

# SUSTAINABILITY OF COMMUNITY

## RADIOS – MODULE 3

### A Training Guide



By Search for Common Ground with support from the British-French «Media for Democracy and Good Governance » project, funded by DFID (Department for International Development) and FCI (France Coopération Internationale)

Main Contributors: Thomas-Paul Banze; Pacifique Kalau; Destin Lwanga; Aloys Niyoyita; Nestor Nkurunziza.

# INTRODUCTION



This module represents the third in a series of brief guidebooks aiming to support the Sustainability of Community Radios. It responds to the growing prevalence of community radio in Sub-Saharan Africa and the challenges these stations face in their governance and operation. Drawing on years of experience in training, coaching and support in Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, among other settings, the guidebook provides concrete advice to help stations by exploring areas related to administrative management, resource generation, financial tools, marketing strategies and guidelines for programming.

This third module focuses on elaborates on the various aspects of human resources management such as evaluation and training, compensation for employees, communication and conflict prevention among staff members. The guide provides practical suggestions and guidance on how to motivate staff, how to handle conflicts and how to coordinate communication at the station. It contains sample criteria and other tools to facilitate the application of the principles it lays out. Module 3 builds on the notions and issues discussed over the course of Module 2, available at [http://www.radiopeaceafrica.org/index.cfm?lang=en&context\\_id=3&context=manuals](http://www.radiopeaceafrica.org/index.cfm?lang=en&context_id=3&context=manuals).

Module III takes a highly comprehensive and practical approach and can be useful for everyone whose role is essential in the day-to-day operations of a radio station: station managers, programme directors, technical directors and members of the Board of Directors, as well as other interested parties.

RFPA looks forward to sharing these modules over the course of the coming months, and invites your feedback on their relevance and usefulness within your stations and work. Comments are always welcome at [rfpa@sfcg.org](mailto:rfpa@sfcg.org)!

## Employee Management

The following section reviews the most essential features of managing the staff of a radio station.

### Compensation

The employer is responsible for providing a salary for the employees – their contribution to the station's objectives is conditional on material compensation. It also motivates the staff and can be used to reward employees for exceptional performance. Its absence, on the other hand, can lead to faltering motivation, frequent absences or even resignation.

Salaries are based on the financial means of the radio station and in accordance with national labour regulations. However, it is best to build a corporate culture where each employee feels that the radio's success is in his/her best interest: they need to understand that generating more revenue contributes to covering their own salary.

### Evaluation and Training of Staff

Evaluating and training radio employees contributes to improving the overall performance of the radio station and allows it to keep up with the latest technological and programmatic developments. It is a crucial enhancing the capacity of the staff and producing high-quality programs that support community development.

#### *Training*

Training covers all actions undertaken to ensure that the employees are capable of fulfilling their duties at present and in the future. Since employees of a community radio come from different organizations and backgrounds, they might or might not have been trained for community radio programming. It is the responsibility of the management to assess the staff members' needs and plan training and other professional development activities, taking into consideration the station's financial resources.

Staff training is in fact a priority area of human resources management – it determines the quality of programming. After the program manager or the person in charge of HR made sure during the initial hiring process that the job description fits the radio's needs (see Module 2 for more details), it is essential that the incoming staff receives training and orientation about their position, the structure of the radio station, the roles of other employees and other relevant information.

Trainings can take place outside the radio station or on the premises. The advantage of the latter is that staff can use the technology and equipment they use in their everyday work. Trainers can be current employees or outside consultant and experts.

### *Performance Reviews*

Evaluating the performance of the station's personnel is the purview of the station manager. S/he assesses all employees annually based on a set of specific evaluation criteria tailored to reflect the specificities of each position. The results of the performance reviews are then communicated to the Management Committee. The manager is regularly assessed by the Management Committee based on evaluation criteria relevant to his/her duties.

Sample criteria for performance review include:

- Outputs
- Professionalism
- Sense of community
- Fulfilment of duties as required by the position
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Creativity
- Decision-making process
- Ability to take initiatives

Below you will find a sample performance review sheet to evaluate the performance and professional development of the radio station's personnel.

#### **SAMPLE PERFORMANCE REVIEW SHEET**

**Name of employee:**

**Position:**

**Date:**

**Period evaluated:**

**Name of evaluator:**

#### *General Evaluation Questions*

Current position

How do you perceive your current work?

Does the initial job description correspond to the work that you are currently doing?

What are your priorities in your job?

Specific tasks and events

What would you consider the most important events or milestones since you have started working here? Why?

What problems have affected your work or you personally?

#### Individual progress

What progress have you made so far?

#### Work Environment

How do you perceive your position within the organization?

#### Working Conditions

How would you evaluate your current workload?

#### *General Duties*

##### Main Tasks

What tasks are you in charge of based on your original job description?

##### Skills and Competence

Please give us your opinion on the following skills:

- Sense of initiative
- Sense of responsibility
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving skills
- Communication skills

#### *Professional Development*

What is your biggest weakness and strength at the workplace?

What are your professional objectives in your current position?

Would you like to assign yourself additional objectives?

Date:

---

Signature of employee

---

Signature of the evaluator

## Managing and Motivating Staff

A good manager needs to see how to manage relationships between people working at the station as well as between the station staff and the community. S/he needs to prevent grievances before they arise and resolve conflicts when they can be prevented while at the same time ensuring that the station produces quality, reliable programming that responds to the information needs of the listeners. Motivational tools are important to keep the staff enthusiastic about the station's mission and to provide them with incentives to improve their performance.

### *Different management styles*

The station manager needs to coordinate and supervise a group of employees to make sure that the station accomplishes its goals. His/her efficiency in fulfilling this role depends on his/her management style. While each person has his/her own personal style, Blake-Mouton (2002) outlined the following main categories<sup>1</sup>:

#### *The paternalist style*

This style manifests itself by the manager's keen interest in the personal relations but less enthusiasm for radio programming. A person adopting this management style seeks the approval of the employees at all cost. This style hinders the efficiency of the station: it causes low levels of productivity and a general resistance to change.

#### *Authoritarian style*

An authoritarian station manager is interested in the production of radio programming but has little concern for the employees. S/he orders tasks to be done, and directs the station without consultation or discussion with the stakeholders. The drawbacks of such style include passivity and submission of employees, failure to use their personal skills to the fullest, hostility and sabotage.

#### *Laissez-faire style*

In this case the manager has little interest in either the programming or the personnel. S/he does not intervene when there is conflict or the production does not live up to standards. This results in low level of interest from the staff and ultimately leads to the closure of the radio station.

#### *Consultative style*

Managers adopting the consultative style are focused on production but also in the personnel. S/he thinks that there is a gap between the objectives of the station and that of the employees – and tries to bridge this divide by finding a compromise. Even though the station is functional, it still does not provide quality programming.

#### *Participative style*

In this case, the manager has vested interest in both the radio programming of the station and the employees in charge of it. S/he considers that the mission of the station and the goals of its employees are complimentary. The success of the station is at the same time a reflection of the professional fulfilment of the staff members. Employees are involved in setting objectives, the means to achieve those and defining their work conditions. This style produces a maximum level of productivity and good working environment characterized by team spirit and positive atmosphere.

---

<sup>1</sup> R.BLAKE t MOUTON, cité par J. Baptiste ILBOUDO, comment créer et gérer une radio communautaire, p38, juillet 2002

The participative management style is the best choice for a community radio station manager although certain circumstances may compel him/her to adopt certain elements of the authoritarian style on a case-by-case basis.

### *Motivational Strategies*

Motivation is important feedback for employees. Psychology defines motivation as a conscious or unconscious factor that incentivizes the individual to act in a certain manner. There is a difference between positive motivation – that orients the behaviour to achieve a positive, satisfactory goal – and negative motivation – that provides an incentive to avoid a certain goal or target. For a station manager, a motivated employee is someone who genuinely tries to accomplish his work and demonstrates this by his/her efforts.

The factors behind motivation are numerous. Below are a number of suggestions that may help to maximize the productivity of an employee.

- Job security and trust in the workplace
- Satisfactory salary and other benefits
- Responsibility – the positions and the tasks should be substantial and use the talent of the individual
- Acknowledgment of talent and merit –for instance, awarding someone a “Best Producer of the Month” title can be highly motivating
- General work conditional – availability of technological and material resources
- Perspective of positive outcomes and success – each employee should be given assignments that respond to his/her skills and knowledge. Work that is too easy or too challenging can lower the moral of staff members while success has a positive, encouraging effect on people.

Other motivational tools can include: compliments and positive reinforcement, training and skills-building opportunities, team-building opportunities like staff meetings, working lunches, and solidarity events, and periodic stipends when revenue allows.

### The Three Principles of Motivation

These principles help to improve employee’s motivation and their level of productivity.

#### *1. The Roberval balance principle*

According to the spirit of this principle, one must put the performance of the employee in one scale of a balance and in the other scale what the radio provides the employee (salary, benefits, etc.). The station manager must oversee this balance constantly. If it changes at the expense of the employee, the manager must compensate it with positive feedback or some other type of motivational tool.

#### *2. Principle of equity*

Two people with same qualifications and accomplishments must receive the same compensation.

#### *3. Principle of time*

The degree and level of motivation of the employee is different today than it will be tomorrow. Motivation can drift away. It must be continuously maintained.

### *Communicating with the Personnel*

Communication and free flow of information contributes to motivating employees. If the need to know and understand the functioning of the station is not handled well, it results in uncertainty, anxiety and loss of motivation.

As paradoxical as it may sound, community radio stations often experience communication problems.

Examples include:

- Problems with upwards information flows: producer does not communicate with the programme manager or the station manager.
- Problems with downwards information flows: the station manager does not inform the producer about his decisions.
- Problems with horizontal information flow: the different programme managers do not communicate with the technical manager.

Each manager on the station should try to avoid communication failures and solve communication problems because it contributes to the efficiency of the station. Free information flow among employees allows to

- Abide by the rules of the station
- Achieve a greater involvement in working towards the objectives of the station
- Provide the necessary information and data for decision making and the execution of other tasks
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities associated with each task
- Take into consideration individual needs and achievements.

### *Effective communication*

The individual management style adopted by the head of the station determines his/her communication style as well. However, certain general criteria of what constitutes good communication can be established. The following figure lists some of the most prominent ones.

- The capacity to listen
- Clarity in written and oral expression
- Empathy
- Mutual respect and politeness
- Conveying feelings and emotions

There are several ways for a station manager to communicate with the personnel and vice versa. The best method depends on the function of the communication, the parties involved and the urgency of the message.

### *Oral Communication*

Oral communication is a specific characteristic of the African culture. However, at the workplace, oral messages or notes are to be used with caution. The goal is to try to avoid oral instructions and gradually transition to using written instructions – even if oral communication “humanises” the actors of the interaction.



An oral message is simple, short and consists of simple words that are easy to remember. If there are several intermediaries involved – even if the message is brief – it is preferable to pass it along as a written note. It is of course also important not to exaggerate and only manage through written instructions.

### *Staff Meetings*

Staff Meetings are integral parts of the life of a community radio. It allows staff members to exchange information on current projects, problems, opportunities, facilitating the work of everyone and making sure that the operations of the station run smoothly.

Below are the most important guidelines for preparing, conducting and following up on staff meetings.

- Let participants know what type of staff meeting is taking place (informative, problem solving, management issues, etc.);
- Pre-determine the objectives of the meetings and select participating staff members based on their qualifications, motivation of efficiency;
- Send participants the agenda or any documentation necessary prior to the meeting to allow them to go through the documents;
- Make it explicit from the start of the meeting what is expected from the participant and what role they have in the meeting;
- The moderator should not monopolise talking time. S/he should listen attentively to each employee, trying to understand him/her and not judge the person. S/he should create an environment where everyone can speak freely and ask for the opinion of minority groups or those who have not intervened;
- Before the end of the session, the moderator must bring back the meeting to the main points or the decisions to be taken, the solutions that have been discussed and the methods to be used to implement those solutions or other actions;
- The note taker must send the minutes of the meeting to the participants.

### *Preventing and Managing Conflicts*

Conflicts are inevitable at any workplace or among any other group of humans – we see it every day over values such as security, power, autonomy or benefits. Conflicts are inevitable since humans will always have different values, needs and interests. As it has been mentioned before, it falls upon the station manager to prevent and manage conflicts as they can be harmful for the radio station as a whole. In order to solve a conflict, however, one must know its source, its different forms and the strategies required to manage them.

### *Conflict Prevention Measures*

Being aware of the sources of conflicts may help to prevent them. Here are some strategies to make sure that the values, positions and interests of the employees do not conflict with each other.

- Communicating with the personnel
- Delegate tasks and responsibilities
- Distribute resources in an equal way
- Create teams based on the skills and knowledge of the employees

A good manager will remember that other issues can create conflict such as...

- The level of interconnectedness of activities and tasks

- Different political, religious or ethnic background
- Significant age difference
- Lack of respect between men and women employees

### *Types of Conflicts and Management Strategies*

Conflicts can arise between individuals, an individual and a group or between groups or teams. Conflict management and resolution skills are essential for a station manager – the productivity of his/her station depends on it, as well as the well-being of the employees. There are three main categories to handle conflicts among personnel: escaping the conflict, mitigating it or facing it.

In the first case, the manager tends to avoid or escape conflict situations or sensitive topics. This behaviour is harmful and irresponsible since it can further exacerbate tensions and let the situation get out of hand, devolve into chaos.

Those who advocate the mitigation strategy prefer to postpone the confrontation, settle things and calm the tension among the employees temporarily without really tackling the root causes of the conflict. Again, this does not solve the problem and the conflict is likely to erupt again sooner or rather, disrupting once again the work of the station.

Facing the conflict consists in confronting the parties in disagreement and tackling the problems at the core of the conflict. Instead of resorting to punishment, the best way to handle this situation is to negotiate with everyone involved.

Negotiation has its own rules and principles such as:

- Determining the nature of the conflict
- Prepare thoroughly for the negotiation process
- Create a positive, non-hostile atmosphere from the beginning
- Facilitate dialogue in a constructive way
- Listen and understand the position of the parties
- Focus on the needs of the parties when trying to find a solution
- Try to come up with a mutually beneficial outcome

Open communication and motivational tools can help the station managers minimize conflicts among the personnel. However, should contentious issues arise, the person in charge should facilitate finding a solution to the problem in order to ensure the continuous functioning of the radio station and a constructive atmosphere at the workplace.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



**For more information on the management of community radio stations, please refer to the list below.**

*"A Guide to Sustainability"* by Developing Media Partners. Available at

<http://www.radiopeaceafrica.org/assets/texts/pdf/Lo%20Res%20Guidebook.pdf>

*"Community Media Sustainability Guide – The Business of Changing Lives"* by Internews. Available at:

<http://www.internews.org/research-publications/community-media-sustainability-guide-business-changing-lives>

*"Community Radio Handbook"* by UNESCO. Available at:

<http://developingradio.org/files/UNESCO%20CR%20Handbook.pdf>

*"Community Radio Start-Up Information Guide"* by AMARC. Available at:

[http://www.amarc.org/documents/manuals/community-radio-start-up-guide\\_e.pdf](http://www.amarc.org/documents/manuals/community-radio-start-up-guide_e.pdf)

*"Governance, Management, and Sustainability of Community Radio Stations"* by J-A. 'Rantimi Jays, Leiden University. Available at: <http://www.internews.org/research-publications/community-media-sustainability-guide-business-changing-lives>

*"The African Community Manager's Handbook – A Guide to Sustainable Radio"* by AMARC. Available at:

[http://www.amarc.org/documents/manuals/The\\_African\\_CR\\_Manager.pdf](http://www.amarc.org/documents/manuals/The_African_CR_Manager.pdf)

*"What is a healthy station"* by Developing Media Partners. Available at

<http://developingradio.org/files/WhatisaHealthyStation.pdf>

**We hope you will find our Manual useful and we always look forward to your comments and feedback. Please do not hesitate to share your thoughts at [rfpa@sfcg.org](mailto:rfpa@sfcg.org)!**