

Strengthening Partnerships among Local FM Radio Networks and Reproductive Health Agencies on HIV/AIDS: A Review of the Effectiveness of Local FM Radio in Promoting Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS Prevention and Gender Equity

Radio could be the most wonderful public communication system imaginable...if it were capable, not only of transmitting, but of receiving -- of making the listener not only hear but also speak.
-- Bertolt Brecht, 1932



Population
Media
Center

United Nations Population Fund

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INTRODUCTION

Although radio is not a new phenomenon, community control of programming, content and operation is relatively recent, and has been gaining strength throughout the world in recent years, especially in developing countries. As a result, local FM and community radio has attracted the attention of many international development organizations as an optimal resource to be developed in the struggle for democracy, the fight against disease, and the preservation of local language and culture.

This paper provides an overview of how local FM radio has been used around the world to promote health and development goals. It is intended to inform UNFPA country representatives of the potential use of local and community radio to achieve UNFPA objectives worldwide.

WHAT IS LOCAL FM/COMMUNITY RADIO?

When characterizing local FM/community radio, community participation and social integration themes are emphasized; both of which develop civil society and encourage democratic organization. However, participation in community radio stations varies from total ownership to different degrees of audience involvement in programming and management. In fact, according to Johan Deflander at PANOS in Mali, limiting the definition of “community” radio to radio which has “evolved from a group of people or a community, a village” would exclude most local or community radio stations in Africa. He explains: “Most private radio stations in Africa are commercial stations. That doesn’t mean they broadcast commercials all day long, but it does mean that they were set up with the sole purpose of making money.”¹

There is no singular, agreed-upon definition for the term *local or community radio*. Definitions range from quite narrow to very broad. The narrow definition describes local/community radio as broadcasting that is for, by, and about the community, with ownership that is representative of the community, pursues a social development agenda, and above all, is run as a non-profit.² However, other definitions include private, commercial, for-profit stations. Still other definitions include radio stations that are affiliated with national, municipal and local government.

¹ Deflander, Johan in Gumucio Dragon, Alfonso: Making Waves: Participatory Communication for Social Change. The Rockefeller Foundation, 2001.

² Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). www.misa.org

A sampling of the numerous definitions for local and community radio is provided in the pages that follow. Although definitions vary, the common characteristic underlying all of the descriptions of local and community radio is that they have a participatory component. However, the very nature of participatory communication, as Alfonso Gumucio Dagron states, is that it “can adopt different forms according to need, and that no blueprint model can impose itself over the richness of views and cultural interactions.”³ Thus, the focus of this paper will not be on arguing over the nuances of definition of local and community radio that follow, but on determining how best to use the opportunity presented by local and community radio, in providing “the most appealing tool for participatory communication and development”⁴ and an “ideal medium for change.”⁵

The Report on the Sixth World Conference of Community Radio Broadcasters offers a particularly broad definition of community radio: “Community radio, rural radio, cooperative radio, participatory radio, free radio, alternative radio, popular radio, educational radio – each of these terms have been used at varying times and in varying places to describe community radio. Community radio can be located in isolated rural villages, or in the heart of the largest cities of the world. Their signals may reach only a kilometer, cover a whole country or be carried via short wave to other parts of the world. Some stations are owned by not-for-profit groups or by cooperatives whose members are the listeners themselves. Others are owned by students, universities, municipalities, churches or trade unions. There are stations financed by donations from listeners, by international development agencies, by advertising and by governments.”⁶

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) also offers a broad definition for community radio, which includes rural, urban, music-oriented and political stations. AMARC defines community radio as any radio that “contributes to the expression of social, cultural, and political movements in all their diversity, as well as to the promotion of all initiatives for peace, friendship among people, democracy and development.”⁷

AMARC further defines community radio as “not-for-profit radio which serves the community in which it is located or to whom it is addressed, all the while encouraging the expression and participation of the community in the station. Community radio is radio that contributes to the expression of social, cultural and political movements in all

³ In Gumucio Dagron, Alfonso: Making Waves: Participatory Communication for Social Change. The Rockefeller Foundation, 2001.

⁴ IBID.

⁵ IBID.

⁶ Waves for Freedom. Report on the Sixth World Conference of Community Radio Broadcasters. Dakar, Senegal, January 23-29, 1995.

⁷ Booklet published as a result of the seminar “Participatory Communication, Community Radio and Development” organized by the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) and held in Montreal in April 11-12 in 1991.

their diversity, as well as to the promotion of all initiatives for peace, friendship among people, democracy and development.”⁸

The United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states that community radio is characterized by “access, public participation in production, decision-making and listener-financing. The intention is that management of the station is the hands of those who use it and listen to it.” UNESCO adds that community radio stations attempt to integrate participants in order to create an active and diverse listener-base.⁹

A document on strategies for developing community radios in Mozambique mirrors the UNESCO definition. The document, Maputo 2000, defines community radio as “a not-for-profit service, which is run with community participation, responds to the needs of the community, and serves and contributes towards the community’s development in a progressive manner, by promoting social change, and the democratization of communication through community participation.”¹⁰

The same document states that the main aim of community radio is to “contribute towards the socio-economic and cultural development of the community, by promoting the culture of peace, democracy, human rights, equity and the empowerment of the community where it is located. A real community radio should be in the community, should serve the community, and should be of the community.”¹¹

The Argentina Federation of Community Radio develops the concept of community participation even further. It states: “Community radio stations are radio stations that see themselves as an integral part of the community in which they participate. As media, they develop pluralistic and participatory communication that is open to the need for expression of the social and cultural sectors with less access to exclusively commercial media.”¹²

In “What is Community Radio? A Resource Guide” AMARC/Africa and Panos/Southern Africa describe the philosophy underlying community radio: “The historical philosophy of community radio is to use this medium as the voice of the voiceless, the mouthpiece of oppressed people (be it on racial, gender or class grounds) and generally as a tool for development. Community radio is defined as having three aspects: non-profit making, community ownership and control, and community participation. It should be made clear that community radio is not about doing something for the community but about the community doing something for itself, i.e., owning and controlling its own means of communication.”¹³

⁸ Michelle Ntab, Regional Director for Africa, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, personal communication, 2 September 2002.

⁹ www.unesco.org/webworld.com_inf_reports/com_pdf_new/eng_7.pdf

¹⁰ Conference in Maputo, Mozambique. 2000.

¹¹ Maputo 2000.

¹² Federacion Argentina de Radios Comunitarias (FARCO), Argentina, n.d. <http://nuevatierra.org>

¹³ AMARC/Africa and Panos/Southern Africa, “What is Community Radio? A Resource Guide.” 1998.

VOICES/India, another member of AMARC, shares this three-part definition of community radio. “Firstly, community radio is characterized by the active participation of the community in the process of creating news, information, entertainment and culturally relevant material, with an emphasis on local issues and concerns. With training, local producers can create programmes using local voices. The community can also actively participate in the management of the station and have a say in the scheduling and content of the programmes. Community radio is essentially a non-profit enterprise. In these days of highly commercialized broadcasting, the ethos of community radio remains independence and responsibility to serve the community, not the advertiser. As the station is owned by the community, it also maintains some responsibility in the running of the station. Thirdly, community radio programming is designed by the community, to improve social conditions and the quality of its cultural life. The community itself decides what its priorities and needs are in terms of information provision.”¹⁴

Finally, a particularly poetic definition of community radio is provided by José Ignacio Lopez Vigil, in the 1997 *Manual urgente para Radialistas Apasionados*. “When radio fosters the participation of citizens and defends their interests; when it reflects the tastes of the majority and makes good humor and hope its main purpose; when it truly informs; when it helps resolve the thousand and one problems of daily life; when all ideas are debated in its programmes and all opinions are respected; when cultural diversity is stimulated over commercial homogeneity; when women are main players in communication and not simply a pretty voice or a publicity gimmick; when no type of dictatorship is tolerated, not even the musical dictatorship of the big recording studios; when everyone’s words fly without discrimination or censorship, that is community radio.”¹⁵

WHY IS LOCAL FM/COMMUNITY RADIO SO EFFECTIVE?

Alfonso Gumucio Dagron provides an insightful view of why local and community radio is so effective. He states that “the smallest and most precarious community radio station already makes a difference for a community. The presence of a community radio station, even if it is not highly participatory, has an immediate effect on the population. Small stations usually start airing music for most of the day, thus making an impact on cultural identity and community pride. The next step, closely associated with music programming, is carrying announcements and dedications which contribute to the strengthening of the local social networks. When the station grows in experience and skill, local production of health or education-related programmes starts. These contribute to share information on important issues that affect the community.”¹⁶

¹⁴ AMARC. “What is Community Radio?” www.amarc.org/amarc/ang

¹⁵ Vigil, José Ignacio Lopez, *Manual urgente para Radialistas Apasionados*. 1997

¹⁶ Gumucio Dagron, Alfonso: *Making Waves: Participatory Communication for Social Change*. The Rockefeller Foundation, 2001.

In many developing countries, where most of the population lives in extreme poverty, and are thus unable to buy a newspaper regularly, or acquire a television; where most of the population is illiterate, and does not know how to read or to speak the dominant national language; where the communication network is defective and thus does not allow widespread distribution of periodicals in the districts, localities and villages – local and community radio surfaces as the medium that can most easily reach the target audience. Denise Gray-Felder of the Rockefeller Foundation states that “community-based radio is one of the best ways to reach excluded or marginalized communities in targeted, useful ways.”¹⁷

Gumucio Dagron adds: “As a tool for social change and participatory communication, radio has several comparative advantages over the other media. First, it is cost-efficient in terms of investment – both for those that run the station and for the audience. Second, it is pertinent in terms of language and content – ideal for the huge illiterate population that still remains marginalized especially in rural areas of the Third World. Third, it is relevant to local practices, traditions and culture. Fourth, once the initial investment in equipment is made, sustainability is feasible, though dependent on the level of community participation. Fifth, in terms of outreach and geographic coverage, radio has a strong advantage over other media. Last but not least, the convergence between radio and the Internet is providing new strength to community radio and has enormously increased networking opportunities.”¹⁸

According to the Commonwealth of Learning, radio is particularly effective because it is:

- **Attractive:** most people enjoy listening to radio, particularly if it is well produced and presented. It is generally regarded as a personal, friendly and reliable medium.
- **Available:** local and community radio services are common throughout the world. Where they are not available, it is relatively easy and not prohibitively expensive to set them up.
- **Accessible:** most people, even in the poorest rural areas, have access to radio receivers. Radio can speak to people directly and in their own language – even to those without the benefit of literacy.
- **Affordable:** radio programmes are relatively cheap to produce and transmit. The costs are dramatically less than those for television or video, and usually lower than print or face-to-face teaching and learning costs.¹⁹

¹⁷ Gumucio Dagron, Alfonso: Making Waves: Participatory Communication for Social Change. The Rockefeller Foundation, 2001.

¹⁸ IBID.

¹⁹ Thomas, John. “Using Community Radio for Non-Formal Education.” 2001.

Community Waves, a joint UNDP/UNESCO publication, highlights the following to the numerous advantages of community radio:

- The question of language will be broached. It is not simply a matter of whether people can listen to radio, but on the contrary, whether or not they can understand the radio.
- Community radio deals with aspects of human rights, through the right to communication and information.
- Most people in developing countries are hungry for information. In the days of the information society, community radio can offer some form of education on the media, creating a culture of information.
- Community radio can act as a platform for debate; exchange of ideas and reactions to various plans and projects. This can accommodate the people's ideas and satisfy their spiritual and psychological well being much better than any other form of broadcasting.
- Community radio preserves cultural identity: with the globalization of information and the advent of satellite communication, community radio can offer communities an economic and fundamental method for protecting their language and their cultural heritage. Radio can also help standardize the language.²⁰

Local Radio can be Effective in Promoting Health and Development Goals

In the developing world, radios are frequently used for informal education. In very rural places walking long distances to get to school can be a deterrent to formal education. Newspapers are expensive to produce and distribute; most communities do not have funding for this. Also, high illiteracy rates deter the effectiveness of newspapers. Radios and television can educate audiences without requiring their physical presence at the information source or even requiring them to be literate. The only audience requirement is that listeners understand the language of the broadcast.

In general, television is considerably more expensive to finance than radio. Therefore, radios are a more cost-effective way to educate an audience. Since radio is only audio and not audio-visual, people are able to listen while performing other tasks. As a result, radio is more accessible to working people during more hours of the day than other forms of media. Radios are also a reliable and pleasant medium and people enjoy listening. Also, radio is an ideal medium to educate a large group of people.

In a 1995 International Family Planning Perspectives article on the mass media and family planning in Kenya, Charles Westoff and German Rodriguez explore the impact of mass media on contraceptive use. They use data from the 1989 Kenyan Demographic and Health Survey to demonstrate a strong statistical association between women's reports of having heard or seen messages about family planning through various media outlets and their use of contraceptives and their reproductive preferences. Westoff and Rodriguez report that while 15% of women who said they had neither seen nor heard

²⁰ UNDP/UNESCO. "Community Waves: Some experiences in supporting the establishment of community radios by UNESCO in Mozambique." June 2001.

media messages on family planning were currently using a contraceptive method, this proportion rises to 25% among those who had heard radio messages, and to 40% among women exposed to both radio and print messages, and to 50% among those exposed to radio, print and television messages. According to the authors, these associations persist even when a variety of life-cycle, residential and socioeconomic controls are imposed, so that women exposed to no messages report an average of 5.5 children as their ideal family size, while those exposed to three types of messages report 4.7 children as ideal. The authors conclude that, given the persistence of these strong relationships, the results suggest that the mass media can have an important effect on reproductive behavior.²¹

WHY IS LOCAL FM/COMMUNITY RADIO FLOURISHING NOW?

Local and community radio stations have multiplied by the thousands over the past five decades. Alfonso Gumucio adds that it is almost “impossible to calculate the real numbers, as statistics do not include the many that operate without a legal license.”²²

Local FM/community radio is rapidly expanding throughout the world in large part because in many areas of the world, radio is still the only medium that can reach a mass audience, simultaneously and at relatively low cost.

Michelle Ntab, Regional Director for Africa at AMARC, explains that that local radio is expanding so rapidly because of its effectiveness in “reaching the poorest of the poor, who are traditionally excluded from the reach of commercial or government radio.”²³ Clearly, local radio is becoming increasingly important in communities who otherwise would not have access to communications and therefore would not have an outlet for their own voice.

Additionally, media liberalization and improvements in technology have also certainly played key roles in the veritable explosion of local and community radio in the developing world. Technical and financial assistance from international development organizations has also contributed to the expansion of local and community radio.

Media Liberalization

In 1985, there were scarcely more than ten independent radio stations in all of Africa. Over the next ten years however, deep socio-economic changes encouraged the expansion of community radio, so that by 1998 there were many hundreds of independent radio stations (including those with community management) on the air.

The 1990s provided an excellent opportunity to open society to democratic procedures at all levels of society. Governments attempting to democratize lifted broadcasting

²¹ Westhoff, Charles and German Rodriguez. “The Mass Media and Family Planning in Kenya.” *International Family Planning Perspectives*. Volume 21, No. 1, March 1995.

²² Gumucio Dagon, Alfonso: *Making Waves: Participatory Communication for Social Change*. The Rockefeller Foundation, 2001.

²³ Ntab, Michelle. Personal communication. 2 September 2002.

restrictions, therefore eliminating certain governmental and corporate monopolies. Local, national and international organizations have acted upon more liberal political conditions and the renewed hope within many nations to pursue the development of local communication outlets.

The explosion of independent radio stations in Africa particularly in the 1990s not only made information more accessible to citizens, but also allowed the public greater participation in the democratization of their respective countries. Community radio is a catalyst for the democratization of communications, particularly in Africa, because it promotes popular participation. In Asia, although radio listenership is rapidly being eclipsed by television, radio is still hugely successful in much of the region.

Improvements in Technology

Four major developments in technology allowed for expansion of community radio since the 1970s and '80s:

- The development of FM radio transmission
- The consequent growth of local and community radio stations
- The increasing availability of relatively low-cost, portable AM/FM radio receivers
- The increasing miniaturization of radio transmitting stations.²⁴

Also, new advances in solar and wind-up power are helping overcome issues such as unreliable electricity supply, or the limited availability and expense of conventional batteries needed to power radio transmitters and receivers.

Another important change that took place in the 1990s that facilitated the proliferation of community radio was the development of more advanced telecommunications and technology industries. Today, radio-broadcasting equipment is less expensive than it was even 10 years ago. Quality and reach have also improved tremendously. Transmitters can broadcast further today and therefore reach more people. The increased broadcast range makes initial capital investment in radio station start-up increasingly worthwhile.

New information and communication technologies (ICTs) will make local and community radio even more effective in reaching and informing audiences. ICTs have the power to connect people and communities in geographically and economically remote locations and contribute to better health and greater productivity. With the proliferation of digital technology, the media are merging in ways never thought possible only a decade ago, blurring the lines between traditional communication sectors. The convergence of digital technologies has simplified the production of content and diversified the means through which it can be transmitted. Media and message are merging, creating a more accessible process.

For example, technologies such as the satellite system operated by WorldSpace, allow for information to be directly downloaded to community broadcasters. The WorldSpace

²⁴ Thomas, John. "Using Community Radio for Non-Formal Education." 2001.

Foundation has unique access to WorldSpace technology and educational content production capabilities in both audio and web-based formats. WorldSpace Foundation programming is currently being received by approximately 6 million people in 50 African countries on a variety of educational and social development topics. During the next few months, WorldSpace Foundation will expand its reach into Asia and the Pacific.

Another example of how community members can access information is the web-based platform developed by Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA). The platform allows for access to information and exchange, by linking users to multiple databases of specialized information resources and facilitating efficient access to high-value, hands-on content. VITA has also developed compact ground stations for satellite delivery of email and information products, permitting useful and timely dialogue between communities.

Networks of community radio broadcasters, such as AMARC and OneWorld, are also providing innovative and effective means for radio broadcasters to share information. Such networks give broadcasters and station managers a forum for collaboration and collective problem solving.

UNESCO has been in the forefront to promote use of electronic media by community radio stations. UNESCO has recently launched a new partnership programme to combine community broadcasting with Internet and related technologies. The objective of this programme is to maximize the use of existing community radios and to develop other such community-based communications facilities, such as UNESCO's network of "telecentres" which provide computer and information services and telecom facilities for individual use and community development.

Technical and Financial Assistance from International Development Organizations

Donors and international development organizations have also contributed to the expansion of community radio. Traditionally a grass-roots initiative, community radios now are a popular form of development for international aid organizations such as the United Nations. These organizations are increasingly coming to the realization that media-based projects driven by the community are among the most effective ways of reaching excluded or marginalized people. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as well as bilateral donors, such as The Netherlands and Germany, have been strong proponents of capacity building of rural radio since in the 1970s. UNESCO has been at the forefront of the UN effort to develop the potential of community radio worldwide.

International development organizations support community radio stations to encourage democratization by providing an alternative media voice in countries that often have limited access to forms of communication beyond government controlled and operated media.

Community radio benefits democratization because it depends on local efforts and participation. Local participation encourages pluralism and the development of civil

society, which many scholars have linked to the development of a healthy democracy.²⁵ Increased participation by multiple groups diversifies the information available and encourages the sharing and exchange of information and education.

In sum, community radio is flourishing because of the very definition of community radio: at their best, they are a well-informed, trusted and valued part of the local social structure. They can ask their listeners to tell them what they want and need in terms of non-formal education and training, and can help articulate and promote these views locally. Local radio stations also have good access to organizations and individuals with the knowledge, skills and experience to respond effectively to local needs. Local radio can involve local people in its programming, providing a platform for local ideas and opinions and responding quickly and effectively to listener comments, questions and suggestions.

A TOUR OF THE USE OF COMMUNITY RADIO IN SOCIAL PROGRAMMING

There are many different roles that the media, in particular radio, can play in development. Participatory communication for social change is an evolving field. In this section, we present a number of case studies of how community radio can be employed as an effective medium to encourage social change. Many of the examples presented below are excerpted from “*Making Waves: Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change*,” a report to The Rockefeller Foundation by Alfonso Gumucio Dagron.²⁶

Selected Case Studies of UNFPA-supported Community Radio Projects

Tanzania: In Tanzania, a radio soap opera called “*Twende na Wakati*” was broadcast nationwide between 1995 and 1997. Funded by the UNFPA, it combined family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention education through a single mass medium intervention; radio. This project also employed the Sabido entertainment-education methodology, and was inspired by the Taichung family planning experiment in Taiwan in 1960, particularly in the sense that it explored the role of peer and spousal communication in family planning. The Tanzania experiment included control areas and multiple and varied evaluations that were conducted prior to and after the intervention. This helped demonstrate the direct effect of the intervention. During the broadcasting of “*Twende na Wakati*,” contraceptive prevalence went from 10% in 1993 to 18% in 1996. By 1992 33% of households in Tanzania owned a radio and 46% listened to it at least once a week.²⁷

Independent research by the University of New Mexico and the Population Family Life Education Programme of the Government of Tanzania measured the effects caused by

²⁵ Putnam, Robert D. “The Prosperous Community.” 1993.

²⁶ Gumucio Dagron, Alfonso: *Making Waves: Participatory Communication for Social Change*. The Rockefeller Foundation, 2001.

²⁷ AMARC (1991, April 11-12). “Participatory Communication, Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC).” Booklet published as a result of seminar held in Montreal.

the programme with regard to such issues as AIDS prevention behavior, ideal age of marriage for women, and use of family planning. Among the findings were a significant increase in the percentage of listeners in the broadcast area who believe that they may be at risk of HIV infection; an increase in the belief that audience members, rather than their deity or fate, can determine how many children they will have; an increase in the belief that children in small families have better lives than children in large families; and an increase in the percentage of respondents who approve of family planning. Of the listeners surveyed, 88 percent said the programme had caused them to change their own behavior to avoid HIV infection, through limiting the number of sexual partners and through condom use. Independent data from the AIDS control programme of the government of Tanzania showed a 153 percent increase in condom distribution in the broadcast areas during the first year of the soap opera, while condom distribution in the Dodoma non-broadcast area increased only 16 percent in the same time period.

The programme was also effective in promoting family planning. There was a strong positive relationship between listenership and the change in the percentage of men and women who were currently using any family planning method. The research also showed an increase in the percentage of Tanzanians in the areas of the broadcast who discussed family planning with their spouses. Counting all of the costs of the radio serial, the cost per new adopter of family planning was under 80 cents (U.S.), a cost-effectiveness unmatched by any other known strategy.²⁸

Angola: Since 1998, UNFPA has funded a project, "IEC on Population Issues through Mass Media" at the national level. At the provincial level, UNFPA funds the radio components of the Provincial Population Programmes in Benguela and Huíla. These projects are implemented by the Angolan National Radio (Rádio Nacional de Angola-RNA) in Luanda and its provincial radio stations in Benguela and Huila provinces. The objectives of these projects are:

- To strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Radio of Angola (RNA) and selected RNA provincial stations (Huila, Benguela and Huambo) to enhance the design, production and management of radio programmes on population- and development-related issues, including reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and gender issues, in Portuguese and national languages;
- To produce a variety of radio programmes, specifically directed to men, women and adolescents, promoting positive, responsible behaviors around population, development, gender, and reproductive health, and promoting increased acceptability and use of existing reproductive health services by these groups; and
- To produce radio programmes specifically directed to political, social and religious leaders, promoting better understanding and commitment to population and development, gender, and reproductive health issues among these leaders.

The emergency situation in Angola, due to the resumption of the civil war in 1998, has justified the development and implementation of a project entitled "Use of Educational

²⁸ Everett M. Rogers, Peter W. Vaughan, Ramadhan M.A. Swalehe, et al. "Effects of Entertainment-Education Radio Soap Opera on Family Planning Behavior in Tanzania." *Studies in Family Planning*, Volume 30, Number 3. September 1999.

Radio Programmemeing as a Support to Humanitarian Assistance for Vulnerable Populations in IDP Camps in Some Provinces (Huila, Benguela, Malange, Uíge, and Bengo).” The project supports emergency reproductive health, infant and child health, sexual education, and reproductive health services for youth by creating “emergency listening posts” at the provincial radio stations. The 30-minute radio programmes are broadcast weekly in Portuguese and local languages.

Namibia: UNFPA is supporting the University of Namibia to provide technical support to programme partners in developing IEC materials based on socio-cultural and operational research findings. Support is also being provided by UNFPA to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Information and Broadcasting to conduct advocacy and community mobilization activities, which will be carried out through radio and TV programmes of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, targeting young people and parents.

UNFPA also supports local radio stations (mainly the national radio "Namibia Broadcasting Cooperation") in 7 out of 13 political regions through Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Information and Broadcasting for developing and airing messages on sexual and reproductive health for youth.

UNFPA provides support to The Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation to collaborate with local radio stations near youth centers to develop and broadcast region-specific messages on youth sexual and reproductive health (targeting youth and parents separately).

Mozambique: UNFPA provides support to two communication projects in Mozambique: one at the central level, with the Institute of Social Communication (ICS), and the other at the provincial level (Zambezia). In the Zambezia project, UNFPA assisted in implementing a strategic plan for supporting community radios, including how to integrate issues relating to reproductive health into radio programmes. UNFPA is now seeking to replicate in other provinces throughout Mozambique the initiatives successfully implemented in Zambezia province.

Nigeria: Radio remains the most powerful means of providing information to the vast population of Nigeria. In particular, FM audiences are huge in this increasingly urbanizing country. UNFPA is supporting a project, “Forging Partnership with the Mass Media to the Increase Awareness about Population Issues,” which includes training to enhance the capacity of mass media personnel, including those from radio, to report on population issues with more accuracy and a greater sense of responsibility.

The UNFPA-supported pilot 52 episodes of “I Need to Know,” an entertainment-education television serial focusing on sexuality and reproductive health issues as they affect adolescents, was a roaring success with the Nigerian public. The serial provided young people with much-needed information on HIV/AIDS in particular, and other adolescent sexuality and reproductive health issues in general, while promoting parent-child communication on these issues. The Canadian International Development Agency is funding the production of new “I Need to Know” episodes, as well as radio adaptation

and translation of episodes into three local languages. These are being broadcast on a few radio channels.

Niger: In Niger, UNFPA is supporting community-based radios (CBR) with a special emphasis on youth-oriented stations. Currently, there is a network of 40 CBRs (at various stages of implementation), of which five (mostly based in and managed by community-based youth centers in remote areas) have been fully supported by UNFPA. UNFPA is providing IEC and advocacy materials and training on selected topics (adolescent reproductive health, gender, safe motherhood, etc.) to the entire network of CBRs.

Togo: In the context of the “Prevention of STD/ HIV/AIDS and Unwanted Pregnancies among Adolescents” project, UNFPA/Togo has launched a pilot initiative targeting 9 local FM radios in the Plateaux region. The objective of this project is to provide staff of the radio stations with information about adolescent reproductive health initiatives in the Plateaux region.

Mali: UNFPA/Mali’s “Youth, Sports and Health Promotion Project” contributes to a broad youth information strategy on adolescent reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS together with numerous private and community FM radios in Bamako, Sikasso and Kayes. The large number of young girls and boys listening to these radio stations was an important criterion in selecting these stations. Another important selection criterion was the extent to which these stations participate in local development through their community and social programme components. The objective of the collaboration with local radio stations – in the context of this broader adolescent reproductive health promotion strategy – is to promote reproductive health behavior change among adolescents, especially with regard to HIV/AIDS prevention.

Mauritania: In Mauritania, UNFPA supports a rural radio station based in Rosso called “Femmes et Développement” (Women and Development) in collaboration with the Secretariat d'Etat à la Condition Féminine and Radio Mauritanie. Seizing the opportunity created by the newly adopted “Code du Statut Personnel” (Family Code), UNFPA/Mauritania supported the development and broadcast of two rural radio initiatives in 2002: one which supported the development and broadcast at the regional level of a participative media campaign focusing on women's rights; and the other with the rural radio station and youth groups in Rosso to produce a weekly radio drama on population, and adolescent reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, male responsibility, and access to family planning. This will be the first radio drama ever produced in Mauritania.

Cape Verde: Radio is a very popular medium for information in Cape Verde. UNFPA collaborates regularly with local and national radio, and since 1995 has supported a rural radio station on the island of Santo Antão, to promote awareness-raising on issues of reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. Santo Antão is a very remote, rural island, with little access to information, and having some of the worst health indicators in the country.

The objectives of this rural radio project are:

- To improve access to quality reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention information; and
- To contribute to capacity building of rural radio on issues of HIV/AIDS prevention within the framework of the National Strategic Plan in the Fight against AIDS.

Vietnam: Since 1998, UNFPA has been supporting the development and broadcasting of a radio programme for youth on adolescent reproductive health called “Window of Love.” In the programme, young people can call counselors in the studio or write them to ask about sex, love, friendship, HIV/AIDS, marriage, etc.

The Danish government has agreed to finance part of the technical assistance and broadcasting costs of “Window of Love,” as well as two new programmes following the concept of “Window of Love” on local radio stations in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Papua New Guinea: Under its “Empowerment of Women” project, UNFPA is supporting the YWCA in Papua New Guinea to run a 2-hour weekly radio programme, called “Tok Stret” (“Straight talk” in Pidgin). The programme invites guests to participate in panel discussions, with topics ranging from reproductive health, to women's issues, to education. The Dean of the Medical School appears regularly in the programme to field reproductive health questions. The programme covers most of the country. One segment of the programme is dedicated to taking telephone call-in questions from the radio audience.

Local and Community Radio for Health and Community Development

St. Lucia: Between 1996 and 1998, a radio serial drama called “*Apwe Plezi*” addressing issues of family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention was broadcast in the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. Other issues that were identified as critical for the programme were gender equality, relationship fidelity, and domestic violence.²⁹ The St. Lucia project intended to address behavioral patterns, which meant the radio programme had to consider cultural barriers to change. The programme proved to be mostly successful. Although the programme only maintained an audience of about 12% of the adult population in St. Lucia, the portion of the population that was exposed to the programming appeared to have benefited in terms of increased knowledge about contraceptives, family planning, domestic violence, and the other issues discussed during the programme.

The programme in St. Lucia differentiated itself from other campaigns both because it used the entertainment-education methodology developed by Miguel Sabido in the 1970s, and because it provided support to the listeners, a decision that may have facilitated the learning process. There was a listener-hotline that received about 10 calls a week, either offering or asking for help and advice. In response to such pleas for help, the programme

²⁹ Vaughan, Peter W., Alleyne Regis, Edwin St. Catherine. (2000, December). 149.

followed up with a counseling hotline that received more calls, about 6 per day and 1,200 calls as of August 1997. The help line was only advertised during the programme, so those who called in were reacting to what they had heard.³⁰

Kenya, Nigeria and Sierra Leone: The UNDP, the WHO and the World Bank jointly sponsored a project in Kenya, Nigeria and Sierra Leone that enlisted the support of radio stations in social programming about malaria, early marriage, women's health seeking behavior, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, post-natal care, women as frontline health providers, neglect of sick women, women as caretakers for the sick and women's powerlessness in decision making. An interdisciplinary team worked with women in rural villages in each of the three countries, as well as with collaborating institutions.³¹ They created a programme that combined small group informational discussions led by trained facilitators and radio programmes to raise awareness toward social and health related issues faced by women in rural communities.

Some of the problems faced by the women in the studies were related to access to radio listening. In some of the Muslim villages women spend a lot of time listening to radios because villages are secluded. In Christian villages, on the other hand, women spend a lot of time performing farm work and do not have access to radios during the same time. Another problem was the availability of batteries and/or electricity in the rural villages.

Mauritania: *Aftout FM* is a radio station that was established to address Guinea Worm in Mauritania. The format of the programming was partly devoted to local music, news, games and religious shows; the rest of it was devoted to community issues of health, literacy, environment and economy.³² Radio programming from the station resulted in a significant reduction in the number of cases of people with Guinea Worm, increased the number of children fully immunized by five times and obtained an 80% better understanding among listeners of how to prevent Guinea Worm infections.

South Africa: *Soul City* is a South African health promotion project that harnesses the power of mass media for social change. Garth Japhet, a doctor and part-time journalist, founded Soul City in an attempt to put the power of mass communications in the service of preventing the spread of HIV and promoting healthier lifestyles. *Soul City's* programmes use an "entertainment education" approach. They are popular; designed and produced to air in primetime, rather than in less-viewed educational time slots. The messages and themes of the *Soul City* television drama are replayed through its radio series, entitled *Healing Hearts*. This consists of 60 15-minute episodes broadcast in nine languages on nine regional radio stations. The show was developed to appeal to more rural audiences who have less access to television. The *Soul City* campaign uses print material to reinforce the broad messages conveyed by the electronic media and to supplement knowledge with more detailed information. The booklets are serialized in

³⁰ Vaughan, Peter W., Alleyne Regis, Edwin St. Catherine. (2000, December). 154.

³¹ In Kenya: University of Nairobi, Kenyatta Hospital, Institute of Education, Education Media Service. In Sierra Leone: Ramsy Medical Laboratories, Ministry of Health, Spence Productions. In Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna State Media Corporation.

³² Bouhafa. 1997

two languages, published in ten newspapers nationally, and thereafter in a total of 2.25 million booklets that are distributed as inserts in these newspapers during the broadcast period. Clinics and community-based projects also receive copies for distribution.

Local and Community Radio for Democracy

Ghana: FM radio had a direct impact on bringing about the first-ever peaceful transition from one elected civilian government to another in Ghana in December 2001. In 1995, Ghana's previous government gave up its monopoly of the airwaves and permitted the establishment of private FM radio stations. Since then, more than 40 have cropped up around Ghana, broadcasting in both English and native Ghanaian languages. For Ghana's poor, being able to call the radio, or to be interviewed in the market by a radio reporter with a tape recorder, has given them a chance to participate in politics as never before. Ghanaians going to the polls would call their local FM station if they witnessed anything questionably undemocratic, and it would be broadcast in seconds. The election board monitored the radios, and it would quickly respond. "On the day of the elections there was a polling station in Accra where soldiers started destroying voting boxes," recalled Joseph Ebo Quarshie, president of the Ghana Bar Association. "Immediately, someone called an FM station and it was reported on the air. I was at my bank at the time. A guy walks up to me, a pharmacist I know, and says 'Have you heard what's going on at this polling station in Accra? What is the Bar Association doing about it?' Minutes later, I got a call from JOY FM. I told them to call me back in a few minutes. Meanwhile, I got a copy of the Constitution. JOY FM called me back and I read over the radio the article in the Constitution, which says that citizens had the right to resist interference in a polling station. JOY FM kept playing my interview over and over. A couple of hours later the soldiers were chased off by voters."³³ In fact, the four most democratic countries in West Africa today – Benin, Ghana, Mali and Senegal – all have private, flourishing talk radio stations

Nepal: *Radio Sagaramatha* is Nepal's first independent community broadcasting station and represents South Asia's first major effort at "independent community radio." *Sagaramatha*, which means the head in the heavens (the Nepali name of Mount Everest), was established with financial and technical assistance provided under UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). Community broadcasting is a relatively new concept in Nepal. *Radio Sagaramatha's* listeners are the urban dwellers of the capital city that is also the social, economic and political center of the country. This listenership is both a challenge and an opportunity. Getting the attention of this audience demands programming that is competitive or comparable, if not even superior, to what already exists.

Radio Sagaramatha reaches a public that has always influenced Nepal's political and economic decision-making. Thus, *Sagaramatha* can influence change. This environment shapes Radio Sagaramatha's mission. After nearly one year of operations, the Nepali government has realized the contribution that independent community radio services can make to improve the information flow and thereby to ensure an inclusive democratic

³³ Friedman, Thomas. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/05/01/opinion/01FRIE.html>

dialogue among stakeholders of development. *Radio Sagaramatha* is governed by a Board that includes the Himal Association, the Nepal Press Institute and Worldview Nepal.³⁴

Community Radio for Women's Empowerment

South Africa: *Moutse Community Radio Station* was founded by members of the Rural Women's Movement (RWM), a national organization in South Africa, which lobbies around issues of concern to rural women. In the words of one movement member, Lahilwe Nkoana, "*Moutse Community Radio Station (MCRS)* was born of many years of our community struggle. During those years, the rural, mostly female community campaigned for rights to water, education, health care, electricity, democracy and an end to polygamy which discriminated against rural wives." The on-air programmes cater to a wide range of listeners. The health programme regularly features medical practitioners for community phone-ins where they discuss and answer questions while the agriculture programme invites departmental representatives. The daily morning and afternoon drive programmes are entertaining yet informative and often include interviews on a broad spectrum of community issues. The community announcements of local events and the reading of funeral notices keep people living over a large area informed. Local, national and international news is read in a number of languages.

Sustainability of Local and Community Radio

The Philippines: A project by UNESCO in the Philippines called the "*Tambuli Community Radio Project*" set up management and training teams that work in rural communities to help set up independent radio stations. Volunteers in the community do most of the work; thus the project is in their hands, and, as a consequence, the communities develop a sense of pride, tolerance and cooperation.³⁵ *Tambuli* is the *Tagalo* voice for the *carabao* horn, used traditionally to call villagers for community meetings. It is also an acronym for "voice of the small community for the development of the underprivileged." A set of five objectives guides the project: (1) to provide local access to information, (2) to allow villages to express themselves, (3) to link together as a community, (4) to strengthen the sense of identity, and (5) to transform the audience from mere receivers to participants and managers of a communication system. In short: the empowerment of people through communication so that they will strengthen their community organizations and seek better opportunities for development. The engine that makes a *Tambuli* station work is a multisectoral Community Media Council (CMC). The CMC decides on managerial and programming issues. Most of the members also have responsibility as broadcasters; each one contributes with a programme slot relevant to his or her sector: health, education, youth, agriculture, senior citizens, environment, fishermen, women and legislation among others. In the long run, the CMC should become the owner of the stations. From its inception the project had 1999 as the end date. Nevertheless, the need of more community radio stations, the numerous requests from other communities, has convinced *Tambuli* founder Louie Tabing of the need to

³⁴ http://www.unesco.org/webworld/com_media/society_com_media.html

³⁵ http://www.unesco.org/webworld/com/broadcasting/com_media.shtml

create a permanent institution to support future projects as well as the existing network. A *Tambuli* Foundation has been created to take over the project from the year 2000.

Mali: *Radio Kayes*, a radio station in Mali originally funded by an Italian NGO, is now autonomous. It is managed by the local population and supported by a state structure. Over four hundred villages are involved in the project. Each village chooses a producer, who is provided with portable recording equipment, and who, upon deciding on a theme, records the concerns of the villagers and puts together a programme. The radio station's main concerns are educating the population on issues of social knowledge, technological know-how, improved living conditions and information necessary to support economic development initiatives.³⁶

Mozambique: The emergence of community radio has in many parts of the world been directly linked to grass roots movements using radio as a tool to reach their constituencies – the community. Until recently, this has not been the case in Mozambique. After years of censorship, from the colonial era to that of the single party press, the open and democratic Mozambican Press Law (in force since 1991) radically changed the legal environment in which the country's media operate. From 1995 onwards, a state body, the Mass Communications Institute (ICS), and the Catholic Church, have started radio stations with a community orientation. Increasingly, independent stations, based on civic associations, are beginning to appear.

Regarded as one of the poorest countries on the planet, with one of the lowest per capita incomes, and with its social fabric seriously damaged by decades of armed conflict, Mozambique today is one of the few African countries, which, once peace was obtained, has rapidly become a genuine model of democratization, including the areas of freedom of expression and press freedom. Since the new Constitution of the Republic opened the doors to political pluralism in late 1990, there has been a clear surge in Mozambique of new media of the so-called independent sector – that is, the sector not linked to the state or the government. In this area, there is a remarkable and growing dynamism in terms of setting up and managing mass media, particularly radio stations, with the involvement of the communities. From 1991 onwards, after the approval of the Press Law (Law 18/91, of 10 August), several community press initiatives, both in the written media and in radio, have been emerging in Mozambique, particularly in the main urban centers. These initiatives had arisen in order to respond to the ever-increasing need that citizens have for information – a right that is constitutionally enshrined, in a country where neither the publicly-owned radio and television, nor the papers with large print runs, mostly published in Maputo, manage to cover the entire country.

Giving Children a Voice

Senegal: *Radio Gune Yi* is a radio programme done by children for children. Its name identifies it because *Gune Yi* means “children” in Wolof, the language most widely spoken in Senegal. It is produced by PLAN International Senegal, and all the network

³⁶ AMARC. “Participatory Communication, Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)” Booklet published as a result of seminar held in Montreal. April 11-12, 1991.

stations of Radio Television du Senegal broadcast it. The programme was established by PLAN International to promote the Rights of the Child, mainly in relation to freedom of expression and access to information. Since it started in December 1995, *Radio Gune Yi* has visited more than 100 villages. More than 1,000 children have participated directly in production, while several thousand children have attended the recordings. Hundreds of thousands of children listen to the programme regularly.

Counteracting the Effect of Hate Radio

Tanzania: In 1994 *Radio Mille Collines* – the infamous “hate radio” in Rwanda – incited the genocide against the Tutsi. One million were killed, and over the “thousand hills” of Rwanda remain the tombs of those that did not make it to survival. Three months later, Tutsi troops came from Uganda and took power in Kigali, prompting 600,000 Hutu refugees to flee across the border to Tanzania. *Radio Kwizera* was born in 1995 as a response to hate radio. The name says it all: kwizera means “hope” in Kinyarwanda language. A central aspect of *Kwizera*’s mandate as a community radio station involves providing the means by which the community may engage in dialogue with itself. In 1998 an audience survey was carried out in Ngara and Lukole camps, to estimate listenership, develop new strategies and ascertain the level of awareness about *Radio Kwizera*. The survey showed that broadcasting 13 hours a day gives the station a strong identity. The survey also showed that the station has made the right choice to balance information, education and entertainment. For example, it has used soap operas to deal with important issues such as HIV/AIDS. The station remains popular among both the refugees and the local population.

Optimization of Information Services by Combining Radio and Internet Technologies

More than any other medium, radio speaks the language but also has the accent of the community in which it is located. The programming of community radio stations is relevant to local interests and usually makes important contributions to strengthening and protecting cultural identity and social values. However, radio has not been spared from the globalization trend. As much as television and newspapers, radio is largely influenced by international news agencies, most of them from the United States or Europe.

Smaller radio stations have fought to survive, expand influence on the community and defend national and local interests. “The same technology that makes possible globalization also allows these citizen radio stations to work with civil society in an attempt to influence the global village,” says Pulsar director, Bruce Girard.³⁷ Nevertheless, we are still a long way from a world where all peoples are offered equitable access to information and to technological resources. New technologies can play an ambiguous role in the pursuit of this goal: they can make a notable contribution to the democratization of information and communication, or, if not mastered, can generate a widening abyss between the information rich and the information poor.³⁸

³⁷ The Communication Initiative. Case Studies. Pulsar.

³⁸ IBID.

Pulsar: As early as 1986, AMARC suggested that an independent news agency be created to provide independent news for the increasing number of small stations in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Pulsar started in March 1996 with the purpose of providing community radio stations in Latin America with information useful to their listeners. Pulsar writers take information from the Latin American press on the Internet, re-write it and send it to users (on-line). Local radio stations go to the Internet site to browse through the clippings (text, audio and graphical). By facilitating access to the Internet, Pulsar provides a modernizing impulse for the news programming of radio broadcasters throughout Latin America. Besides generating a volume of information previously out of reach for community radio stations, Pulsar facilitated their networking. Being able to have daily contact with hundreds of stations be it through email via radio wave frequencies or via the Internet, whether to distribute news bulletins or to receive news from correspondents, helped build a powerful sense of identity among community radio stations.

EcoNews Africa: EcoNews Africa enables African CBOs and NGOs to be actively involved in decision-making on sustainable development by promoting timely strategic information flows at all levels. EcoNews Africa is an NGO initiative that analyses global environment and development issues from an African perspective and reports on local, national and regional activities that contribute to global solutions. It aims to enhance the dissemination of information from affected populations to the relevant policy makers in order to promote the involvement of civil society groups in decision-making on issues relating to sustainable development. The overall objective of EcoNews is to “promote the involvement and active participation of civil society groups in governance at the subregional and global decision-making levels on policies that impact on national policy, in particular macro-economic and environmental governance.” The organization was founded in March 1992 when NGO representatives wanted to design effective information and communication structures to facilitate the flow of information about development.

Sri Lanka: Kothmale is an isolated valley in Sri Lanka. *Kothmale FM* community radio was launched with UNESCO’s support in February 1989. The objective of the project is to assess prospects of converging community radio and informatics to serve rural information needs and to determine its possible impact on development efforts in rural communities. It serves a total population of 350,000. In 1998, UNESCO provided \$50,000 to hook the station up to the Internet. The station has broken new ground in community broadcasting and communication services by marrying a traditional technology (radio) with a new one (the Internet). The connection allows programmers access to a wealth of information to answer listeners’ queries or improve their broadcasts.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CHALLENGES RELATED TO WORKING WITH COMMUNITY RADIO?

Experience has proved it beneficial to collaborate with a variety of organizations and local institutions to gain support for newly emerging radio stations and programmes.

Partnerships with international aid organizations, local businesses, churches, health service providers and educational institutions are fruitful in generating resources, support and information for social programming. As long as there is clearly defined management of the radio station, with a well-outlined mission and delegation of responsibilities, the community radio station board should be able to seek help from other structures that support the existence and well being of the community.

However, these partnerships are not without their challenges. We discuss some of the more salient issues below.

National Legislation Governing Community Radio

National legislation governing the definition, mission, broadcasting content and format, and even the day-to-day operation of community radio is changing constantly – largely due to involvement of international development organizations and NGOs and to changing political will.

According to AMARC, there are four general categories of legislation governing community radio:³⁹

1. Progressive countries where community radio is allowed and encouraged. Clear separation between public, commercial and community radio. These countries are helping us to sell the idea of community radio. In Africa, these countries include: Madagascar, Réunion, Mauritius, Namibia, Mozambique, and South Africa.
2. Countries where community radio is allowed, but there is no clear definition of community radio – community radio is placed in the same category as commercial or private radio. Examples of these countries in Africa include: Niger, Ivory Coast, Sénégal, Mali, Ghana, Angola, most of the countries in East Africa, and most of the countries in Central Africa.
3. Countries under civil rule. There is a mushrooming of community radio in these countries, but there is not a clear categorization of community radio (due to a vacuum in terms of legislation governing them). In these countries, virtually anyone can open a community radio station and broadcast virtually anything. African countries, which fall into this category, include: Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ethiopia. It should be noted that OXFAM/Canada is doing excellent work in Ethiopia to develop legislation governing community radio.)
4. Countries where community radio is seen as subversive. In these countries, community radio is viewed as a tool for diverting the attention and loyalties of local community away from larger government aims. Examples of these countries in Africa include: Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Guinea, Mauritania, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, and the Sudan.

Nigeria represents an interesting situation that is difficult to classify according to the categories above. In Nigeria, there is political will to draft legislation concerning

³⁹ Michelle Ntab. Regional Director for Africa. AMARC. Personal communication. 2 September 2002.

community radio (in fact, there was a media bill introduced in 2001), but the central government is afraid of local chiefs using community radio to increase their power base and becoming a threat to central government control.

The countries in North Africa also defy classification into the above categories, as they are difficult to access (due to civil unrest, war and myriad other social issues). Morocco is a notable exception, largely because of the work of UNESCO in this country.

One of AMARC's aims is to advocate for changes in national legislation that will permit the further growth and expansion of community radio. An excellent case study is Swaziland, where the Royal government dominates media, and access of private media to the airwaves has traditionally been extremely restricted. AMARC organized awareness-raising seminars for over 60 stakeholders throughout the Kingdom, which resulted in the June 2002 publication of a "white paper" on community radio. Just recently, OSISA, an NGO working in a remote rural area in Swaziland, has been granted a temporary license to broadcast over Lumbombo Community Radio in Siteki. OSISA, with funding from the George Soros Foundation, is now helping the Swazi government to define the role of community radio in its national strategy to privatize the media throughout the country.

Governance

In "Creating Sustainable Community Radio Stations – A Major Challenge!" Birgitte Jallof insists that community ownership is key to the survival of community radio. "When the community feels that this is their station to which it provides producers and stories, where it assists in overcoming financial problems, and where it prevents theft by all being alert and protective, only then would a station in rural Mozambique have a chance of survival." But, she adds: "Creating this community ownership feeling takes time."⁴⁰

Although community ownership and participation is the essence of true community radio, the issue of governance, or control of operational issues and programming content and format can be problematic. Who determines what kinds of programming are most relevant to the community? For example, not long ago, a rich family in Bamako had no scruples about handing out money to a radio station for it to announce the marriage of one of its daughters.

In order to determine what the community needs or wants to know, one must begin with a clear idea of exactly what target audiences the station is designed to serve. This can be achieved through active participation of the listeners in the radio stations, but it is often difficult to involve community members who might have other demands on their time. Also, it is difficult to maintain energy and interest levels among community members, many of whom volunteer their time to radio station activities.

⁴⁰ Birgitte Jallof. *Creating Sustainable Community Radio Stations: A Major Challenge!* UNESCO's Experience in Mozambique. November 2001.

Nevertheless, it is important to maintain the community concept. At all times, the communities should feel that they are the owners of the initiatives and not simple listeners. Only in this way can solid foundations be laid for the success of the radios. Furthermore, the people selected to head the radio stations should bear in mind that they are in a project that belongs to the entire community. Fabiao Noticio, a member of the Homoine Community Radio Association says in Mozambique says, “We have to struggle every day so that people do not emerge who imagine that the radio is somebody’s private property: this belongs to all of us.”⁴¹

Financing

Since community radios are often run as non-profit organizations, it is common for them to face financial challenges. Several outlets are available to counter financial crises. Popular sponsorship programmes, fund-raising campaigns, advertising sales, subsidies, public appeals for donations and listening clubs with membership fees are all viable options.

Radio stations are usually forced to struggle along, their only income coming from local small businesses or for the broadcasting of family news. At certain small radio stations in Mali, presenters receive CFA 200 (FF 2) from peanut vendors in the market. Popular sponsorship has turned out to be a stroke of inspiration on the part of African station managers. One station in Bamako was able to ensure its survival in 1995 because a presenter had persuaded local market traders to sponsor a broadcast about popular sayings and proverbs.⁴²

Another community radio station in Mali, Radio Bamakan, once appealed to its listeners to help it pay the electricity bill, and they turned out en masse to contribute a few coins each to enable the station to continue broadcasting.⁴³

Radio stations also often organize listeners’ clubs. Radio Rik, a small community radio station in Bamako, which targets the youth market, has set up just such a club simply in order to be able to continue broadcasting: in exchange for a few francs per month, people become members and are entitled to have a say in what is broadcast.⁴⁴

Patronage is another tempting funding possibility for community radio stations. However, it runs counter to the principles of community radio as being truly of, and for, the community, especially when patronage is sought from individuals or organizations who might not share the community’s goals and vision for its own development.

⁴¹ UNESCO/UNDP Media Development Project. *Community Waves: Some Experiences in Supporting the Establishment of Community Radios by UNESCO in Mozambique*. June 2001.

⁴² Serge Bailly. *African Radio Stations Face Techno-Apartheid*. n.d.

⁴³ IBID.

⁴⁴ IBID.

Programme Content

Programme content is the central concern of community radio station presenters. Should they favor neighborhood information or information about the rest of the world? “What is the use of reporting that a plane has crashed in Massachusetts if listeners are unaware that locusts have devastated crops in a neighboring village? The role of neighborhood radio stations is not to carry the same information as international stations,” says Andre-Eugne Ilboudo, response for rural radio stations in Burkina Faso. “The choice of format is fundamental for our radio stations. Neighborhood radio cannot consist of broadcasts of jazz music. The fact that we are neighborhood radio stations means that we have to be relevant to our area rather than, for instance, providing news about the war in Chechnya.”

Lack of Experience and Training

Another problem community radio stations confront is a lack of sufficient knowledge and training, particularly on the content of information that is broadcast. It is difficult to educate audiences about nutrition, health, disease, etc. without specialized and accurate knowledge. Radio station managers and other staff may not have sufficient training or experience necessary to broadcast educational content. When outsiders are imported to dictate information content or management, community radio ceases to be autonomous, self-determined and community-based.

UNESCO had an enlightening experience assisting to set up eight community radio stations in Mozambique. The UNESCO team found the major obstacles in existing community radio stations to be the lack of proper technical configurations (an example is the radio being off the air for extended periods of time because of electrical surges and power outages), inadequately trained staff and a tenuous community base.⁴⁵ In order to minimize these problems the team decided to focus on a three-fold strategy to ensure the radio’s sustainability. This began with encouraging a strong community ownership sentiment, providing effective training and creating a technical sustainability system.

Upon assessing the needs of the eight communities, the team found that many people had intimate knowledge and skills dealing with adverse conditions that proved useful for social programmement. The team designed a capacity-building strategy composed of: eight to 10 days of intensive training, a community training programme with a coach, management seminars and workshops and the establishment of a “training station” to help other stations get on their feet.

Each section in the training course was organized several times in different parts of the country so that two to four representatives of each community could participate without exceeding 16 to 18 participants in each workshop. The training revolved around the “KAP” strategy: knowledge, attitude and practice. Once the participants returned, they organized seminars for the community volunteers. However, since it was not always possible for everything that was learned in the workshops to be re-taught; another strategy was applied to ensure that people were continually updated. This was the

⁴⁵ Birgitte Jallov. Creating Sustainable Community Radio Stations – A Major Challenge! November 2001.

“Process Coach Scheme.” The coaches were radio journalists, local teachers or community workers. They were responsible for teaching and empowering community members to be active and responsible while running the radio station. The coaches also had the responsibility of helping UNESCO in the monitoring of the radio station. They were required to write a monthly report upon which their monthly salary depended.

Besides implementing a coaching system, UNESCO also developed a model for the programme in which a paid staff was responsible for the everyday operation of the radio station and for directing the volunteers. They visited already existing radio stations to draw from their experience.

Another achievement by the team was the establishment of a training programme in existing radio stations so that communities planning to set up their own stations had the opportunity to observe a successful operation firsthand. As for technical configuration needs, the UNESCO team settled for the more expensive equipment from a well-known brand to make breakdowns easier to deal with. A technical capacity-building workshop was conducted in “Preventive Maintenance” and in-depth training for running a studio.

Lack of Information or Training on Ways to make Programmes more Entertaining

Using entertainment to educate audiences is not a new concept. However, many radio station producers and staffs have not been trained in successful application of methodologies for integrating educational messages into entertainment formats. One such methodology was developed by Miguel Sabido in Mexico in the 1970s, where he pioneered the use of “telenovelas” to promote literacy, family planning and other social development goals.

His methodology, also commonly referred to as the “entertainment-education” strategy, is the intentional incorporation of educational messages into entertainment formats with the purpose of changing audience members’ behavior. It has been described in numerous sources.⁴⁶ Some 75 entertainment-education projects have been developed in various forms in Latin America, Africa and Asia to bring about behavioral changes in family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender equality, and adult literacy.⁴⁷

The entertainment-education strategy has been proven to have a unique potential to bring about strong effects on behavior, perhaps in part because of its basis in social learning theory as articulated by Bandura.⁴⁸

The impact of the “Twende na Wakati” radio soap opera in Tanzania is presented above. In general, the soap opera had strong behavioral effects on family planning adoption; it increased listeners’ self-efficacy regarding family planning adoption and influenced listeners to talk with their spouses and peers about contraception.⁴⁹ This programme has

⁴⁶ Nariman, 1993. Piotrow et al. 1997. Singhal and Rogers, 1999. .

⁴⁷ Piotrow et al. 1997. Rogers and Shefner, 1994.

⁴⁸ Bandura, 1977.

⁴⁹ Rogers et al, 1999.

been heralded as the most extensively evaluated radio soap opera employing the Sabido methodology to influence behavior change.

Other challenges in working with community radio include their relative geographic isolation, inexperience with contracting mechanisms, lack of training or expertise in radio production techniques, and often low-quality or out-dated equipment and facilities.

Clearly, there is much work to be done to build the capacity of local and community radio throughout the world, in terms of content programming, quality production and responding effectively to the needs of the communities they serve.

INNOVATIVE WAYS TO EVALUATE IMPACT OF PROGRAMMING

In most cases it is very hard to assess the impact of social programming in the community. Generally, questionnaires or surveys are used. However, community radio stations do not always have resources for large audience evaluations, unless government and/or local and international institutions support such an endeavor.

With the soap opera in Tanzania, five independent sources provided insight on the effects of the soap opera: personal interview surveys (contrasted with the control area), Ministry of Health clinic data, script content analysis, analysis of listener's letters and demographic and health surveys. In four annual surveys most listeners perceived the radio programme as both very entertaining (between 64 and 77%) and very educational (between 70 and 85%). Many listeners became highly involved with the programmes' characters. Letters written by listeners demonstrated that they emulated behaviors of the positive characters on the show.

A measure of self-efficacy, indicated by the survey respondent's confidence in his or her ability to decide on family size, showed that there was an increased level of confidence. The ideal number of children indicated by survey respondents decreased by 0.3 children. The ideal marriage age increased 0.9 years. The proportion of married respondents who said they communicated with their husbands about family planning increased by 4 percentage points. Spousal communication has been shown to play a crucial role in the adoption of contraceptive methods. Overall, the results of the entertainment education project behind "Twende na Wakati" were very positive.⁵⁰ The project was funded by UNFPA.

A research study funded by the UNDP in Nigeria provides another, perhaps less rigorous, example of the evaluation of the impact of a radio programme on behavior change. In a group discussion comprised of women in Nigeria, it was concluded that radio is effective in creating a space for people to express their views and that it is able to reach a wide

⁵⁰ Everett M. Rogers, Peter W. Vaughan, Ramadhan M.A. Swalehe, Nagesh Rao, Peer Svenkerud, and Suruchi Sood.) "Effects of an Entertainment-education Radio Soap Opera on Family Planning Behavior in Tanzania" Reprinted from **Studies in Family Planning**. September, 1999.

audience.⁵¹ The women added that it created an opportunity for them to discuss issues with their husbands that are not usually discussed openly. In this context women are able to introduce the subject of family planning, a starting point for the adoption of a method of contraception. These conclusions were drawn thanks to the UN funded immersion of a multi-disciplinary team in the area.

UNICEF is currently working to develop both process and impact indicators for evaluation of community radio. The following indicators are excerpted from a draft of “Healthy Communication” Materials – Number 7 – Evaluation. The indicators are still a work in progress, and are not intended to represent a comprehensive list of possible indicators, but may provide a useful starting point for UNFPA country programmes in developing systems to monitor the progress and evaluate the impact of community radio.

Process Evaluation

Assessment of progress in implementing communication intervention plans:

Overall

Partnerships: success in mobilizing key communications and health partners for health communication programming

Reach: percentage of the target group(s) who received the health communication information and messages

Reaction: views of that group on the relevance of the health communications initiatives to their everyday lives and/or work tasks

Involvement: have people experiencing the health issues been centrally involved in the programme initiatives developed?

Partnerships

News Media Partnerships

Have the news media that best reach the most important populations for gains in development status increased their focus on the priority development issues?

Is there an ongoing, regular communication mechanism with the key decision makers in those news organizations?

Are the news organizations receiving the information and ideas that they most require?

⁵¹ UNDP/World Bank/WHO. “Mucoore (Trusted Friend), let’s share with others! Developing radio and illustration materials for the Healthy Women Conselling Guide.”

Are the news organizations receiving development information and ideas in forms that make it easy for them to comprehend and use?

Have priority development issues been a prominent focus of the major news media industry?

Entertainment Partnerships

What is the level of increase in the focus of the 5 most popular entertainment programmes on [your] priority development issue as an integral part of their entertainment?

Is there regular communication with the scriptwriters and producers of the most popular entertainment programmes?

Is there an established, ongoing communication mechanism with the key decision-makers in the entertainment industry?

Have relationships been developed with the owners and managers of the most important entertainment organizations?

Has the skill level of people in the organization to work with those in entertainment been raised?

Are the development issues and ideas presented to the entertainment community in ways that are easy for them to comprehend and use?

Do entertainment industry events have a prominent focus on development issues?

Community Media Partnerships

What is the level of increase in the focus of the most popular community media on priority development issues as an integral part of their media coverage?

Is there regular communication with the editors, organizers and main contributors to community media?

Is there an established, ongoing communication mechanism with the key decision-makers in the main community media?

Have relationships been developed with the owners and managers of the most important community media organizations?

Has the skill level of people in the development sector to work with those in community media been raised?

Are the development information and ideas presented to the community media in ways that are easy for them to comprehend and use?

Do the regular meetings of those involved in community media have a prominent focus on development?

LESSONS LEARNED

The various experiences related here have demonstrated that there are many lessons to be remembered dealing with community radio. The first is the importance of autonomous, community run radio stations. At the same time, community radio stations are dependent on international aid organizations for funding and training, especially in the initial phases of station establishment. Once established, community radio provides a positive community-based outlet for education, entertainment and expression. It may be necessary for an aid organization periodically to assist through training and supplying updated equipment.

It is also beneficial for community radio stations to form alliances with local health providers and educational institutions, as well as with local businesses; these help support the activities of the radio station both financially and through the provision of information and resources.

In evaluating the effectiveness of a radio station, traditional survey methods can be lacking. Such survey techniques require a large number of volunteers and financial resources. Indicators, such as an increased rate in family planning activity recorded at a local health service provider after a programme about fertility is aired, can be useful indicators of effective radio programming. In this way, a partnership with local health care providers is essential both as a support institution for programmes aired on community radio and as a tool for evaluation of effectiveness.

WHY SHOULD UNFPA FOCUS ON COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS?

UNFPA's mandate is to provide assistance to governments in population and development issues. After the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, UNFPA's focus shifted to reproductive health and rights, women's empowerment, and gender equity issues. UNFPA communication approaches in these areas are changing the focus from relying on mass media and the creation of awareness about reproductive health issues to "approaches which allow people to ask questions, clarify their feelings, get feedback and clarify rumors."⁵²

⁵² Communication Initiative. Interview with UNFPA Communication Programme Specialists. November 2001.

There are strong indications that radio has a particularly strong impact among women;⁵³ thus local and community radio is a particularly effective and important tool in achieving UNFPA's objectives in reproductive health and women's rights.

Additionally, UNFPA is revising its strategic direction through a number of working groups that are evaluating different aspects of the organization, including programme and policies, providing an opportunity to "boost the role of communication for social mobilization and social development."⁵⁴ As this paper demonstrates, local and community radio is an excellent means of furthering communication for social change.

The only true form of development is that which calls upon the populations involved in the process. It must be carried out in the spirit of community participation and rely upon the abilities of the individuals affected. All steps leading to development must encompass cross-sectoral consultations allowing for cultural expression and maximum participation by the communities at which such projects are aimed.

Community radio recognizes that the right to communicate is the premise of development, and that enlarging the scope of one's consciousness is the foundation of long-lasting development. In many parts of the world, the right to freedom of expression is still being trampled upon. More and more, participatory types of communication are being practiced in the face of numerous obstacles. They take on a variety of forms, not the least of which is radio.

Perhaps the most compelling argument for why international development organizations such as UNFPA should support community radio comes from AMARC. "The right to communicate is a universal human right which serves and underpins all other human rights and which must be preserved and extended in the context of rapidly changing information and communication technologies."⁵⁵

⁵³ The Communication Initiative. Gordon Adam: The Hot Five.

⁵⁴ Communication Initiative. Interview with UNFPA Communication Programme Specialists. November 2001.

⁵⁵ AMARC. Extract from the Milan Declaration. August 1998.

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