This phase carried out studies to identify sites for the establishment of rural radios in Northern and Southern Mali, defined the legal statutes for rural radio, trained 106 radio agents and produced hundreds of radio programmes;
4. the birth of association radio networks (Jamana, Kayira, Finzancan), of community radios (Kadiolo, Niono, Bandiagara, Kidal) funded jointly by the ACCT and by NGOs during 1991 to 1994;
5. the birth of hundreds of associations and NGOs throughout Mali after March 1991; and
6. the formulation of a decentralisation policy after 1992.

The project aimed to create four rural community radios at Bougouni, Kolondièba, Koutiala and Bla in the southern zone of Mali. By means of multi-thematic and multi-disciplinary programmes, the project was to support activities for the protection of mothers and children, the promotion of women and environmental education and protection. It was also to contribute to food security by transferring know-how, skills and technologies by means of the rural radio, the establishment of a master plan for the development of rural radio in Mali, and the decentralisation of the radio medium in accordance with the Mali national communication policy.

After a satisfactory first phase, FAO contacted the Netherlands which agreed to fund the second phase of the project for a total of US\$ 700,876. The second phase of the project focused on three major objectives: (i) to develop the mech-

anisms and sustainability of rural local radio and to establish adequate operational structures; (ii) to provide rural local radios with the legal instruments and the regulatory administrative framework required to sustain their activities with their own funds; and (iii) to create social interactivity by means of the participation of the people of Southern Mali in the design, preparation, production, broadcast and evaluation of multi-thematic and multi-disciplinary radio programmes.

The expected outputs from this second phase were: the sustainability of rural radio thanks to the participatory involvement of rural populations in the management of rural community radio; the adoption of a legal statute for rural radio and the drafting and adoption of an administrative framework; equipment for the four associations of Bougouni, Kolondièba, Koutiala and Bla to set up rural local community radios managed by members of the respective communities.

It is important to stress that the project for the establishment of four rural radios in Southern Mali was preceded by a first-phase project aimed at rehabilitating rural radio in Mali, which was suffering from stagnation, and a lack of personnel qualified in the interactive and participatory techniques for radio programme production. Between May 1993 and June 1995, in addition to its basic activities (training, programme production in the field and a study of the legal statute for rural radio carried out by the firm DIALLO in 1994), the project conducted a study of the radio stations to be established in the whole country in parallel and sometimes in synergy with the ITU (International Telecommunications Union), UNESCO and SOTELMA (Société des Télécommunications du Mali) to provide a master plan for the development of radio and television in Mali. This study lists all the radio and television FM frequencies in Mali, thus facilitating the establishment of FM radio and/or television stations in the whole country.

It was on the basis of this study and at the request of the Government that FAO developed a methodology for the establishment of community radios. From the experience acquired in the field, it is noted that the choice of the personnel selected (whether local or not) for the initial establishment of local community radio is of vital importance. The staff should have the following qualities: be communicative and know how to listen, have the required social experience, be of good moral standing, and have a conception of the community approach.

Different stages of the methodology for the establishment of community radios

There are at least 15 stages and/or activities for the establishment of community radios which are described below.

1. *Awareness sessions in the places destined to have a radio station:* Several awareness sessions were carried out by means of frequent field missions. Allowing as they do for explanations, exchanges and sometimes even confrontations, these sessions aimed at consultation and dialogue with the whole local community and involved all the social and professional elements of the area.

In the case of Southern Mali, the farmers' associations and organisations, the women's associations and organisations, the NGOs and the public authorities, notably those related to rural development, were identified and contacted. They participated in the meetings which focused on rural radio, addressing the questions: Is there a demand? What do the local populations want? What does it mean to have a radio at community level? How do you manage it? What will the radio talk about?

Strategically it was necessary to have the initial support of the local authorities and the Compagnie Malienne de Développement des Textiles (CMDT). Both these structures accepted the basic principles of the project. Thus, in all the four towns, the Commandants de cercle (the head of the administrative sector) mobilised their grassroots administrators (the borough/parish chiefs) who relayed the information to the grassroots communities. With a view to promoting greater involvement on the part of village associations, the CMDT invited the project co-ordinator to attend several regular meetings with village associations and CMDT officials so as to explain the principles of community radio, its management and the importance of the participation of local populations in the establishment of radio stations. All these activities together contributed to achieving the required mobilisation at a local level and facilitated the field work. In towns like Kolondièba where NGOs are present, Save the Children and Helvetas were informed and they participated in the meetings. Today these NGOs are providing support for the radio station.

This first stage is the most important. The whole process of establishing a local community radio depends on its success.

2. *Establishment of management and programme committees:* Within each “circle” or administrative unit, a general assembly of representatives of the different social and professional backgrounds was held. The representatives came from the rural world (village associations and chamber of agriculture), the CMDT as partners, the local administration, the local development committee, the NGOs, women’s associations, youth associations, and other civil groups (trades, crafts, religions, etc.). Thus each interest group, each social and professional constituency was represented by its own delegates at the general assembly.

Since the management committee consists of 9-11 members, the general assembly decided to assign two to three posts to the rural world (farmers’ associations and chamber of agriculture), one post to the CMDT, two posts to women, one post to the local development committee, one post to the NGOs, one post to the chamber of commerce and crafts and one to the station chief.

3. *Building of appropriate premises by the community:* This stage must involve the local grassroots communities if the radio is to be their own. If they are not involved, it will not be possible for the community to appropriate or re-appropriate the radio and to identify with it.

In Southern Mali, the radio stations also received support from the local development committees and the NGOs. At Bougouni, for example, the local development committee, chaired by the “commandant de cercle”, signed a contract for the building of the radio premises with a local construction company for the sum of 18 million CFA francs, or US\$30,000. At Kolondièreba, two NGOs, Save the Children US and Helvetas, together with the local development committee funded the building with 8 million CFA francs, or US\$14,000. At Koutiala, the premises were built with funds from the local development committee for 17 million CFA francs, or US\$28,000. And at Bla, an old building (a local camp-site) was refurbished for about 3 million CFA francs, or US\$6,000. Nine months after the project started, the four towns had finished building the premises for their radio stations.

4. *Drafting of a provisional statute and administrative schedule for each site:* The administrative schedule of a local community radio regulates and guar-

antees the management and operations of the radio station. It defines the nature, the objectives, the management, the funding, the programming and the operation of the local radio.

However, there were problems with the statute and the administrative schedule from the start of the project. In accordance with the project document, the radio management committee in each town was to draft their own statute and administrative schedule, but the stations are still operating on the basis of provisional statutes and administrative schedules.

5. *Choice of radio programme animation and production personnel:* The staffing level of each community radio is limited to eight people (speakers, producers and technicians). They are paid from the start of operations on the basis of the radio's earnings. Salaries range from 20,000 CFA francs or US\$33 to 40,000 CFA francs or US\$66, with 20,000 CFA (US\$33) for the security guard, 30 000 CFA (US\$ 50) for the agents and 40 000 CFA (US\$66) for the station chief.

The personnel are not civil servants but radio staff members and they are recruited on the basis of written and oral tests. The conditions include: submitting an application, having achieved middle school qualification, being a local inhabitant, speaking the local language or languages, having solid ties with the area, signing a contract with the radio station, accepting to work in the rural environment, and taking the written and oral test. The organisation of the test is based on absolute transparency. The questionnaires are drafted and corrected under the supervision of the members of the management committee and results are given immediately afterwards. No complaints have arisen from the test.

6. *Selection and purchase of the equipment:* Engineers from the Office de radio-télévision Malienne (ORTM), with the help of a national agent (also from ORTM) and an expert from FAO studied and discussed the choice of all the equipment to ensure that it was technically suited to the context, the climate and the atmospheric conditions. The question of analogue or digital equipment was thoroughly discussed. Once all the parties had reached agreement, the selection was put up for international tender.
7. *Installation of the equipment:* The equipment was installed by national technicians and engineers who are in charge of its systematic and continuous maintenance. The project's four stations were set up between July 4 and

August 6, 1998. Four engineers proceeded with the connection of all the machines, the installation of the pylons and electric generators, the checking of the electrical circuits and the sound-proofing of the studios. The local communities provided the work-force and building materials such as cement, sand and gravel. Three engineers were paid by FAO while the fourth was paid by the local community.

8. *Training of the technical personnel and the management committees:* The CIERRO (Centre Interafricain d'Etudes en Radio Rurale de Ouagadougou), Africa's only centre specialising in rural radio, provided all the training for the technicians, animators and producers for the four stations. Five of the 11 members of each of the four management committees were also trained. This training course, which was held from September 6 to October 10, 1998, enabled the local stations to effectively launch their operations and management. The training programme included theoretical and practical courses on radio production techniques, programme animation, recording techniques, equipment operation and the administrative and financial management of radio stations.
9. *Study of the information and communication needs of the local populations:* This study is the foundation of all communication for development activities. No message can be developed if it is not based on the concerns of the local populations and does not address their needs. The study of these needs must be carried out using a participatory methods approach, stressing the needs of women and young people. It must be carried out before the production of radio programmes so as to provide the themes and the information sources for these programmes.
10. *Starting up the station:* Between late December 1998 and January 1999, the management committees authorised the start-up of the radio programmes and have monitored the stations' operations since then. Generally, to accustom the listeners to the signal, the station broadcasts popular and local music.
11. *Study of the extent of the electro-magnetic field:* This stage begins immediately after the start-up of the station and the broadcast of the first programmes. Indeed, like power and stability, range is one of the essential

characteristics of a transmitter and it is linked to a whole series of external phenomena such as geographical formations, the weather, the seasons, the height of the pylon and the type and gain of the antenna being used. There are the theoretical range and the practical (true) range. Determining a transmitter's range is commonly called measuring its field. This simply means determining the range of the signal and observing the obstacles it might encounter so as to make corrections and ensure the proper coverage of the desired areas.

12. *Setting up instruments of sustainability*: In addition to the management committee, which is the primary body to ensure sustainability by working to mobilise financial resources for the radio station, if one wants the station to be lasting and sustainable, it is necessary to create a local support movement. This is an association for the development of local radio with registered members, membership fees, general assemblies and a programme of activities which generate income.
13. *Study of the radio operation costs*: This is useful to prepare the local communities gradually to assume responsibility for all the aspects affecting the operational costs. Such a preparation must begin as soon as the radio starts to operate.
14. *Establishment of a listening and feedback system*: This stage consists of using existing structures to stimulate the audience to discuss the radio programmes with a view to eliciting criticisms, needs, wishes, requests. These are needed to improve the quality of the programmes and increase the participation of local populations in the design, drafting, production and monitoring of broadcasts. The creation of artificial listening structures must be particularly avoided.
15. *Establishment of impact monitoring and evaluation systems for radio programmes*: This is the weak link of local radios. Listeners' correspondence might seem sufficient, but in fact it is not. It is therefore urgent to prepare impact monitoring and evaluation forms. They can focus on three levels, depending on the purpose of the research. Impact monitoring and evaluation seeks to measure the audience of programmes broadcast, the influence they have on the attitudes and behaviour of the populations concerned, the knowledge input, and finally their influence on the social and economic environment (development) of the town or the region.

Lessons learned

The different stages described above are all equally important. Nearly two years after the project was launched, it must be recognised that the stages and activities implemented have led to the development of an integrated approach to community radio.

The lessons learned concerning the technical equipment are that spare parts must be available as soon as the equipment is installed, the range of the signal must be confirmed and there is need occasionally to re-orient the transmitter antennae for better coverage. It is essential for the management committees to be involved and committed in the generation of the resources required for the effective operation of the radio stations.

As far as the programmes are concerned, the young people want their programmes '48 hours a day'; and the introduction of specific themes and an increase of time on-air should be anticipated. Attempts are now being made to strengthen specific interest programmes, such as AIDS, small trade, family planning, nutrition, radio theatre and village life. The women were the first to see the real potential of local community radio. This being the case, they honourably accomplished their duties in the management and operation of the Bougouni, Kolondièba, Koutiala and Bla community radio stations, i.e. in conservative towns where male power characteristically predominates. Whether at the management, personnel, programming or decision-making level, the Southern Mali community radios have set themselves, as a priority, to deal with the real concerns of women. Currently, among the programmes broadcast by these radio stations are specific features on family planning, violence to women, AIDS and family life. These programmes have a wide audience and attract enthusiastic women listeners.

We women listen a lot to the radio: morning, noon and night. Because when you do not have information and knowledge on a subject and someone else who does gives them to you directly, without formality, as they do on the radio, it pleases the ear. We like to listen to programmes about marriage and married life, on house work and cooking, on hygiene; when you manage to understand all these subjects well, it gives something extra to your life. (Tenimba Samake, Sido village).

I like to listen to music programmes at night; it gives me great pleasure. (Fanta Doumbia, Blakala village).

Radio has brought freedom and independence to women, because it brings awareness to men whose mentality is backward and closed as regards women. It says out loud what we have to whisper. We welcome the clarity of the speakers and hope that all the programmes aimed at women will continue. (A 50 year-old from Kolondièba).

Although they are appreciated, programmes targeted at women are generally considered to be insufficient in terms of the number of hours dedicated to them: eight hours week in Kolondièba and Bla, and 12 hours a week in Bougouni and Koutiala, which is barely 20% of the cumulated time on-air average of 58 hours. This inadequacy can be explained by the newness of the stations themselves and the inexperience in radio broadcasting of the members of the management committees. The women's associations have, therefore, decided to become more involved in the management of the radio stations in all the towns with community radios by participating themselves, directly or indirectly, in the preparation and transmission of programmes so as to express their point of view. And the next objective of these local community radios is to increase the time dedicated to women's programmes on the basis of a participatory study of their information-communication needs.

Alongside this resolve for a greater involvement, the women have started a campaign to mobilise their members by explaining the usefulness of radio stations and the support they expect, such as financial contributions, to guarantee the survival of the radio stations. Women are thus quite determined to be heard. But do they have the means? There is one clear solution: for them to organise themselves by seeking information on participation in the production of programmes.

Greater participation of women in the management of radio stations has already begun. The activities under way will no doubt lead to a greater awareness of women's initiatives in fostering communication. It is hoped that the presence of women in the management committees and in the staff and the support of radio stations by women's associations will ensure better management for radio stations and will make them more sustainable in Southern Mali.

Conclusion

The time when private, commercial, association or community radios flourished in Africa coincided with the rise of political unrest, when radios belonging to associations and political parties served to claim freedom and democracy. From 1989 to

1990, certain countries, in drawing up their constitutions, made communication laws which authorise the creation of private radio stations. At the end of 1990 and the beginning of 1991, the first commercial radio in Burkina Faso was established under the name of Horizon FM. Other radios of a religious nature (three in Burkina Faso) appeared between 1992 and 1995. In Mali, it was only after the establishment of the state of rights in 1992 that several radio stations were established in both urban and rural areas. This trend will surely accelerate in Niger, Senegal and Cameroon where communication professionals, associations and rural communities are seeking greater freedom of expression.

Depending on their original vocation, radio stations have different political, cultural and social roles and functions. Some are used to link a village with its immigrant community (Kayes radio). Many are commercial radios which broadcast music and advertising. But all of them transmit service-related information programmes on health and the environment, making skilful use of national languages and local music. In fact, many of them are returning to the initial roles and uses of rural radio, paying greater attention to targeting their audiences: young people, women, farmers, fishermen or whole communities.

Civil society is gradually equipping itself with communication tools and one of the best of these is the radio, because it is one of the least expensive means of communication and populations can easily make it their own. The roles and uses of rural radio will be determined by what separates and unites community, public, private, religious, commercial radio services and the existing rural radios. The end of the monopoly opens the way to a sharing of roles. These will be determined by the freedom, the rules and the cohesion measures that are needed in the context of the media pluralism that is currently emerging in Africa.

The Development Through Radio Project

Jennifer Sibanda

FEDERATION OF AFRICAN WOMEN

Harare, Zimbabwe

The Development Through Radio (DTR) Project is a Communication for Development model which was initiated in Zimbabwe in 1988. This project is sometimes referred to as the Rural Listening Clubs (RRLCs); however, this is a misnomer as groups do not meet to just listen to a broadcast but they produce their own radio programmes which are in turn broadcast for them to listen and react to. In Zimbabwe there are currently over 60 DTR clubs with a number of unrecorded off-shoot clubs. This project has since been introduced in Angola; in the Eshowe District of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa; the Mpika District, Mfuwe constituency, Zambia; and in Nankumba Peninsula, Mangochi District, Malawi. The Federation of African Media Women-Southern African Development Community (FAMW-SADC) is spearheading the replication of the DTR Project in Southern.

The DTR project was started after the realisation by the Zimbabwe chapter of the Federation of African Media Women (FAMW-Z) that women and marginalised groups in Zimbabwe did not have access to the media. An analysis was made of the electronic and print media. The results showed that print media have serious limitations and could not offer the rural women a medium where they could deliberate their issues and those relating to their communities. The major limitation was that the dominant language of communication is English which is not understood by the majority of people in the rural areas of Africa. In addition, the print media

cannot reach most rural areas due to impassable roads and the high costs of delivering newspapers. Production of newspapers is centralised in urban areas and the cost of newspapers is extremely high and out of reach of rural communities.

Taking cognisance of the high illiteracy rates in Africa and the above constraints, FAMW-Z found that radio was the most appropriate mass communication medium to use in communicating the concerns of rural communities. It uses local languages which are understood by the majority of the population. It reaches most corners of the country, e.g. in Zimbabwe, most radio signals reach over 90% of the country. Radio sets are portable and can be taken anywhere. People can sit around a radio set to listen to a broadcast and women can listen to the radio whilst they are undertaking other chores. The radio receiver is still affordable by many people. Radio does not in general need electrical power points since batteries can be used to operate them. Recently, a radio has been developed which is powered by winding it up like a clock. This will enhance the listenership as women will not need to buy batteries, the cost of which can be very high in Africa.

FAMW-Z identified a number of partners who shared its vision and who could offer assistance that would ensure take-off of the project. UNESCO and FES were identified as funding partners. The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) was identified as a strategic partner due to its being the only broadcaster in the country. Moreover, the Broadcasting Act of 1957 which governs the electronic media gives monopoly of the airwaves to ZBC. This means that there cannot be any other player in broadcasting except the ZBC. However, the Act allows ZBC to work with other partners in encouraging and helping to forge development projects taking place in rural areas. Another partner that was identified was the Division of Mass Communication which now falls under the Harare Polytechnic. This institution was to offer training to rural communities on how to produce radio programmes. The Association of Women's Club (AWC) which has a vibrant network of women's clubs throughout Zimbabwe was also identified as a partner, which enabled FAMW-Z to utilise the existing structures in rural areas. Many partners have since assisted in the growth and expansion of the DTR project including the Netherlands Government, PANOS, Canadian International Development Agency and the Ford Foundation.

After identifying and meeting with these partners, the process was started of giving access to and through the media to women and other marginalised groups. This then led to the launch of the DTR project in Zimbabwe in 1988.

The Objectives of the DTR Project

The objectives of the DTR project are to demystify radio and encourage the habit of listening to the radio, to create and produce a series of radio programmes addressing the problems and priorities of development as identified by the rural populations in their discussion groups, and with the full participation of the communities. They are also to provide a two-way communication system between the DTR groups and other groups, to empower women and make them aware of their basic human rights, and to ensure the participation of women and other marginalised groups in economic and social development. Other objectives are to help the rural populations to learn to express themselves using radio, to provide an instrument for dialogue between the rural population and the administration and vice versa, to keep the rural population regularly informed of local, regional and national events and to provide listeners with practical information which will help to improve their cultural, health, economic, and social conditions.

How the DTR Project Operates

At the community level, the project is led by monitors who were appointed or elected by their own groups. These were trained in how to use the radio cassette recorder for producing radio programmes. They were also trained in how to design a message, how to carry out/facilitate discussions, and how to record the issues that have been articulated by the groups. The groups spell out the burning issues within communities. They discuss and prioritise these issues in terms of their importance. They then record the issues which might be political, economical, cultural or social in nature. These, in most cases need responses from various authorities in government, the parastatals, NGOs or the private sector.

The project supplies a radio, batteries and tapes to each group. This ensures that the groups meet as a group to produce the programmes. The women had noted that

they wanted to meet as a group as this enables those without radio to gain access to a radio. When women meet as a group they are able to reflect on issues that relate to the whole community. They then seek responses to the issues that affect them as a community, as women, or to the issues that affect children.

The DTR Project Co-ordinators collect the recorded audio tapes from the rural areas and also ensure that the radios are in good working condition. After picking up the recorded audio tapes from the groups, the co-ordinator listens to them at the broadcasting station. This enables him/her to listen to the issues that have been raised and to identify the various organisations that need to respond to them. He/she then seeks interviews with the respondents after which he/she packages the complete programme. This is the programme that will then go on air. The voices that are heard on the air are the voices of the women and those of the respondents.

The group listens to the broadcast on radio on a day and time which they themselves have chosen and which are convenient for the majority of the groups. The broadcast programme will carry issues articulated by their group and other DTR groups in other areas, districts or provinces/regions, and get responses to the questions and concerns that they raised when they packaged their programmes.

The DTR groups also do a lot of networking by talking to each other. They might ask for advice from other groups on a particular issue. For example, one group in Zimbabwe wanted to start a poultry farming project. They expressed this desire on their programme slot and asked for advice and tips on whether to start the project and how they should go about running it. A group which had started a similar project responded by telling them of the problems they had encountered such as the theft of the chickens, escalating costs of chicken feed and the very low profit margin. They then explained about a sunflower oil pressing project which they had begun. They had got someone to teach them how to use the equipment which pressed oil. The project had a higher profit margin and they told the group how to run such a project. The first group was impressed and decided to start their own sunflower oil pressing project which has since been implemented successfully.

FAMW-Z realised that it would be difficult to sustain the interest of women if the project only required them to produce programmes. This was compounded by the fact

that women were walking long distances to meet as a group and to produce a programme. FAMW-Z encouraged the groups to run parallel income generating projects which would be undertaken on the day of the broadcast. Some groups were already running income generating projects which FAMW-Z sought to strengthen to ensure that they became sustainable. This move has helped to strengthen the DTR project. Some groups are running thriving income generating projects that have raised the quality of their lives and those of their families.

Some Important Issues to be Considered before Starting a DTR Project

The choice of the language to be used by the DTR project is a major policy decision. Should the DTR project choose a highly localised language to reach the people more effectively, or a more widely understood and used language? The basic communication needs of the people to be covered by the project must be identified. It is also important to identify the facilitators, communicators and co-ordinators who should undergo specialised training.

Before any DTR pilot project is started the major rural players in the project must be provided with training which is designed to give them a deeper insight into the realities, aspirations, and objectives of the DTR project and the community they work within. It is necessary to develop a sense of responsibility and a capacity for critical reflection. Above all, it is necessary to recognise that the social aspect of the function of information services is more important in the growth of this project.

The DTR project should change the Southern African media landscape in such a way as to improve the quality of the information they disseminate. Programmes must emphasise the human aspect of the events, put them in their historic context and always end on a hopeful note even when the subject matter is conflict. With limited educational opportunities available, the DTR project should be seen as a resource that can be harnessed to accelerate national integration, cultural harmonisation and national development in general. It can also supplement the efforts made by Government information services, other NGOs and various extension officers by providing specifically packaged information on health, HIV/AIDS, agriculture, nutrition, family planning and environmental protection. Since the DTR has a captive audience educational materials can be included in the broadcasts for these audiences.

The heavy responsibility entrusted to the DTR project brings to the fore the question of ownership and control because the one who owns the channel determines what messages it will carry and who gets access to the channel and its output. The DTR project is owned by the community and they must feel that they own it. Minimum interference by other stakeholders is critical. The community decides on what issues to broadcast and the community's elected/nominated representative/monitor records the issues that are agreed upon by the community. Some editing must be done so the monitor will have been trained in message design to synthesise the discussions.

The existing structures in the rural areas should be used as much as possible to start the project. They should be strengthened in ways articulated by the communities themselves since local structures are stronger than those that are dictated to them. The project must be controlled at the local level. It gives access to self-expression in and through the media for the communities. The project time slot belongs to them and they are able to broadcast to the whole nation or to a particular region or geographical area covered by the radio station that is being used.

Conclusion

The DTR project has been a success in all the countries where it has been introduced. In these countries, requests for its expansion to the other districts are overwhelming. Requests have also been received for its replication in countries beyond the 14 countries of the Southern African Development Community.

The growth of DTR projects poses FAMW-SADC with a number of challenges:

1. how to upload and mainstream issues that are discussed at the local level by the DTR project using the Internet?
2. how can the growth of the DTR project be managed?
3. how to mainstream local traditional forms of communication into the DTR?
4. how to enhance traditional cultures using DTR?

For the future, FAMW-SADC is exploring ways in which the DTR project can be used in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building.