SUSTAINABILITY OF COMMUNITY RADIOS – MODULE 4

A TRAINING GUIDE

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Part I: INTRODUCTION

This module represents the fourth 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 their vital role in providing a space for diverse community voices. However, community radios face many challenges in areas of 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, to name just a few, the guidebook provides concrete advice to assist stations in improving administrative management, increasing resource generation, recommending financial tools, improving marketing strategies and guidelines for programming.

This Module IV focuses on the particular characteristics of community radio stations and how these different features influence the way one determines programming. The first section examines ownership questions and the different forms of collaboration between the radio station and the community.   The second section of the module provides insight into the preparation of a programming schedule and its importance. In addition, the module contains a sample programming plan, which can be adapted as necessary to help the senior management better structure their programmes, coordinate with the station's producers and journalists, and manage the expectations of their audience.

Module IV is useful for anyone whose role is essential in the day-to-day operations of a radio station: station managers, programme directors, technical directors, members of the Board of Directors, and other interested parties.

The module builds on the principles and documents discussed over the course of Module I-III, including administrative management issues such as the governing bodies of a community radio station; and human resources questions. All previous modules are available at Radio for Peacebuilding Africa's (RFPA) website at

http://www.radiopeaceafrica.org/index.cfm?lang=en&context_id=3&context=manuals .

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!

Part II: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

A. Approach of this Module

Global objective:

- Learn to manage community radio operations and programmes in an efficient manner.

Specific objectives:

- Understand the logic and dynamics of community radio stations.
- Learn to create effective and efficient programming using a participatory approach.
- Internalize different programming strategies to ensure the community-oriented dimension of the radio station.

Activities proposed for trainings:

- (1) Brainstorming session about the principles and the mission of the community radio phenomenon.
- (2) Brainstorming session about the participatory process of creating the programme schedule of a community radio station.
- (3) Identify and understand the strategies necessary to measure the community-oriented dimension of the radio.
- (4) Create tools and plans for radio management.

Approach proposed for trainings[1]:

- (1) Question-Answer game followed by synthesizing the responses with trainer facilitation (90 min).
- (2) Question-Answer game; visiting the community to collect information about the population's concerns; brainstorming in 2 groups of 5, followed by discussion (180 min).

Expected results:

At the end of a training based on this Module, participants will be able to :

- Be acquainted with the principles of community radio and distinguish it from other types of radio stations and programmes;
- Create participatory programming ; and
- Implement and internalize efficient programme management tools.

Total duration of the training is approximately: 6 hours and 30 min.

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[1] More information on training techniques and activities can be found in Module 1 of this module series.

Community radio management includes various aspects of programme-related activities: implementing the station's action plan, devising the first programming plan, creating the first programmes and updating the programme schedule… all this must be monitored and evaluated regularly. The following section reviews in detail the most important principles related to programming and the specific nature of community radios, including the distinct features that differentiate them from other types of radios.

Understanding the concept of community radio

Community radios are tools for communication of a local community for the sake of the community's development and understanding of the events and challenges facing them. A community radio station depends on the community where they are based for management and support.

In this context, the expression « community » refers to a group of people or a collective set of citizens that share the common interest in making sure community members are well informed about events and issues that affect them as individuals and members of the community. However, it should be noted that the most effective community radio stations represent a divers set of viewpoints and beliefs from within the community, thereby promoting tolerance and peaceful exchange of opinions.

Ownership and control of the station

The **ownership and the control of the radio must remain in the hands of the community or community organization** through the creation of democratic mechanisms that allow the community to participate in the different aspects of decision-making and management (see Module II for more details). These structures must resist co-opting particular interests of one or more individuals. This also means that the community is involved in developing the programming, contributing to the financial sustainability of the radio.

Community participation

Community participation is a very important aspect of a community radio that derives from the community ownership and is closely linked with its not-for-profit nature. This participation should happen at different levels of the radio station from the Board of Directors to the decision on what programmes should be produced and broadcasts. Community members should be encouraged to take part in the audit and the evaluation of the management and programmes. They may also participate in directing and creating programmes or finding funding for the station.

Besides these three main characteristics that distinguish community radios from other types of radios, other differentiating features include the inclusion of diverse voices including minorities

and marginalized populations in the creation and production of programmes and the inclusion of various local languages spoken in the community in the programme planning and broadcasting.

What is not considered as community radio?

There are radio stations created by the state that serve the community and sometimes consider themselves community radios. By the same token, private stations may also involve the community or call for the participation of members of the community, whether or not for financial purposes. These types of stations are not considered as community radios for the reasons outlined below.

What differentiates community radios from other types of radios?

There are three main sectors in the media for radio.
- <u>Public broadcasting</u> includes media outlets whose primary mission is public service and are financed by the government and the public. Public radio stations are controlled by the state. Public radio designates organizations financed by the state and the public. It is controlled by the government.
- <u>Private commercial radios</u> are private services established with the purpose of earning profit. It is controlled by independent commercial groups or individuals.
- <u>Community radio</u> refers to a not-for-profit entity controlled by the community or a specific community-based organization that is the owner of the station as well.

"Community Radio" and "Rural Radio" concept

In a number of African countries, state-run rural radio stations dominate the media landscape of radio programming. These stations are, by definition, controlled by the government whose purpose is to serving the community. The services provided by the rural radio stations have often been the most effective way to for the government to supply information to the people. When rural radio programming includes community voices, it can provide a space for government and communities to communicate.

While these stations are appreciated, some argue that the access and control provided to the communities are limited, even if the stations are not used for government propaganda. The purpose of this guide is not to judge the merit of these arguments, but to simply point out that the state-run rural radio stations are not community radio stations because they are not managed by community members, they are managed by the government.

Private and independent radio

In a number of countries, the recent liberalization of the air waves has allowed the proliferation of private stations. In certain cases, there is no clear distinction among public, private and community sectors in the radio. The liberalization is the fact that individuals may establish radio stations.

In countries including Angola or South Africa, public radios have been privatized and become commercial radios after being bought by individuals or commercial groups. This process has been perceived as contributing to democracy. While some private commercial radio stations, address the needs of communities by broadcasting programmes of community interests, especially in countries where the laws do not allow community radios to exist, these stations are still for-profit entities and so the interest will usually be about making a profit.

Even if a community enjoys certain rights regarding access and participation in a private station, it cannot claim any rights to the station. From a legal point of view, these rights are reserved exclusively for the owner or the shareholders of the private station. Consequently, this type of radio cannot be considered as community radio.

Community radio programmes

The role of the programme schedule

The programme schedule or plan is a spread sheet that presents the details of the programmes broadcasted every day of the week.

A good programme plan will mirror the radio's spirit and personality. It should reflect the main concerns of the community and the audience of these programs, by its nature and the content of the programs. This plan evolves continuously: the programme evaluation allows the station to readjust it in order to reflect the changing needs of the community and to get ahead of the competition.

Community radios are tools that allow a community to focus on its needs. This means that individuals deeply involved in community radio need to have a thorough understanding of the communities and its characteristics. The **creation process of community radio stations** is spurred by the direct and continuous interaction with the audience. Therefore, programming of community radios must take into consideration this participative aspect.

SAMPLE PROGRAMME SCHEDULE[2]

TIME	PROGRAMME	SYNOPSIS
Programme for Monday, 12 October 2012		
08:00	WAKE UP AFRICA	Wake Up Africa showcases the various issues from politics, social to economy across Africa and diasporean Africans with intellectual interviewing, up to date news reviews, News bulletins, discussion and live hook ups broadcasters and journalists across Africa with a full blend of good music. **Presenter:** Various (Space Clottey and Emma Akwafo)
09:00	PEOPLES' PARLIAMENT	A phone-in discussion show allowing listeners acting as members of parliament to speak their minds on any issue affecting Africans worldwide with celebrities and community leaders often in the hot seat acting as ministers or otherwise, with the host as the Speaker of parliament. This is a youth programme to give them a test of Parliamentary debate. **Presenter:** Various (Space Clottey and Emma Akwafo)
11:00	MUSIC 4 U	**Presenter:** African Simba
14:00	WORK & HAPPINESS	The Work and Happiness talk show centres on opening doors in the work environment. It focuses on the challenges that Africans and the Diaspora face in work, business and organisations local and global, and how a variety of factors such as global issues, culture, history, relationships and development can have greater impact. **Presenters:** Mariama Kabba & Daniel Oppong
15.00 15:30	EAGLE HOUSE MINISTRIES	**Presenter:** Bishop Louis Arku
16:00	ON THE ROAD	The show takes the stress out of the rush hour traffic by listening to the finest African Music & News with Travel & Weather updates and a touch of Jokes. **Presenter:** Various
19:00	COMMUNITY AFFAIRS	An educational programme concerning, social security issues. Shopping, cinemas, social youth clubs and events-wedding activities, birthdays etc. And success stories in the community. **Presenter:** Nana Churcher
20:00	AFRICA SPEAKS	Political discussion programme on Africa, the OAU, the AU, African Leaders' rise and fall. The African political history, the riches of Africa, beyond the independence struggle in African, neo-colonialism in Africa. This is a 'history class 'for the youth. **Presenter:** Esther Stanford
22:00	LOOK EAST	This programme focuses mainly on East African issues and covers the countries of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Look East is a two hour programme which brings you entertainment news, weekly current affairs from East Africa and the Diaspora, as well as interviews from public personalities. **Presenter:** Esther Stanford

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[2] Programme schedule of the Voice of Africa radio station (FM 98.4), available at
http://www.voiceofafricaradio.com/schedule.html

Creating a programme plan should be based on certain rules and principles. It usually includes three factors:

1. The station's objectives and mission

The station's mission[3] encapsulates its core values and main objectives that describe the founding philosophy, determine its commitment to the community and guide the work of its personnel. More specifically, the mission of a community radio:

- Summarizes the audience's vision;
- Summarizes the vision of the staff members;
- *Reflects the community's vision of reality*; and
- Defines the identity of the radio.

While the mission represents the long-term strategy of the station, the objectives set more specific targets that will help the radio to achieve its mission.

The station manager and the producers should rely on the mission and the radio's objectives and its core values when developing a programme plan. It is a significant challenge in the daily life of the station to reincarnate these objectives and the mission in a practical way and make sure that the programming embodies a genuinely participative and community-centred philosophy. Module V of this module series will talk more in detail about how to implement a genuinely community-centred approach in radio programming.

2. The audience's concerns

Community radios address the needs of the community. Each community has an internal dynamic, needs and expectations, and its own special way of doing things. In general, individuals listen to programmes that are interesting and most relevant to their lives. Therefore, before developing a programme plan, the staff of the community radio station should:

- Identify the potential audience;
- Understand the community's fields of interest;
- Know community's informational needs; and
- Identify the strengths, challenges and aspirations of its members as they pertain to the radio station to develop staff's capacity to move forward.

In order to understand the main points of interest of the community, four factors should be taken into consideration:

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[3] For more information on how to write a mission statement, please refer to Radtke, J.M. (1998) "How to Write a Mission Statement" by the The Grantmanship Centre, available at http://www.tgci.com/magazine/How%20to%20Write%20a%20Mission%20Statement.pdf. For examples, visit http://www.missionstatements.com/nonprofit_mission_statements.html

- Time: Audience members are principally concerned about recent, timely issues.
- Geography: Audience members are mainly interested in what happens around their geographic location.
- Emotional: Audience members are invested about topics that concern issues about family, relationships, and other psycho-social issues.
- Professional: The audience is concerned about topics that relate to their professional aspirations.

The program plan should also take into consideration the interests and concerns of the (potential) partners working in the field of development because there are often opportunities for the community radio stations to partner with development efforts which are beneficial to the community. Engaging with the government, NGOs, and other organisations can be a successful way to raise funds because these entities need communication channels to reach diverse populations. Given the independent nature of community radios, it is up to the station manager to decide to what extent the station serves the interest of these stakeholders and what extent programming potentially benefits community members.

Basic elements that determine the format and the content of community radios

There are several administrative, structural, programmatic and financial elements that contribute to successful programming. The topics of human resources, administrative management and structure are covered in Manuals I-III; the financial sustainability is the topic of the next modules. The programmatic elements that stations managers and producers need to take into consideration are the following:

- The everyday life of the community – the audience;
- The main concerns of the community;
- The main concerns of specific groups of the community such as youth or women;
- Special emphasis must be given to marginalized groups;
- Conserving the cultural identity of the radio and the community;
- Considering local languages spoken in the community; and
- Integrating the traditional communication channels.

Apart from these basic elements, producers may develop their own concepts based on their creativity and their relationship with the community.

Programming as a participative process

Focusing programming on the population needs:

- The programme priority should be focused on community issues which have been identified.
- The news and other information should have a local focus (for example, something that happened at the national level – how does that affect the community.)
- Programmes should go beyond simple broadcasting and contribute to building the community's capacity in relevant issues. There should also be some focus on finding solutions to problems.
- The programmes broadcasted by the station emphasise the role of the community as creator of the programmes and distributor of information. The programmes play a crucial role in conserving the local culture as an instrument of community cohesion and development.

Pre-audit

The pre-audit with the community is a crucial aspect of the participatory process. The population must have the opportunity to evaluate, modify or reject the programme or elements of the programme because otherwise the radio station staff cannot be sure if the programmes are useful for the community. The contribution of the population in production and programming is key for the sustainability of the community radio because the participation builds an investment from community members.

The pre-audit may take place during a community meeting or throughout a number of meetings with various segments of the community.

Pre-audits should be prepared carefully. Below is a list of basic things to consider before undertaking such a process:

1. Take note of the time the population is available to listen to the programmes.
2. Make sure that the programmes that are to be broadcasted to the group are clear, understandable and accessible.
3. Organize live debates with the target groups.

If the target group of the programmes broadcasted by the station is the entire population, for the purposes of the pre-audit a survey questionnaire may be created for a sample of the population. If the target group for certain programmes is only a segment of the population or a

particular group (such as youth of a certain age), representative members of this segment should be invited to participate listening and debating about the programme.

Monitoring and evaluation of the programming

Knowing the audience is indispensable in creating and producing effective programming, an assessment should be conducted before elaborating the programme plan. Tracking the community's concerns should be a continuous exercise. The radio can implement different mechanisms in order to get to know the audience and keep in touch with them. This can include listening clubs, audience association, public committees, exchange with focus groups, etc.

> The monitoring and evaluation studies reflect upon:
>
> − The main interests of the audience;
> − The level of appreciation for programmes;
> − New ideas on adapting the content and the format to the changing needs of the population;
> − The profile of the audience members (age, gender, socio-economic categories);
> − The radio's position compared to its competition; and
> − The main listeners are of the programmes and the station.

Mechanisms to ensure the participatory aspect of community radios

Besides the different organs such as the General Assembly or the Board of Directors that provide an opportunity for community members to participate in the management of the station[4], the creation of certain mechanisms may facilitate involving the community at large.

1. Producing community broadcastings as a way of involving the community in the production

The main aspect of community radios is the participation of the community members in its activities. This may happen, for instance, by producing public broadcasting. In this case, the radio goes to visit different communities asking community members to participative in its broadcast. This gives community members a space for them to give their opinions and share experiences. It also gives the community radio and those involved the opportunity to collect feedback at a very local level.

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[4] For more detail on the Board of Directors and other management structures, please see Module II of this series

This diverse participative approach to broadcasting allows the station to decentralize its activities and turns listeners into actors and participants.

2. Local committees or listening clubs as a framework for participation

Local committees or listening clubs create a space for regular groups to meet and discuss programmes. It is also an opportunity to conduct focus group interviews which discuss programmes and other aspects of the radio station. Focus groups make it possible to:

● Collect information on the expectations of the audience and their principal preoccupations;
● Verify if the objectives that were set in accordance with the community's needs are still valid;
● Update the programmes based on open discussions with the audience and discuss issues that the station may be experience; and
● Raise funds: it is an opportunity to raise awareness among community members about their duty towards the radio station.

With time, the enthusiasm of the audience attending such meetings may decline. Therefore, each occasion should be used as an opportunity to engage community members and revive the interest in the station and its programming.

3. Involving the community in developing and readjusting the programme plan

As it has been mentioned, the programme plan must reflect the issues of the target population. Therefore, its creation cannot be undertaken independently from the community. There are a number of different mechanisms that allow the station to involve community members thereby respecting the participatory nature of community radios.

To truly serve the community, the radio station personnel must identify the community's needs and its listening tendencies. Regularly conducted surveys and focus groups (at least once a year) provide this data. Using and reflecting upon these numbers and facts allows for programming that is based on the community's feedback and input.[5]

By providing answers to community suggestions, questions and concerns, the station gives demonstrates that it is for their benefit. The surveys also help to collect feedback from the population about the programming. This feedback can be useful in readjusting the programme plan based on new needs and issues. The community-focus of the radios means a constant readjustment of programming based on the evolving socio-economic and political reality of the communities.

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[5] For more information on how to conduct survey and focus groups, visit the Research Methods Knowledge Base at http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/survey.php and Krueger, R.A. (2002) "Designing and Conducting Focus Group Interviews" by the University of Minnesota, available at http://www.comm.umn.edu/~akoerner/courses/5431-S10/Krueger-FocusGroupInterviews.pdf

4. Public relations as a way to be at the disposal of the community

In an effort to involve the community in programming, the Committee for Programming (within the Board of Management) should play a public relations role. The role of this committee is to meet with the various structures, community leaders, and community organizations regularly in order to discuss issues relating to the station. It is one feedback loop - to listen to their suggestions and understand their needs. It demonstrates that they are an integral part and beneficiary of radio. On-going consultations with community leaders are another mechanism to strengthen the community involvement.

5. Producing specific and targeted programmes as part of the participatory dimension

In order to ensure the diversity of voices in the programming, locally spoken languages should be showcased. It also provides an opportunity to highlight a group's cultural heritage.

Guaranteeing a community dimension also means providing air to different segments of the society (youth, women, etc.) but also different professions (artisans, artists, farmers, local business owners, etc). One should remember that communities are not homogeneous blocs - it has different components that should be highlighted and celebrated.

6. Co-organize activities to promote development

The station may have opportunities to be involved by sponsoring or co-organizing community events. These activities often have the goal of supporting local community organizations that work for development and can strengthen the relations between the station and its audience. They may also facilitate stronger connections and greater involvement with local organisations in the station's future programming. Both partners and community members may feel more vested in the station's work since the station itself has shown interest in the organizations' activities and their implementation.

This type of action also contributes to promote the participatory dimension of the stations and form strong ties with community organisations.

Communities often have high expectations vis-a-vis its radio station. These types of activities are a good occasion for the station to respond to these expectations and at the same time engage with the community. It is up to the radio to create the conditions and opportunities for the community members to participate and be involved.

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

"*Designing and Conducting Focus Group Interview*" by Krueger, R. A. , University of Minnesota. Available at: http://www.comm.umn.edu/~akoerner/courses/5431-S10/Krueger-FocusGroupInterviews.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

"*How to Conduct a Focus Group*" by Sharken, J.A., The Grantmanship Centre. Available at
http://www.tgci.com/magazine/How%20to%20Conduct%20a%20Focus%20Group.pdf

"*How to Write a Mission Statement*" by Raedtke, J.M., The Grantmanship Centre. Available at
http://www.tgci.com/magazine/How%20to%20Write%20a%20Mission%20Statement.pdf

"Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences" by Berg, B.L. (2011) Pearson: New Jersey.

"*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

"*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!