



“Innovative program production can go straight to the station’s bottom line — every time a new audience is created there are new opportunities for funding and sponsorship.”

— **JOHN VAN ZYL (2005)**

A sense of belonging, community radio and civil society, p12.

Acknowledgements	3
Staff	4
Introduction	5
Section 1:	7
What is it we want to sustain? Defining community media	7
Study: ‘Work with what you have’: Radio Vwa Peyisan Abriko	11
Study: Small towns find a voice online: Community media on the web	14
Section 2:	19
Understanding sustainability	19
Study: Soweto’s ‘Number One’: Jozi FM.	22
Study: Keeping the money neutral: Radio Izuba	25
Section 3:	28
Models of sustainable funding	28
Business models, plans and community media	30
Study: Diverse Sources of Funding: Radio Desi	32
Study: A lasting cup of coffee – the Coffee Lifeline Project.....	35
Study: Listener supported public radio in the United States	37
Section 4:	40
Programming creates audience that creates income	40
Study: ‘It’s your baby – it needs food’: Radio Gbafth	41
Study: The road from community service to social enterprise – Media for Development	44
Section 5:	46
Making donors work for you	46
Study: Getting your support to community media right.....	48
Sustainable energy for sustainable stations	51
Write a successful funding proposal and achieve your goals	52
Section 6:	54
The role of networks in sustaining community media	54
Study: Peru’s CNR – A centralized network.....	55
Study: Intercontinental Radio Communication System	57
Study: Balancing continued aid with public service mission in a competitive market	60
Section 7:	65
Community research for community sustainability	65
Study: Sustainability is about community investment and community commitment	70
Section 8:	72
The enabling legal environment for community media	72
Conclusion.☒	80
Resources	81

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Some years ago the notion of a business model for community media would have brought responses ranging from dismay to ridicule. Community media's origins in political struggle, its community ownership structures, its participatory production processes, and its whole purpose – to give voice to the voiceless, to provide an alternative to mainstream media, to place control of media in the hands of ordinary people – seem fundamentally to contradict the notions of both “business” and “model”.

Today, however, community media are becoming a valued and recognized part of the media landscape. International aid agencies, concerned about meeting the Millennium Development Goals, are showing ever greater interest in community media's ability to inform and empower. More and more governments are acknowledging the contribution of community media to local government, to basic and adult education, to health and economic development and are creating enabling policy and legal frameworks for community media. In the new era of recognition and legitimacy, community media are themselves increasingly seen as small enterprises with a responsibility to survive and sustain high quality community services.



This is not the only way in which the community media context is changing. The shift to digital communication technologies has brought about an explosion of new media activity and opportunities over the past decade. The Internet in particular has revolutionized information gathering, production, transmission and reception. Mixing of “old” media and new communications technologies – known as “convergence” – has turned mobile phones into radio receivers and cameras; computers into television sets; radio stations into post offices; citizens into journalists and introduced many, many other new beings, processes and formats. Community media are lapping up the new technologies and are using them in creative ways to extend their services, improve their journalism capacity, to generate income, cut costs and link migrant and diaspora communities with local communities back home.

New information and communications technologies are also making us look at the concept of community in different ways. While the “community” part of community media is still generally used to mean local, geographically defined

communities or communities organized around particular cultural or religious interests, the 21st century has seen the emergence of far looser global groupings and social networks. These are new kinds of “virtual” communities using the Internet to organize around local and global issues.

New technologies have also brought about greater competition for scarce resources. Advertising – at the core of most media business models – is now flooding to the Internet and all media are seeking new ways of making money. Community media today are engaging in activities like training, farming, research, managing Internet centers, operating telephone services – activities that go far beyond their primary role of involving communities in creating, packaging and disseminating news and information. Driving this energy is the growing realization that the long-term survival of community media rests in its ability to tap into diverse income streams.

The Guide

The *Community Media Sustainability Guide* explores some of the challenges and issues facing community media in the 21st century. It is designed to be of value to community media practitioners and to donors, trainers, consultants and others who provide support to community media in a changing environment. We draw on research and experiences of community media from all over the world to provide different perspectives on sustainability and suggestions as to how to achieve it.

We focus on financial sustainability. This is not because we believe that success with funding and finance automatically results in sustainable community media, but because funding and finance are a major concern. Financial sustainability is a particular concern in developing countries, where community media play a crucial and often life-saving role, and where their fortunes are so often tied to international donor support. The crunch comes when donors withdraw support. Ideally, this should be when the media are able to fund their own operations, but withdrawal schedules are usually set in moments of optimism when contracts are signed and tend to be based on promises of sustainability rather than on thorough planning and practical experience.

Our spotlight falls mainly on community media serving communities in developing countries. This in turn means a bias towards community radio because of its wide use in the developing world. However, a focus on radio does not exclude other forms of community media – newspapers, community media centers, online media, film and video. Community media of all kinds share principles and practices.

So how do you become financially sustainable? Unfortunately, there is no simple answer. Every situation and

organization is different. There is no one business model, no formula, no one-size-fits all solution, no secret recipe – only a variety of models and experiences, good and bad, to learn from.

So we cannot tell you how to achieve financial sustainability, but we can discuss the issues and share ideas. Throughout the guide we include examples of community media. We do this to illustrate some of our arguments, to demonstrate the struggles community media must face daily in order to survive, but above all to show the extraordinary creativity of the communities who build and sustain community media.

As a loose framework we have used a list of what we believe are the internal and external factors necessary for community media to achieve financial sustainability. Briefly, they are:

Internal factors – inside the organization

- A clear and focused community service mission and creative marketing of the mission;
- Stable and accountable leadership and governance;
- Effective management, financial management and planning;
- Internal training systems to ensure that human resources and capacity are constantly renewed;
- Appropriate technology – equipment that is durable, replaceable, affordable;
- Internal audience research capacity.

External factors – the community media environment

- An enabling legal and regulatory framework that will protect, guide and encourage creation of community media;
- A sustainable source of public funding;
- A national forum to advocate for community media; to co-ordinate

support provision; to market community media, and to set standards;

- A community-oriented content provider or a content sharing network to provide content that community media may not themselves have resources to create.

We do not deal with each comprehensively; however, we touch on all of them, as follows:

Section 1

Introduces community media, discusses its defining features and core concepts. We present an example of a typical community radio station, and **Persephone Miel** introduces online community media, which is a growing field.

Section 2

Discusses sustainability and financial sustainability, and presents two challenging studies of community radio stations facing issues around commercialism and independence.

Section 3

Discusses models of sustainable funding, the role of business models and examples from developed and developing countries.

Section 4

Bill Siemerling explores the role of the mission statement in achieving financial sustainability.

Section 5

In this section we tackle the question of international development support and the role of grants in developing and sustaining community media. **Birgitte Jallov** makes some practical suggestions.

Section 6

Discusses the importance of national associations and networks to achieving sustainability. **Bruce Girard** describes and discusses two older networks and associations serving community media

in Latin America. We also introduce Salam Watandar, a new network in Afghanistan.

Section 7

Birgitte Jallo presents a cost-effective yet credible and rigorous way of doing audience research.

Section 8

Kate Coyer scans the legal and regulatory environment and presents some best practice ideas.

Finally, we include list of useful resources, presented in a way that will make it easy for users to explore further and to locate information and ideas that are appropriate to their specific situations and contexts. Community media has become something of a growth industry and new books, papers and reports are appearing all the time. Many resources will have been missed, not because they aren't useful but because there are so many. Many of these can be tracked down on the websites we have listed, and elsewhere in the text.

We hope the guide will be of value to the thousands of community media activists and practitioners engaged in the daily struggle to build sustainable community media and to the many donors and development support agencies working with them.

When we talk about sustainability, what is it we want to sustain?

We start with some definitions of community media, because

this helps us understand what it is we want to sustain.

Defining community media

Community media are now widely recognized by governments and the international development community both for their reach and for their practices, that is, the ways in which they reach people. Recognition has led more and more governments (sometimes reluctantly, under pressure to democratize) to introduce laws and regulations that include community media.

What this means is that community media are increasingly being shaped and defined *within* mainstream systems, as a “third” tier of media. Community media are being defined in relation to the “first” and “second” tiers of commercial and public media. This is a shift from the past in which community media developed in opposition to the mainstream, to represent and give voice to oppressed, marginalized and excluded communities. In fact, one of the defining features of community media was its origins in people’s struggles against oppressive regimes, poverty and exploitation. There are many examples of community media of all kinds that have operated illegally and been closed down by repressive governments, sometimes using violence.

The new era of recognition and value owes a huge debt to decades of work by thousands of community media pioneers and activists, whose voices can be

heard in the new policies and laws being drafted.

Example – South Africa

The birth of community radio in South Africa is a classic example of community radio born in struggle and becoming a part of the mainstream.

South Africa’s community radio movement today comprises over 90 stations broadcasting to communities across the country. The movement started in the 1980s as a tiny resistance organization, CASET (the Cassette Education Trust), operating in just one province. CASET used cassette tape to distribute alternative news and information to meetings and rallies of the liberation movement. Programs included interviews with leaders and activists whose voices were barred from state radio and the white-owned mainstream press.¹

Over time, CASET was drawn into a community radio movement, learning through organizations like AMARC² and drawing lessons and international experiences into proposals for future media laws in a liberated South Africa.

“We had a lot of debate about the word community radio and what we wanted to call it and quite honestly at the time we thought we were inventing the word. We thought we’d invented the concept of community radio! It was only when AMARC got hold of our stuff somehow or other, and we got this thing inviting us to send something to the World Assembly of Community Radio. And we thought whoa hey man there’s other people out there doing it.”

— Edric Gorfinkel, founder of CASET and pioneer of community radio in South Africa.³

The definition of South African community radio that emerged from the anti-apartheid struggle is today enshrined in two laws, both of which assert that a community radio station is

- fully controlled by a non-profit body and run for non-profit purposes
- serves a particular community
- encourages community participation in selecting and running programs
- funded by donations, grants, sponsorships, advertising or membership fees, or by a combination of these methods.⁴

To be granted a license, the station must meet to all four criteria. South Africa’s legal definition sees the radio frequency spectrum as a public resource. Licenses represent frequencies and are held by communities through community structures. The community structures must ensure that the frequency is used to serve community needs.

Core principles within many definitions

Community media are dynamic entities. Many people see them as processes – communities taking control of their own development and using communications technology to do this – rather than as institutions organized around information and communications technologies. Because they have evolved in so many different contexts to serve so many different needs, and are continuing to evolve to respond to changing situations, community media both pre-date and defy definition.

AMARC gives the task of defining community radio over to its members, and lists on its website several answers to the question “what is community radio,” many of which embrace the principles of community ownership, community service, participatory practise and non-profit business model described in the South African example.⁵ There are also many definitions – all variations on the same themes – in the various charters and statements that have emerged over the past couple of decades as community radio slowly enters the mainstream.

“A community radio station is owned and controlled by a not-for-profit organization, the structure of which provides for membership, management, operation and programming primarily by members of the community at large. Programming should reflect the diversity of the market that the station is licensed to serve.

— The African Charter on Broadcasting (2001).

An operational definition

Rather than stating what community media is, or should be, we draw on the core principles of many definitions to forge an operational definition, emphasizing **what community media do**, and **how they do it**. Our two defining features are therefore **community service** (what they do) and **community participation** (how they do it).

We take this approach partly for practical reasons. An operational definition is more suited to a guide about financial sustainability. Community service and the activities that make it happen are at the center of the community media “economy”. Creating a quality community service both generates income and costs money.

An operational definition also enables us to include examples of media that provide valuable community services through engaging communities, but which are not community owned or which may be operating within the commercial sector. There are many examples of media like this in places where there is no enabling legal framework for community media and where communities have had to choose other options to operate legally.

Who ‘owns’ community media?

The short answer – and the ideal – is communities, and in many cases communities do own community media, through a wide variety of ownership bodies, usually set up especially for the purpose.

In places where there are laws specifically aimed at creating community media, ownership structures are set up to comply with those laws. In South Africa, the law states that a community radio station must be owned and controlled by an elected board representing all sectors of the community. Board members are usually elected at annual general meetings (AGMs) and serve for one or two years, depending on the station’s constitution.

In other places, laws are broader or more flexible. They may be specific about non-profit status but less so about representative community ownership. In Ireland, for example, community media can be owned by non-profit organizations, including NGOs, religious institutions, cultural associations or universities. However, the owners must make provision for membership, management and staffing by the community that is served. In this way, the media are accountable to the communities served and are controlled by them, but are not owned by them. The Irish system recognizes that ownership and control are not inseparable.⁶ In places where there

are no laws specifically for community media, some community media set up as businesses.

However, laws aside, the question of who really owns community media can be very complex.

In a recent study of six local independent radio stations in Africa, Developing Radio Partners found it hard to link ownership to community service. Among the six stations was a community-owned station dominated and virtually owned by a single church; an NGO-owned station that goes way beyond its NGO mission in community service and a for-profit station that values the perception of community ownership so highly that it gives over the running of the station to members of the community several times a year.⁷

The community-owned but church-dominated station was South African. In this case, community members flocked to the annual general meeting and asserted their ownership of the station. At the meeting, they objected to the dominance of church programming, disbanded the board, elected a new board and instructed the new board to cut back religious programming and increase general community programming.

The community's intervention was made possible by the legal environment which makes community ownership a condition for obtaining a license: had the church-dominated board not agreed to give up control, the community could have complained to the licensing authority and the authority could have revoked the license. There is security in this for sustainable community service. (The example of Jozi FM in Section 2 also shows how members of a community acted to safeguard "their" airwaves.)

However, for the NGO station in Tanzania and the commercial station

in Zambia the future is less secure. In the case of the NGO station, there is a risk that the station will close if the host NGO's funding dries up. And what is there to stop the owner of the commercial station from selling the business to someone who is less concerned with community service and more with profit?

These examples highlight that community ownership is neither a prerequisite for nor a guarantee of sustainable community service. However, where structures are representative and processes are democratic, community ownership has the best potential to guarantee sustainable community service. Fundamental to this is a law to enable and protect community ownership and – very important – empowerment of communities to use the law.

Not for profit – but not for bankruptcy either

In countries where there is no enabling legal environment for community media, many community media initiatives operate as businesses. Nonetheless, they provide vibrant community services through participatory processes. However, the non-profit ethic is an important way of distinguishing community media from other media forms. And, as discussed above, the non-profit principle safeguards community media from commercial interests and therefore sustains community service.

However, non-profit does not mean that community media have to be poor. The main difference between commercial and community media is that profit made by commercial media benefits individuals or investors, while profit made by community media is ploughed back into service provision or used for the benefit of the community, for example, by helping individuals, donating to charity or training community members.

In some countries, there are regulations that enforce public financial accountability and transparency. In the United Kingdom, community media often register as charities. The Charities Act stipulates that organizations earning over a certain amount must post their annual accounts on the Charities Commission web-site for public viewing.⁸ In South Africa, the radio licensing authority has powers to monitor expenditure and audit financial records to ensure that communities benefit from any surplus funds.⁹

Community service

This is at the heart of community media. All community media must have a community and the intention to serve and build the community. Traditionally, communities have been defined in terms of geography (a group of people living in a particular location) or interest (religion, politics, culture, hobby or any other interest).

Debate around community, what it is and whether or not community even exists has been ongoing. Many writers point out that communities are not made up of one kind of person, but are divided in many ways, including class, gender, religion, age, interest, sexual orientation, ethnicity, all of which make questions of shared ownership and service more complex.

The sheer size of communities claimed by some community media calls into question the definition of community: Jozi FM broadcasting to Soweto and Johannesburg in South Africa (see Section 2) for example, claims a community of six million people. Radio Izuba in Rwanda (see Section 3) claims a community of two million.

Community media often equate audience with community, and construct broad, public interest missions to embrace large numbers, aiming to attract

advertising. But as Bill Siemering points out in Section 4, this is commercial media thinking. In diluting the notion of community and community service, community media undermine their best argument for support.

The Internet and online media have forced us to look again at community by creating new forms of community that are far more loosely defined. Online communities take different forms, including social movements, geographically defined communities and interest groups. In Section 3, Persephone Miel discusses some of the new forms of online media and draws a distinction between big, international “virtual” communities, which are often unmanaged, and small, geographically-focused community service web-sites that have many similarities with “traditional” community media. Interestingly, online media producers tend not to define themselves as “community” media – despite the similarities.

The Internet has also created new opportunities for linking migrant and diaspora communities with their home communities, with social and financial benefits. Increasing numbers of stations are webcasting their services, making them available to distant communities. They are also broadcasting news from migrant communities to people at home. Migrant communities are also invited to send messages over the radio to people back home, and are charged for the service.

Community participation – the key to community communications

Participation is the key defining feature of community media; it is what places community media outside of traditional media models in which audiences are passive receivers of messages. In the community media model, senders and

receivers are together engaged in creating messages and meaning. Through participation, media are demystified and communities develop valuable communications skills and media literacy skills and understandings.

Managing community participation requires skills that fall outside of the traditional realm of media management or journalism, somewhere between community activism, community organization and even social work. Community media thrive on volunteer and other forms of community support. In the daily struggle to survive, as we shall see in many of the case studies in this guide, it is community members who time and again save the day.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 For a history of CASET see the chapter titled Making waves with CASET, by Edric Gorfinkel, in *A passion for Radio, Radio Waves and Community*, edited by Bruce Girard. First published in 1992, *A Passion for Radio* is out of print, but an electronic version can be found on the comunica web-site, www.comunica.org
- 2 AMARC – the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (Association Mondiale de Radiodiffuseurs Communautaires) www.amarc.org
- 3 Edric Gorfinkel, quoted in Bosch, T., Community radio in post-apartheid South Africa: The case of Bush Radio in Cape Town. *Transformations*, 10 (February 2005). <http://transformations.cqu.edu.au/journal/journal.shtml>
- 4 Summarized from the IBA Act of 1993 and the Broadcasting Act of 1999. Both laws can be downloaded from the ICASA website, www.icasa.org.za. See the dropdown menu under Legislation on the Home Page.
- 5 www.amarc.org (under About AMARC / What is Community Radio). See also www.comunica.org for 14 definitions of community radio.
- 6 See Section 8, in which Kate Coyer discusses the role of an enabling legal and regulatory environment in creating sustainable community media.

- 7 Fairbairn, J. and Siemering, B. (2006), *Guidebook on Sustainability. Developing Radio Partners*. www.developinradiopartners.org (under Programs and Projects / community radio sustainability project).

- 8 www.charity-commission.gov.uk

- 9 An interesting aspect of the research for this guide was how difficult we found it to obtain financial records from community media organizations. In some cases, managers were protective of the information and nervous about sharing it; in others, it was simply not available in any organized form, suggesting a great need for financial management training.

Work with what you have

BY BERNICE ROBERTSON

Radio Vwa Peyizan Abriko 102.7FM in Haiti is a typical community radio station. It was set up and owned by a community association, provides a vital community service and staffed by volunteers. When Radio Vwa Peyizan Abriko lost its studio some years ago, the station's volunteers set up operations at the side of the road, inspiring community members to bring contributions in cash and in kind to build new premises for the station. Radio Vwa Peyizan Abriko has made community support and participation the core of its financial sustainability plan.

Just off the newly paved main road that leads to the town of Abricots, or the Village, as residents call it, Vwa Peyizan Abriko 102.7 FM is announced on a simple panel board. The board leads down a path hedged by trees and plants that invite you to explore the tiny concrete building ahead. The path ends at a terrace framed by cheerful flowers that echo the smiles on the eight faces who welcome us.

Banners and posters at the door support a vaccination campaign. The door opens into a single room which is split by separators into a reception area, the

broadcast studio and a tiny space for storage. Space is limited, but everything has found a place: the books are neatly stacked; the CDs ordered; the files arranged. Brightly colored posters on the walls publicize campaigns and events and provide a cheerful background that is matched by the tropical music on the radio. A copy of the day's program schedule hangs at eye-level next to the studio operator's chair. The sense of order, organization and tidiness brings to mind the Haitian saying: *fè avek*, work with what you have.

Abricots, a commune of the department (province) of Grand Anse, is 25km from Jérémie, the provincial capital. An isolated region of Haiti, Abricots was not reached by any Haitian radio until the late 1990s when the Taino Cultural Movement for Development (MOCTAD), a local non-profit community association, spotted the opportunity. On 28 November 1998, MOCTAD launched Radio Vwa Peyizan Abriko, the first — and close to 10 years later — still the only radio station in the commune, because, explained Mr. Kechner Toussaint, the station Director, information is key to solving the real problems of a community and the commune of Abricots was starved for information.

Storm and hurricane warnings launch the station

The department of Grand Anse is frequently hit by seasonal storms and hurricanes and the people of Abricots, where water currents abound, ignorant of storm warnings, have had their fair share of fatalities, injuries and material loss. RVPA's debut broadcasts were weather warnings. Their next priority was promotion of local arts and craft, which are gaining momentum in the commune.

The mission of the radio station is to bring about change toward sustainable human development by keeping the population informed. Today, RVPA's programming is varied and includes education, civic education, health, cul-





Kechner Toussaint, Director of Radio Vwa Peyizan Abriko

ture and religion, children's programs, women's affairs, human rights, environmental affairs and music. The station generates its own local news bulletins, but national and international events are broadcast via telephone. The presenter telephones someone in the city, who holds the phone next to a radio receiver and so relays the news to the people of Abricots.

The station is on air 82 hours per week and would go on air more if they had more energy to power the equipment and transmitter. Energy is mainly provided by a solar panel and occasionally by a fuel generator, which is expensive.

Radio is the main source of information for the vast majority of people in Haiti. There are about 51 stations, 30 of these in rural areas. The stations are often quite close together, around four per department (province). Competition between them is intense, particularly during elections when many openly side with a political party or candidate. There are as yet no regulations for community radio. As a result, most of the stations do not yet hold licenses and are either political or commercial. On average, 51% of programming is music and the balance of air-time is devoted to talk shows or debate.

Listeners are the voice of the radio

RVPA's success arises out of community engagement, Director Toussaint explains. Listeners are the voice of the radio. *Les paysans écoutent leur propre voix par radio.* The peasants hear their own voices on the radio. The radio plays a role in all commune development activities and local problems are debated

on air ensuring that City Hall hears what citizens have to say.

Despite pressure, RVPA has remained politically neutral. Director Toussaint recalled the station's role in putting the two top runners for the mayoral race in 2006 in touch with the community through debates and call-in programs. The debates appeared to result in less rivalry between the candidates, and a community-focus in the mayoral election campaign. Today, one of the candidates is the Mayor and he has made the other the Director of City Hall.

Financially, the station faces many dilemmas – confronting the same daily struggle to survive as its listeners. Haiti is known as the least-developed country in the Americas. The World Bank put Haiti's per capita income in 2006 at US\$480 placing it 152 out of 178 countries. An estimated 66% of Haiti's 8.7 million people work in agriculture, mostly subsistence farming. Just under half of the population cannot read or write.

The Abricots City Hall website says Abricots has 25,000 inhabitants. There are about 9,000 pupils registered at some sixty schools in the commune, only three of which are secondary schools. Agriculture and fishing are the main occupations of the commune. City Hall defines three quarters of the population as unemployed since they do not have a fixed and continuous income.

Surviving on community contributions

Despite this, community contributions form RVPA's main source of income. RVPA organizes listeners into fan clubs. There are about 200 fan clubs, ranging from 10 to 50 people each, mostly youth. They meet regularly, confirming their commitment to the community and supporting the station financially

in a way that takes the cliché out of the popular phrase “radio for the people by the people.”

Contributions from the fan clubs have been RVPA's most reliable income. RVPA staff recall its toughest crisis when, just after the station was launched, the building became unavailable. Determined to stay on the air and not interrupt their service, RVPA set up its studio at the side of the road. Community members stepped in with cash and in kind support for construction of the current premises.

Radio Director Toussaint proudly informed us that the station receives contributions even from Abricots natives – former fan club members – who now live outside of the commune. A former resident who now lives in Port-Au-Prince sends the station CDs. The community also provides technical support, for example, the station's generator is under repair free of charge by an experienced engineer from Abricots.

“What you can afford, when you can afford”

Fan club contributions are not set. Members provide what they can afford when they can afford. The same principle applies to community members wanting to advertise. The station does not have fixed rates. Instead, community members are invited to pay what they can and contributions often exceed expectations. While death announcements are often used as a source of radio income in other parts of the country, RVPA provides the service free of charge. This is just one of the ways in which RVPA gives something back to the community.

RVPA believes that international organizations which receive funding for a development or human rights project should pay for advertising their services. But this income is not always easy to

come by, as some organizations say RVPA is a community station and so should carry their advertisements. For commercial adverts, RVPA does not have a rates card, and rates are negotiated case by case. The difficulty of this approach is that revenue is unpredictable.

Another source of income – but also irregular – is from the local *Fondation Paradis des Indiens* (Indian Paradise Foundation) which grows, dries and preserves fruit and advertises their products over the radio. But revenue from this is seasonal, and is good only when harvests and sales are good. Overall, however, the partnership is productive and an additional benefit for RVPA is access to the *Fondation's* Internet service.

Decisions are taken by the team

The station's approach to management and governance is simple. There are 17 members of the radio team, all volunteers, who rotate to present programs. Each programming area is headed by a coordinator and programming coordinators report to the management coordinator or station director. Decisions are taken by the team.

Financial management is equally simple. The station keeps an accounts book for recording income and expenditure. The book is revised by the management coordinator or director.

The station's biggest programming expense is the distance-learning program, which is headed up by an expert who is paid. The program comprises reading and comprehension and mathematics and listeners include adults and children. RVPA reports that teachers say students' exam results have improved since the program started.

For 2008, RVPA projected income of 249,000 Haitian Gourdes (about US\$ 6,470) and expenditure of 243,000 Hai-

tian Gourds (about US\$6,314). However, the team says the reality is quite different, particularly when it comes to income. To compensate, team members pay for the station's needs from their own pockets and are reimbursed if and when money comes in. The only other sources of income are two annual fundraisers. A music festival with local musicians is held on January 2 and an RVPA anniversary event is organized on November 28.

Future plans – expand, diversify and survive

At present, RVPA does not cover the whole commune and hopes soon to increase technical capacity to do this. There are also plans to start up a cybercafé, cyber-cinema and a boutique. RVPA hopes to raise funds for these projects through the assistance of the municipal government and community fundraising. The station has collaborated with the municipality to create a website for the commune and the municipality has said that if RVPA can get connected, they will provide computers for the cybercafé.

For now, RVPA survives through the generosity of its fans, community members, the ingenuity and leadership of the director and his team, and the willingness of the team to dig deep into their pockets. What does sustainability mean for RVPA? It means, team members say, ensuring the station stays on air in order to continue educating the community.

Bernice Robertson is an independent consultant contracted by Internews to write this article. Bernice has worked for several years in Haiti as an international consultant in the area of Democratic Governance and Institutional-Strengthening.

This report is based on interviews with RVPA's management and team though guided by a list of questions during a visit to the station in June 2008.

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Small towns find a voice online

BY PERSEPHONE MIEL

The digital media age is fundamentally changing how news and information are created, disseminated and consumed in the United States and around the world. New tools and platforms have fuelled a decade of explosive growth in online media created by people who are not communication professionals. Ordinary people share their comments, writings and, increasingly, their photos, audio and video, in formats often indistinguishable from those that well-funded professional media use. The reporting of these “citizen journalists” has uncovered political scandals, like the attorney general firings in the United States and brought events like the protests in Burma to the attention of the world. It has also offered a new way for small communities that lacked any kind of professional media to create online media platforms for local news and information. These websites, increasingly common in the developed world, serve many of the same functions as community radio stations and other community media in other countries.

The phenomenal growth of online “participatory” media, meaning media that includes significant contributions by what Jay Rosen has labelled “the people formerly known as the audience,” in the United States is usually associated with partisan political invective and heated discussions of celebrity gossip. However, there is also a small but significant number of groups using the new technologies to provide news and information to local communities, much of it created by community members themselves. These sites, of which there are likely a few thousand across the country, cover City Council and school board meetings, promote local businesses and offer residents the opportunity to discuss everything from politics to gardening tips. Some are run by a single dedicated volunteer, others have blossomed into medium-sized businesses with dozens of employees.

Defining community media in a crowded online media space

As there is no government or other accrediting body conferring any particular

status on websites of any kind and no specific association or membership organization, there is no formal definition of community media sites. However, they are easily distinguished from social networking sites, also called “social media”, (Facebook, MySpace, Friendster, etc.) which are focused on connecting people, regardless of their geography, for the purpose of social interaction. While community news sites are a subset of “participatory media”, also commonly called “user-generated content”, their distinguishing feature is their focus on serving a community that is defined by geography rather than social links, or shared interests or identities like the myriad sites serving parents, sports fans, or video gamers.

An example of a well-established and successful community news site in the United States is the Forum (www.forumhome.org), which serves the towns of Deerfield, Nottingham, Candia and Northwood (combined population of about 16,000 residents) in the state of New Hampshire. Founded in 2005 as

a cooperative with seed funding from a foundation grant and the local library, business advice from a local businessman, and pro bono legal aid, the Forum focuses on local news and activities. The site includes reader-contributed news, fiction, poetry, photographs, cartoons and opinion pieces; anyone can contribute as long as submissions abide by simple editorial guidelines.

The Forum was founded in 2005 by former teacher Maureen Mann and several other residents she had met through political activity. The group shared an interest in creating a non-partisan, unbiased and timely source of local news. The local news void became apparent in February 2004 when the local school newsletter, which doubled as the community bulletin, published the procedure for running in municipal elections a full month *after* the deadline to register had passed. Meanwhile, of the 22 local offices open there were eight for which no one was running at all.

With two part-time paid editors organizing the contributions of a large number of volunteer authors, and one advertising salesperson, the Forum is a low-budget non-profit relying on a mix of volunteer labor, small grants and donations and sales of local ads. In response to requests from readers and advertisers, the Forum began “reverse-publishing,” issuing a paper publication based on the online content a few times a year. The paper is distributed to local residents for free, by mail.

While many community websites have goals and structures similar to the Forum, they are far from an organized movement. As a small but much-heralded piece of the citizen journalism movement, they have been fêted by journalism foundations, new media conferences like WeMedia, university-based research centers and non-profit support organizations. These centers, many of them funded by the Knight

Foundation, offer a significant core of community news sites the basic functions of an association.

Because of the blurring of definitions, there is a range of terms used by community-focused sites to refer to themselves: community news sites, citizen media, hyperlocal media, and placeblogs are the most common. In addition there are many thousands more casual individual bloggers who define their focus as something other than the community or their purpose as primarily personal, and do not associate themselves with the citizen news groups, yet cover local issues with some regularity.

Other community media founders like Barry Parr, who has built up the Coastsider (www.coastsider.com) in his spare time to report on happenings in his coastal California town, keep their distance from their the grant-funded groups, believing that a commercial model will eventually reward their efforts. Coastsider has grown from a site featuring one person’s writing to include regular submissions from community members and substantial information on local events.

Relation to other community media

Most online community sites in the US were started in the past few years by people who previously had no involvement in community media (although an astonishing number of sites have been created by one-time professional journalists from the mainstream media). However, various pre-Internet forms of community media, including low-power FM radio, community access cable TV and municipal newsletters and other community publications have also added online components. Cambridge Community Television (<http://www.cctvcambridge.org/>) in Massachusetts has developed an extensive web presence to encourage additional community participation.

Professional public broadcasting in the United States is also experimenting with many new forms of online media, but has usually chosen to create its own projects to solicit viewer and listener contributions rather than reach out to existing community-created media. Despite the seeming alignment of their public service mission, the cultural divide between the amateur online media movement and the public broadcasting community means it is unlikely that local public radio and TV stations will become a source of support for community sites that could benefit from their journalistic and technical expertise. The Forum, in New Hampshire is based a mere 30 miles (48 km) from the studios of New Hampshire Public Radio, yet the leaders of the two organizations have never even met to discuss possible cooperation.

History

These media are a natural outgrowth of the “civic journalism” (also called “public journalism”) movement, which gained popularity in the early 1990s and aimed to make journalism more responsive to the public. Civic journalism was meant to be less obsessed with neutrality and objectivity and more willing to promote civic engagement. These goals fed into the explosion of what is usually called “citizen journalism”. For citizen journalists, the possibilities offered by digital media creation tools, especially the software that launched the blog format, meant that instead of lobbying their local newspaper to listen to the community they themselves could create the kind of media they thought was lacking.

Professor Jay Rosen of NYU, a long-time promoter of citizen journalism, published a short post on his influential blog pressthink (www.pressthink.org) in July 2008 attempting to define the term once and for all:

A Most Useful Definition of Citizen Journalism

It's mine, but it should be yours. Can we take the quote marks off now? Can we remove the "so-called" from in front? When the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another, that's citizen journalism.¹

– Jay Rosen

The broadest definitions of participatory media include the appearance of millions upon millions of individual blogs devoted to personal narratives, hobbies, culture, politics, celebrity gossip, and technology among many other topics. In among these, sites appeared that were specifically dedicated to covering local events. Some of these, like H2Otown (www.H2Otown.info, in Watertown, MA) were created by a single local resident frustrated by the lack of traditional media or its poor quality, but feature contributions by any number of volunteer local authors. Others, like Baristanet (www.baristanet.com), in suburban New Jersey, are primarily written by the founder(s), in this case two former journalists, based on input and tips submitted by readers.

As these sites multiplied, the Knight Foundation among others launched projects to support online citizen journalism, usually with small grants to help launch publications or upgrade technical facilities. A number of resource centers appeared, mostly within universities that study the citizen journalism phenomenon and offer various kinds of support to citizen media outlets, from technical and legal advice to training in journalism and multimedia production. The best known of these is J-Lab (www.j-lab.org). J-Lab's mission is to help "journalists and citizens use digital technologies to develop new ways for people to participate in public life with projects on innovations in journalism,

citizen media, interactive news stories, entrepreneurship, training and research and publications." As part of its extensive resources for online community media, J-Lab maintains a directory of citizen news sites around the country. As of August 2008, there were 792 sites in the database and J-Lab says the list is far from exhaustive.

Another Knight-supported project, launched by H2Otown founder Lisa Williams, offers connections and advice to the makers of "placeblogs," which the site defines as follows:

"A placeblog is an act of sustained attention to a particular place over time. It can be done by one person, a defined group of people, or in a way that's open to community contribution. It's not a newspaper, though it may contain random acts of journalism. It's about the lived experience of a place."

While these placebloggers tend not to see themselves as journalists or as necessarily serving the community, many of them do provide similar functions. In an unusual example, the Flint Expatriates blog (<http://www.flintexpats.com/>) by San Francisco-based journalist Gordon Young, reports from afar on events in the depressed town of Flint, Michigan. A small but dedicated group of former and current residents of the

town uses the site to keep up with their beloved hometown. The site's author Gordon Young, who makes his living as a freelance journalist and says the site is a labor of love, would love to be able to devote more time to the project. Using the popular online payments service Paypal, Young asks readers to make donations of any size to allow him to turn down some of his other work and spend more time on the site. As of this writing, he had raised just over \$300, but his enthusiasm for the project remained undimmed.

For placeblogs and community news sites, like the Forum, that were born to fill an information vacuum in small communities not previously covered by traditional media, the lack of competition means these media have the luxury of defining their success on their community's own terms. The first challenge for these sites is to create an entity that can be sustained by the community. This sustenance takes many forms: social reinforcement, volunteer labor, donations, subscriptions, local advertising or even municipal funding.

Business Models

Just as there is a wide variety of online sites serving communities, there is no single business model that is common to such sites. With a wealth of free self-publishing tools and platforms, no equipment and no capital investment



Written in San Francisco, Flint Expatriates is beloved by a virtual community of former residents of Flint, Michigan. The site features a logo contributed by a loyal reader. "A special thanks goes out to Randy Gearhart, Northern High class of 1968, for the new Flint Expatriates logo." - <http://www.flintexpats.com/>

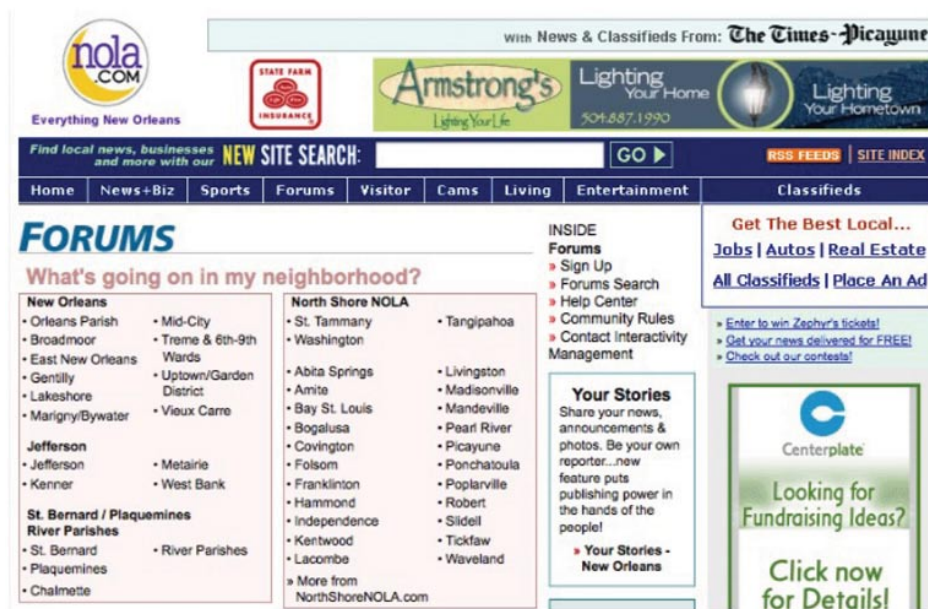
are required, just Internet access and free time. A new blog can be launched quite literally in minutes and maintained from any Internet-connected computer, including a public-access terminal in a library or Internet café.

The most clearly defined group of community news sites is those in the J-Lab (www.j-lab.org) database, which share a focus on not only covering an area but on serving the community and including community participation in some way. The J-Lab database includes answers provided by site owners to a few basic questions, giving a sense of the typical structures. Of the sites that answered a question about their business model, 54% defined themselves as “for-profit,” 38% chose “informal,” and just over 7% checked “non-profit.”

At the same time, it is clear from J-Lab’s narrative reports and personal interviews that for most sites, the for-profit designation is a convenient legal structure, not the primary motivation of the sites. Only half of the sites reported having any paid staff at all and most of those are likely part-time. Many of the sites use only the Google Ads service, which feeds simple text ads to the site based on the words in each page, paying fractions of pennies for each time readers click on the links offered. Others have salespeople soliciting local advertising. In either case, the tiny audiences for these sites means that even the most successful of them are unlikely to be taking in more than a couple of thousands of dollars a month in advertising revenue, and many far less than that.

Editorial Models

Although the overwhelming majority of authors contributing to these community sites are not paid for their efforts, a surprising 63% of the sites in the J-Lab survey said they had some professional journalists involved. Some sites launched by former journalists, like



the New Haven Independent (<http://newhavenindependent.org/>) in New Haven, Connecticut and the Chi-Town Daily News (<http://www.chitowndailynews.org/>) in Chicago, Illinois, stress journalism principles and edit everything that is published. Other sites are open to contributions from all comers, seeking only to avoid legal hassles or poisonous rhetoric and featuring a very personal style of writing and a positive gloss on local businesses.

Legal Issues

Despite the lack of barriers in the United States to launching online publications, citizen journalists have come to realize that even seemingly innocuous topics can lead to conflict and legal problems. The Citizen Media Law Project offers citizen journalists of all kinds, including many community-oriented sites, the kind of legal advice and support that professional journalists in media institutions rely on to avoid lawsuits. The Center provides both online resources and personalized advice on legal issues like libel and defamation. Recently the Center expanded its work to help citizen media make important decisions on how to register, whether as a business or non-profit, in order to minimize liability. Because US laws on

both corporate registration and journalistic issues like libel are made locally, this required the establishment of a detailed state-by-state guide. Center staff also report on their own blog on interesting legal cases involving citizen media.

Top-down and commercial models

Even though there are few examples of small local sites as profitable enterprises, the frantic attempts to figure out how to make money online have led many large traditional media outlets to jump on the hyperlocal bandwagon, using their websites to offer audiences the ability to get and contribute to news at the neighborhood level. The Washington Post’s much-touted experiment with a separate site to serve a neighboring county (www.LoudounExtra.com) was eventually deemed a “hyperlocal flop,”² but the company continues to experiment with ways to offer readers community-level information. In New Orleans, the Times-Picayune’s site [nola.com](http://www.nola.com), hosts discussion forums for more than three dozen separate districts in its coverage area, though the level of activity and the amount of accompanying news coverage is quite variable. <http://www.nola.com/forums/>

Challenges

Although there is no question that many online community media in the United States are serving real needs in their communities, they remain fragile constructs. The most successful community news sites tend to serve relatively homogenous, relatively well-off communities; examples of sites serving less privileged or more diverse populations are rarer.

Also, while some sites thrive based on the writing talents of their main authors, others badly want to improve the quality of their work by training their contributors in reporting or journalism production skills. Finally, though few of the participants are motivated primarily by money, many groups are experiencing volunteer fatigue and feeling pressure to find more reliable sources of financial support.

The clearest determinant of the success of online community news sites in the United States seems to be the ability of the organization to identify and meet a strong need for information. In the developing world, there are already many examples where despite limited availability of the Internet and many other barriers, extreme information deficits caused by disaster, conflict or repres-

sion have led to the rapid, innovative and successful use of digital media tools by local communities.³ As technology, especially systems for the distribution of news to mobile phones, becomes more common and less expensive, it is likely that digitally networked forms of community media will spread in the developing world.

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Resources

Citizen Media Center www.citmedia.org
 Citizen Media Law Project www.citmedialaw.org
 J-Lab www.j-lab.org
 Placeblogger www.placeblogger.com
 Pressthink www.pressthink.org

FOOTNOTES

- 1 http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2008/07/14/a_most_useful_d.html
- 2 http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121253859877343291.html?mod=yahoo_hs
- 3 See Burning Bridge blog for some examples.

Understanding sustainability

We use an operational definition of community media, defining community media in terms of what they do and how they do it. What we want to sustain, therefore, is a valued and high quality community service, and community participation in producing the service. We need resources to do this.

Sustainability is often seen as a target or end-point, as something that projects must achieve. There is also a tendency to equate sustainability with financial sustainability, or financial self-sustainability, which is understood as freedom from dependency on a particular donor, or on donors in general – another end point. At its most basic level, financial sustainability is defined in terms of income and expenditure. If your income minus your expenditure equals zero, or slightly more than zero, you are financially sustainable. You have enough resources, and everyone can go to bed happy.

For community media these approaches are inadequate. If sustainability is a target, it is one that moves: community contexts and needs are constantly changing, and community service by definition must be responsive to community contexts and needs. Becoming sustainable therefore requires being able to respond to changing contexts and needs.

Community media, like all organizations, also change over time and this

will also shape and re-shape what it means to be sustainable. Sustainability in the first couple of years of a community radio station, for example, will need substantial resources for development, training and equipment. Five years later, these needs may diminish, but other organizational needs will emerge.

Sustainability as a set of activities

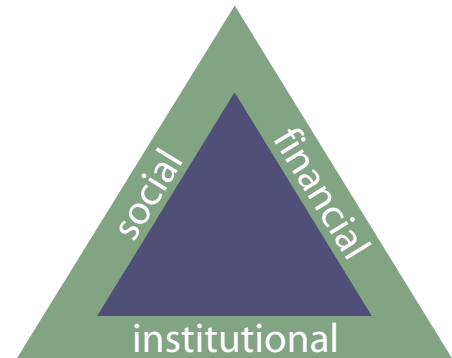
These issues require a more active and open-ended understanding of sustainability. If, as a starting point, we see sustainability as an activity – mobilizing resources – then when engaging in the activities needed to mobilize resources for community media, we need to take account of several factors:

- Sustainability is about mission, ideology and quality – the resources mobilized must be able to sustain community media’s core features of independence, participation and quality service. This means mobilizing the right kinds of resources.
- The meaning of sustainability will change as community needs change. This means sustainability cannot be understood or measured in simple financial terms – it is about all kinds of resources: ability, energy, capacity, efficiency, flexibility and planning. It is about capacity, activities and change.
- To the extent that sustainability can be seen as an organizational target or goal, it must be seen as one that changes in relation to other changing organizational targets or goals.

Seen in this light, for community media, sustainability can be defined as set of activities that enable community media to mobilize the right kinds of resources to meet community needs as they emerge, and to manage them efficiently over time.

Sustainability as a “tripod”

In their manual on setting up community media centers (CMCs), Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron and Hezekiel Dlamini define sustainability as having three aspects: these are social, institutional and financial sustainability.¹ To become sustainable, an organization has to succeed in all three.



Social sustainability refers to all the social processes that are needed to create sustainable community media, including community participation in governance, management and running the organization, community participation in producing content and in giving feedback.

Institutional sustainability refers to the policies, governance structures, management structures and styles, staffing, internal relationships and practices of the media organization; also to its partnerships with other organizations and the legal and regulatory environment.

Financial sustainability refers to the organization’s ongoing income-generating potential.

What is so useful about the “tripod” is that it breaks up the concept of sustainability. It makes us think about sustainability in different ways. This helps us to plan for sustainability differently, using the concepts of social institutional and financial sustainability as a framework. It also steers us away from a single focus on financial sustainability.

Sustainability as an interaction: mission, model and money

The National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO) in the United Kingdom presents a sustainability model that is similar to the “tripod”.² According to the NCVO model, sustainability for any organization working in the community sector requires a balance between the three inter-related areas of mission, model and money.

Mission

The most sustainable mission statements, for all kinds of organizations, are clear and focused.

Concerned about being inclusive, community media may develop broad public service “information, education and entertainment” missions. But a broad mission dilutes the notion of community service by making it hard to distinguish from commercial or public media.

A broad mission also makes it much harder to measure results, to prove your value and to attract support.

Model

The model is the structure of the organization and all the people, relationships, activities and infrastructure needed to deliver the service. Sustainable models are ones that can be efficiently managed. In terms of financial sustainability, the most important issue is to understand what the model costs.

Community media models are built around community participation. In community media, something that is often overlooked is the cost of community participation, that is, the cost in time and money of mobilizing, organizing and managing community participation, in training participants and volunteers, in transport and subsistence of community members involved in content production. Community

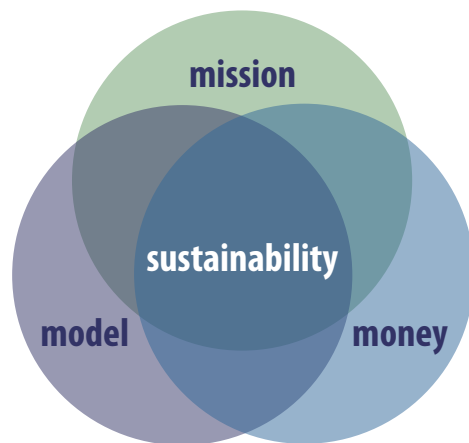
participation is often seen only in terms of income, as “sweat” labor, but – as with all human resources – there are also costs attached.

Money

The main way of achieving sustainable funding is to diversify your funding base so that if any one source dries up or is threatened, you have other funding that you can turn to.

A key issue for community media is independence. Most external funding and support, no matter where it comes from, brings with it agendas or interests. These are sometimes transparent, sometimes hidden. Even the in-kind support of volunteers has interests attached, with volunteers wanting various benefits, from training, to status, to possible future jobs.

The best way of ensuring independence is not allow any one source of funding to become too important.



Sustainability in the development sector

Writing about sustainability as the concept is used in the international development sector, Simon Bell and Stephen Morse (1999) say there is confusion between sustaining institutions and sustaining outputs or impact.³ This leads to an emphasis on sustaining

the institutions or organizations that produce the outputs, rather than on the outputs themselves. But if development is your goal, institutional sustainability is only valuable as long as the institution has valued (developmental) outputs. Put another way, what does it matter if a community media organization that is not producing a valuable community service collapses?

Many community media – particularly in developing countries – either presently depend on the support of international donors or have at some time had to rely on donor funding. When donors and community media workers speak of sustainable community media, they are often most concerned about financial sustainability, and even more specifically, financial self-sustainability.

This is partly because money is at the center of the partnership between donors and organizations. Donor funding is useful – but it is unstable and it is usually relatively short term. There is a lot at stake for both donors and the organizations they fund, and the relationship can be an anxious one. Donors are concerned at the prospect of creating dependency: there are real people depending on their funding for jobs and income. Closing down organizations can have serious consequences for individuals and families; sometimes whole communities suffer. Closing an organization can also represent failure and wasted investment; it can damage the donor’s reputation. Similarly, community media workers are anxious about their jobs, supporting their families and their reputations in the community.

Sustainability as a development strategy

Based on practical experiences gained in Mozambique, Birgitte Jallof argues strongly that achieving long-term sustainability of community media is the *shared responsibility* of all stakehold-

ers, including international or national donors and communities. She uses Gumucio-Dagron's "tripod" to help us understand a comprehensive five-tier community radio development strategy developed by UNESCO.⁴ Each of the tiers comprises a set of activities all of which circle back to institutional, social and financial sustainability:⁵

- Ensure the project has strong community ownership. In order to realize this goal, the UNESCO project underwent a one to two year "mobilization and capacitation" phase before the arrival of the radio equipment. The aim was to create community structures to own the equipment; to build channels for community participation, and to instill a strong feeling of community ownership. Birgitte Jallof argues that social sustainability is possible only when the community actually own and feel that they own the organization.
- Put in place systems for effective training and capacity building. External and internal training capacity is needed. External training can provide valuable leadership, management, programming and technical skills. But to keep up community participation stations need internal training systems and capacity to provide ongoing training for community members.
- Choose appropriate technology (equipment) – good quality, sturdy equipment that is easy to understand and maintain, and which will hold up to use by inexperienced people.
- Develop a financial partnership strategy for community and development support. The ability to attract, establish, manage and maintain partnerships is at the heart of financial sustainability. A financial partnership strategy is not about money – it is about attracting partnerships and managing and maintaining them.
- Impact assessment – it is through impact assessment (research) that

community media can prove their worth to partners in the community and from outside.

To sum up – it is not just about the money

We have discussed various ways understanding sustainability, which are both similar and different. The core issues of independence, community participation and quality community service make sustainability a tricky issue for community media. Sustainability is not just about mobilizing resources and managing them efficiently. It is about mobilizing the right kinds of resources at the right time, to fit changing needs and

“We are not for profit — but we are not for bankruptcy either”

— Ecuador community radio station manager on the Government of Ecuador's banning of advertising on community radio stations, quoted in *Comunica* www.comunica.org

contexts, and managing them efficiently. It is about institution, community and finance. It is about mission and ideology. It is not just about the money, as the two examples that follow (Jozi FM in South Africa and Radio Izuba in Rwanda) very clearly demonstrate.

A fair question?

Becoming sustainable is not easy. A sustainable community service is both difficult to plan and expensive to deliver, yet community media are increasingly seen as essential services with a responsibility to become sustainable. Public services everywhere are subsidized: is it really realistic to expect community media operations to become self-sustainable?

Calling voluntary organizations 'not for profit' is slightly misleading. A better description would be 'non profit distributing' since any profit is kept within the organization and used to further its aims. But some surplus is required to cover the purchase of capital equipment and, as the organization grows, to provide working capital. It is sensible, too, to build up reserves to give continuity of operation and stability for staff, to provide some funds for initial development work on new ideas before you are in a position to seek funding for them, or to cover unforeseen costs, or if there is a need to make staff redundant.

- <http://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/docs/FullCostRecovery.pdf>

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron and Hezekiel Dlamini (2005). Sustainability of CMCs, in Guidebook on setting up a community media center, published by Unesco. <http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/15721/1084292960512.pdf/12.pdf>
- 2 An introduction to sustainable funding." Understanding your options. NCVO Sustainable Funding Project, July 2006. <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/index.asp?id=2090>

The National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO) is a support agency for charities and NGOs in the UK. The book is not available online, but can be ordered from NCVO. The NCVO website www.ncvo-vol.org.uk has excellent information about sustainable funding for non-profit organizations.
- 3 Simon Bell and Stephen Morse (1999). Sustainability Indicators. Measuring the Immeasurable, published by Earthscan (London).
- 4 See also Birgitte Jallof's articles in Sections 5 and 7.
- 5 Birgitte Jallof: Community Radio – For Empowerment and Impact, published in Development Communication, December 2004

Soweto's 'Number One'

BY JACOB NTSHANGASE

South Africa's community radio sector was born in the wave of euphoria that followed the liberation elections that swept Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress to power in 1994. Today, the sector comprises over 90 stations broadcasting to different geographic, religious and cultural communities. Most stations have been on air for about 13 years.

From the start, sustainability – in particular, financial sustainability – has been a serious concern, debated and discussed in national and regional gatherings, written about in training manuals, taught by institutions. Depending on grants in the early years, most South African community radio stations today rely on advertising and program sponsorship for income. By United Nations standards, South Africa is a middle-income country. However, wealth is concentrated around the urban areas and the majority of South Africans live in rural areas, and are poor. Therefore most community radio stations struggle to attract advertising and struggle to survive.

Jozi FM based in the urban township of Soweto and broadcasting to its six million residents is an exception. Earning just over US\$635,000 from advertising, program sponsorship and events in 2007, Jozi FM more than covers its costs and makes a surplus. But as Jacob Ntshangase observes in this study, money isn't everything.

Jozi FM broadcasts from studios in the Khaya Center, which houses a collection of small and medium-sized businesses in Dube, a wealthy suburb of the huge township of Soweto. The largest township in South Africa, Soweto has a turbulent and proud history. It was the center of the 1976 student uprisings which spread like wildfire across the country, sparking a new era in the liberation struggle which brought about the end of white rule in South Africa.

Jozi FM – also known as 'Soweto's backyard radio' – is run as a project of the Soweto Media Resource Center (SMRC), a non-profit organization set

up in the 1990s to develop and produce alternative and community-based media. The SMRC holds the Jozi FM license on behalf of the Soweto community and runs Jozi FM as one of a number of media and media training initiatives.

The station is held in high regard by other stations because of its financial success. Bringing in about R5 million (US\$635,000) mostly in advertising revenue in 2007, Jozi FM is seen as a winner among community radio stations. Jozi FM also leads the field in terms of community radio listenership. The national audience research organization, SAARF, estimates that Jozi FM

has 535,000 listeners¹. The station has hired a Soweto-based marketing agency which puts these numbers to good use, and has successfully branded Jozi FM as Soweto's Number One station.

Contrary to expectations, when you step through the doors Jozi FM looks just like many other community radio stations in South Africa. The furniture is shabby, some chairs are broken and computers are in scarce supply. But the atmosphere is inviting and the walls are covered in posters of musicians and bands, advertising schedules and photographs of events that Jozi FM has organized. It is from the photos that you get a sense of the station's popularity and pulling power – the venues are packed to the rafters.

Jozi FM's popularity and income have not brought it stability. The station has been racked by crises over the past six years with community members organizing against the station and complaining to the broadcast regulator, ICASA, that the station is too commercial.² In 2007 a group of Sowetans picketed the station's gates under the banner of freedom of expression.

The protesters' main concerns were allegations of mismanagement of funds and non-compliance in terms of community participation. The ICASA investigation that followed the protests focused on community participation. ICASA chose not to follow up allegations of mismanagement, leaving those to Jozi FM to handle internally.³

After investigating, ICASA ruled that the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF), the main association of community radio stations in South Africa, should engage with Jozi FM to organize an annual general meeting so that representatives of the Jozi FM community could elect a new board for the station, make proposals regarding structures for community participation and sort out

confusion around the constitution.⁴ The NCRF brought in the Electoral Institute for Southern Africa (EISA) to ensure the elections were well run.

Under the watchful eye of the EISA, the NCRF and ICASA, Jozi FM called an annual general meeting in November 2007. Constitutional issues were settled; community participation reasserted and EISA supervised the formation of the board. After the meeting, EISA reported that the election was credible and fair – an “indication of the will of those who took part in the processes.”

The situation has normalized and for a change, public reads positive stories about Jozi FM. But the question remains – for how long? Opinions still differ widely about the causes of the problem.

A question of ownership?

Some Jozi FM staff and volunteers believe the root causes were not dissatisfaction about community service and participation, but looseness in the Broadcasting Act and ICASA regulations around community ownership and control. They suggest the law should be tightened to clarify the meaning and limits of community participation and to give stations guidelines so that community groups cannot use processes for their own ends. The main concern here is that some members of communities pack annual general meetings and vote in boards that will secure specific group or individual interests.

Community ownership and control are central to the legal definition of community radio in South Africa. Community ownership is the principle which makes community radio different from public and commercial broadcasters. Community participation is a great marketing tool – it gives community radio stations their “niche” – but for a variety of reasons, stations find it un-

comfortable. There is a strong lobby for tighter definition of the principle, which many stations say works against their financial sustainability because the way it is presently understood by communities creates instability.

There is another school of thought that says it is not the principle that is problematic but the way in which stations apply it. In a community as large as Soweto, it is difficult to apply the principle of community ownership, and this is why the Soweto Media Resource Center, which holds the Jozi license, has chosen a structure based on organizational rather than individual membership. All members of the SMRC must be registered organizations representing different sectors (women, unions, youth, business, etc.) and based in Soweto. Each organization is entitled to send delegates to the annual meeting. SMRC Board members, who are also the Board of Jozi FM, are nominated and elected from these delegates. There are clearly community members who are unhappy with the SMRC system and do not feel represented. In many other communities, stations put out a broad call to listeners to come to the annual general meeting and people come as individuals.

Too much money?

A second issue some point to is Jozi FM's wealth. Jozi FM's huge and diverse community of about six million people brings with it great potential to generate income. The station takes advantage of this opportunity and operates with a strong commercial ethic, with great success. Some say that people with vested interests, or wanting a slice of the pie, create problems in order to strategically position themselves for jobs at Jozi FM or membership of the Jozi FM board.

Tebogo Pooe, chairman of the Jozi FM board and a founding member of the station says Jozi FM's income is good because “the station operates in a very

vibrant market, commercially”. Poee says about 70% of Jozi FM’s income is purely commercial advertising, with about 15% from program sponsorship and the rest from events including concerts and promotions.

Jozi FM’s business model and marketing strategy is built around partnerships with business. “We have a commercial approach. We run promotional campaigns showcasing the importance of audiences for commercial support. You need to build and sustain relationships with key clients, i.e. people who can religiously (consistently) advertise on the station. Advertisers won’t place ads because of how well the program is written. It’s about the numbers the station delivers.”

Too much advertising?

Tebogo Poee’s comments point to a third issue – the extent to which the station can (and does) rely on a single source of income: advertising. This, some argue, makes the station less concerned with community programming, or the kind of development programming that comes with program sponsorship rather than advertising. Jozi FM is famous, for example, for its *Cheater’s* program, in which the station publicly exposes extramarital affairs and invites people to the studio to confront one another. The program has huge listener-ship and is a great commercial success – but arguments continue over whether the program has any community development value or is just sleaze.

One of the most interesting aspects of this story is that Jozi FM never lost its status within the community radio sector as a success story. This must be seen within the context of community radio culture in South Africa.

The “sector”, as community radio is affectionately referred to, grew out of community activism in the 1990s and

the struggle to liberate the airwaves from apartheid rule. The first community radio stations were licensed amid great jubilation in 1995. Since the beginning, however, there have been chronic governance, management and financial problems.

The culture has its roots in the struggle era of community mobilisation and activism, which still informs practices in the sector, where many radio station leaders, staff and volunteers have a “do as you please” attitude and a “free for all” approach. There is also lack of understanding about the role of boards and governance despite many governance courses run by training organizations and board induction workshops run by the NCRF as new boards are elected.

When the sector was launched, donor-funding was in abundance. Often, the funding did not come with very strict financial reporting requirements. At the time, most stations were staffed by young people, many of them first time employees who did not have experience in managing donor partnerships or running finance departments. Donor support has diminished and today the sector depends primarily on advertising income, program sponsorship and national, provincial and local government campaigns for income.

Although financially successful up to now, ongoing problems at governance level clearly threaten Jozi FM’s sustainability. In the worst case scenario, if the community cannot impress upon the station’s board and management the need to be accountable, transparent and participatory, ICASA could revoke the license. At this stage, ICASA has chosen not to do so because, they say, Soweto needs a community radio station.

The Jozi FM crisis led to multiple stakeholder interventions and a substantial cost in time and money. But it remains

to be seen if the intervention has indeed solved the problems.

This report is based on interviews with board members, management and staff of Jozi FM and of ICASA officials. Thanks also to Franklin Huizies, Chief Executive Officer of the NCRF (www.ncrf.org.za), for assistance.

Jacob Ntshangase is Executive Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, a Johannesburg-based training institute (www.iaj.org.za). He began his career in media as a community radio station manager (Durban Youth Radio) later becoming a trainer at the IAJ and manager of the IAJ community radio training program. Jacob is also a member of the UNDP Environmental Development Program Steering Committee and a member of the South African National Editor’s Forum.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 August 2008 South African Audience Research Foundation community radio audience measurements.
- 2 ICASA – Independent Communications Authority of South Africa.
- 3 Jozi FM’s board conducted an investigation and several people were suspended. One allegation was that there was an attempt to register Jozi FM as a closed corporation (a commercial structure). SMRC refuted this allegation.
- 4 Jozi FM had more than one constitution and it was not clear which one was governing the station.

Keeping the money neutral

BY RYAN HICKS

Radio Izuba in Kibongo, the capital of Rwanda's Eastern Province, has been on air for four years. Like many community radio stations, it started on a high note, with a start-up grant, some willing international partners and plenty of ideas for raising funds through marketing creative programming ideas to sponsors. For the first year, everything was rosy. Then, however, a internal crisis disrupted partnerships and plans and today Radio Izuba is struggling to get back on track. The key issue is that financial instability could make the station vulnerable to political influence. Ryan Hicks visited Radio Izuba to find out what the future holds.

Radio Izuba 100.0FM was born out of a decentralization plan for Rwanda's Eastern Province. This was a multi-stakeholder plan involving national, provincial and local government departments, non-governmental organizations, business and international development

agencies. The aim was to enable local citizens to have greater say in provincial and local government.

Radio is known to be a good vehicle for citizens' participation and so setting up a radio station became an important part of the decentralization plan. The United States government funding agency, USAID, was supporting the

decentralization plan and agreed to give US\$200,000 to start up a community radio station. A community association, ADECCO (Association for Community Development through Communication) was formed to oversee formation of the radio station, and Radio Izuba went on air in June 2004.

In keeping with the decentralization plan, Radio Izuba's mission is to contribute to sustainable local development. They aim to build and maintain peace so that communities live in harmony in a democratic environment, anchored in good governance and respect for human rights.

The station broadcasts from premises in Kibongo, capital of Eastern Province. There is one studio and four offices. Broadcasting happens in two sessions, in the morning from 6h00-10h00 and in the evening, from 16h00-21h00. Posters of international music stars decorate the walls and the offices are equipped with desktop and laptop computers. During our visit, the atmosphere was quiet, without the excitement or buzz one would expect in a radio station providing news and information to a potential listenership of two million people.

Radio Izuba's signal covers 60% of Eastern Province and also spills over into other provinces, including the province of the capital city, Kigali. By far the majority of listeners are subsistence farmers. Rwanda is unusual in Africa in that most of its people speak one language, Kinyarwanda. Radio Izuba's programming is therefore 85% in Kinyarwanda and the balance is in English, French or Swahili. Programming comprises a mixture of news, current affairs and development programming, including



women's issues and women's rights, agricultural, health and youth programming.

The community owns Radio Izuba through ADECCO, whose 12-member Board of Directors is also the station's board. The ADDECO board is elected from 54 representatives of different sectors of Eastern Province society who form the ADECCO General Assembly. The Assembly's role is to give input into the station, via the Board of Directors. In this way, the community's voice is formally heard. ADECCO stresses its independence from political influence and its community development orientation.

Independence – an important theme

Independence is an important theme for Rwandan media. Radio in Rwanda will for many years to come be associated with Radio Milles Collines, the station which notoriously incited Hutus to murder Tutsis and moderate Hutus during the 1994 genocide. Some 800,000 people were massacred during the genocide and the present Rwandan government argues that this history makes strict media laws necessary. Rwandan media of all kinds, including radio, are today extremely careful not to transgress laws around incitement, hate speech and "divisiveness".¹

Rwandan media also tend to favor the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), the movement which ousted the government that provoked the terrible events of 1994. In the last election (2003), President Paul Kagame was re-elected to power with over 95% of the vote, giving the RPF enormous power and influence at all levels of government and civil society. The extent and depth of the RPF's power has bred a culture of self-censorship among journalists, and last year (2007), Reporters without Borders ranked Rwanda at 147th out of 169 countries in their annual Press Freedom Index.²



Radio Izuba's transmitter. The station broadcasts to about 60% of Rwanda's Eastern Province.

Radio Izuba is no exception to other Rwandan media when it comes to national and provincial government and is perceived by station staff and community members not to challenge at those levels. However, they have a proud tradition of actively challenging local government. As an example, Radio Izuba tells how their journalists followed up a story about a brutal local policeman who beat a man into a coma. After ignoring many requests for an interview, the Mayor eventually answered the phone in a vulgar and unpleasant way. Radio Izuba aired the interview despite attempts by the Mayor's office to stop them from going ahead.

Crisis – and sponsors withdraw support

In addition to the USAID grant, there was strong community support for Radio Izuba in the beginning. Local people

provided materials, money and labor to build the studio and offices Kibongo. Other partnerships developed, and the station was doing well.

Unfortunately, in Radio Izuba's second year on air, issues around expenditure caused serious disagreement between the board and management. There were suggestions that funds were being routed to political party projects rather than initiatives directly related to community development, and the station was unable to justify expenditure to donors and sponsors. During the crisis the partner-

ships were not maintained and donors and program sponsors lost interest and withdrew support. Declining income meant staff members were not paid, and some left the station. Management made little effort to see that their program slots were continued or sustained.

The community stepped in through the ADDECO General Assembly, which ordered an investigation. The ADDECO General Assembly also disbanded the board and replaced some senior staff members. The station is now trying to rebuild relationships, but financial weakness has made it vulnerable to political control.

Building a financial sustainability plan

The new President of the Board, Ms. Solange Ayanone, says the board is concentrating on financial sustainabil-

ity. The station has stepped up efforts to find program sponsorship, and this is working. New sponsors include the mobile phone company, MTN, the United Nations agency, UNIFEM and the Ministry of Health.

According to Ms. Ayanone income is starting to pick up, staff members are being paid and the station is functioning more or less as it should. Last year (2007) income was US\$100,000, which a board member told us was a big improvement on 2005/6.³ However, financial sustainability is still a major concern, and the station does not have a surplus.

Community support remains strong. The station has 10 paid staff and 20 volunteers. There is also a team of trained news gatherers – *points focaux* (pupils of the eye) – who use mobile phones to send in news from different parts of the province. The station pays the *points focaux* in phone credits, and sometimes pays for their transport to come to the station and make programs.

The station's main expenses are salaries, which come to US\$70,000 a year, and the license renewal fee, which costs them RWF1,000,000 (US\$2,000) a year. Radio Izuba journalists say that their most pressing concern has to do with having funds to carry out their reporting tasks. They say they do not have money to pay for transportation to chase stories.

The new board has some fresh fundraising ideas. One of these is to introduce a membership program called Friends of Radio Izuba (*Amis de Radio Izuba*). Listeners would pay 500 RWF (US\$1) per year, giving them the right to send out two dedications per month and two classified ads or announcements per month. Radio Izuba is also seeking program sponsorship from international organizations and NGOs, and is hoping to 'twin' with a radio station based in a

wealthy country which might consider an internship exchange, for training.⁴

The province makes an offer

More controversial are discussions Radio Izuba is having with the provincial administration. The provincial administration has offered to find money in its budget to fund the salaries of three permanent employees. This would represent a big chunk of income and has caused some debate at the station.

“One must be prudent”, says Ms. Ayanone, President of the Radio Izuba Board, adding that if the province was providing 90% of the budget that would be reason to worry. However, some advisors to the station say Radio Izuba is playing with fire and that the province's funding offer, especially as it is linked to salaries, is a move to grab the station little by little.

In Rwanda's present media climate, journalists say, there are two “lines” that Radio Izuba could follow editorially. They could either support the government/RPF line or they could focus on a community development agenda and challenge government on development issues.

Radio Izuba has already chosen to go the more politically neutral development route. But at times development is intensely political and there are concerns that reliance on the province for funding will threaten their independence in the development arena and their ability to criticize provincial development efforts. Any threat to their independence will further undermine their financial sustainability as listeners would become disillusioned and other sponsors would be wary of being seen to be aligned with a political agenda.

For as long as they are financially vulnerable, it will be difficult for Radio Izuba to refuse the money. But to accept it without any safeguards to their

independence could be a greater risk than not taking it at all. The challenge for Radio Izuba will be to find other sources of income, and ways of keeping the province's money neutral.

This article is based on interviews with board members, management and staff of Radio Izuba conducted by Ryan Hicks and during a visit to the station in July 2008.

Ryan Hicks is a Canadian journalist completing his Masters degree in Journalism at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Ryan conducted research at Radio Izuba during an internship at Internews Rwanda in July and August 2008.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 This is the term used in Rwandan media law. Media practitioners and activists criticize the term for its lack of definition and argue that almost anything could be construed as 'divisive'.
- 2 Reporters Without Borders, Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2007. www.rsf.org (under Regular Reports / Press Freedom Index).
- 3 Interview with Radio Izuba board member, Mr. Jules Gahamanyi, July 2008.
- 4 Bush Radio in Cape Town, South Africa, runs a successful internship program with international journalism institutions. www.bushradio.co.za (under Training).

Models of sustainable funding

In this section, we look at two models which identify sources of funding. We have chosen the two models not because they are the best, but because they help differentiate between sources of income – a useful thing to do when developing a financial sustainability or a business plan.

This section focuses on money, but it is important not to forget the other kinds of income that sustain community media. The main one is “sweat” labour: community media everywhere depend on volunteers who contribute their time, knowledge and experience. Volunteer labour and other gifts in-kind from the community are fundamental to sustainability and must be taken into account in planning.

Income and expenditure in the non-profit sector

Before turning to sources of funding, we look briefly at the main categories of income and expenditure in the non-profit sector. Different sources of income will cover different costs. Most non-profit organizations divide costs into core costs (also called overhead or operational costs) and direct project costs.

Core costs are all the expenses that are not connected to running projects. They occur before and after a project has been running, and it is difficult to link them to any particular project. Examples of core costs for community media include governance, non-project planning and consultation, fundraising, general staff training and development, public relations and marketing, rent, electricity, salaries.

Project costs are all costs directly related to running a particular project, for example, if a donor has funded production and airing of a radio drama series,

direct project costs would include training volunteers to produce the series; scripting the series; airtime to market and broadcast the series; monitoring and evaluation of impact, and so on.

A strong financial sustainability plan will ensure that all core costs and project costs are covered. This means raising two kinds of income. There are also different terms for different kinds of income – the ones we use here are borrowed from the non-profit sector in the United Kingdom. They are:

Unrestricted income (also called general income or non-project income), which you can use any way you like, and which is generally used to cover core costs. The main source of unrestricted income in the community media sector is advertising.

Restricted income (also called project income). This is income that is attached to a particular contract or project and which can only be used according to the terms of the contract. The main sources of restricted income in the community media sector are grant funding and content sponsorship.

When developing a financial sustainability plan, the most important questions are:

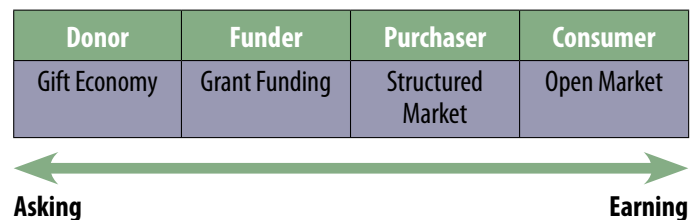
- What are your core costs and how much money is needed to cover them?
- What are the best sources of income to cover them?
- To avoid over reliance on one source of funding, how much money do you want to generate from each source?

TWO FUNDING MODELS

Moving from gifts to trading

The National Council of Voluntary Organizations (NCVO) in the United Kingdom divides sources of funding into four sources. They argue that the funding climate for community organizations is changing. The numbers of organizations seeking funding is increasing and the pool of funds is shrinking. Over the past few years, many community organizations have turned to new ways for generating income, particularly trading.

NCVO illustrates potential funding sources with the following diagram.¹ Sustainability rests in the organization’s ability to draw on each of the four sources in a balanced way, without over-reliance on any one source of income.



The gift economy

This is used to mean charitable and philanthropic donors, including individuals and institutions wanting to benefit an organization.

The best example of community media tapping into the gift economy is the USA, where community radio stations hold several fundraising drives every year, calling on members of the public to donate to their radio stations. Bill Siemering discusses this kind of fundraising in his article on *Listener Supported Public Radio in the United States*, in Section 3. The advantage of gift support is that the money is unrestricted – you can use it as you like within the broad boundaries of your mission statement.

Grant funding

This is contracted money, from NGO or government funders, private foundations or trusts, and is almost always tied to particular projects or purposes. The expectation of the funder is that grant funding will produce particular outputs or results, and that these will be measured and reported on. Many grant makers also have guidelines about how their grants may be spent. Any changes in expenditure must be negotiated in advance. For more about grant support, see Section 5.

The structured market

NCVO uses this term to refer to situations where goods or services are paid for under conditions set out in a contract. The money is restricted to a particular purpose.

The two most common ways in which community media use the structured market are:

- Content sponsorship by NGOs or government departments wanting to get messages out; and
- Training contracts through which community media tap into government or other training funds by offering internships and training.

The open market

This is where trading happens, where organizations sell goods and services to make money, in the same way as any business would. The goods and services can be related to the organization's core business, or they can be completely unrelated to their core business.

Arguably, the community media sector leads the field when it comes to trading. The most common and oldest example of trading in the community media sector is advertising – sale of airtime to business and community members

– which is at the heart of most community media business models and has been for generations.

Community media – like many other non-profits – are also turning to other kinds of trade to generate income, particularly in developing countries where local business is limited where businesses cannot afford advertising. Examples of trading include farming, selling photocopying and fax services, running phone kiosks and cybercafés. Some community media 'trade' the services of their personnel – for example, layout and design skills, writing, program production, hiring out popular radio presenters as deejays, technical skills and many others.

Trading can be purely for business purposes (for example, running a shop or farming); or it can further the goals of the community media project (for example, fixing radio receivers in the community will ensure listeners can hear you).

The main advantage of money earned in this way is that it is unrestricted. But it also means additional costs, and community media operators have to learn a whole new set of skills relating to running alternative businesses. There are also legal issues and tax issues that will have to be taken into account.

THE THREE-LEGGED FUNDING MODEL

In many places, community media use a 'three-legged' model for funding. In this model, income generation is spread across three sources: communities, funders (including non-governmental and government funding programs) and advertisers.²

As with the NCVO model described above, sustainability is achieved by successfully drawing on all three sources

of funding in a balanced way, without becoming too reliant on any one source.

The first two sources of income – communities and advertising – generate unrestricted funding that can be used to cover core costs. The third source of funding will be restricted to a particular contract.

For the three-legged model to work, each of the three funding sources must receive something of value in return:

- Communities benefit from participation and from content;
- Businesses, through advertising, get exposure for their products and services;
- Funders and government want success in their funding efforts (the investment must pay off in terms of social or development impact) or dissemination of education and information content, for example, health or voter education; promoting safe sex and human rights; discouraging violence against women or racial discrimination.

Once you have decided on a funding model, it is possible to develop a sustainability plan. As noted above, these are not the only models. Sustainability is context-based. Different communities and cultures will have different economies and will think about income differently.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 NCVO, *An introduction to sustainable funding*, page 23.
- 2 Dennis List bases his book, *Participative Marketing for Local Radio* (Original Books, Wellington, 2003) on the 'three-legged' model of funding. The book explores different marketing models for community radio stations and has excellent ideas about income generation from each of the 'three legs'.

Business models, plans and community media

A business model explains all the activities that will make your organization financially sustainable. The model will form the core of your business plan.

WHY HAVE A BUSINESS MODEL?

A business model is simply way of expressing your work in ways that emphasise the factors that make it financially sustainable. It is different from a business plan or a sustainability plan in that it describes what is happening rather than what you intend (plan) to happen. It is a way of understanding and explaining what you do in ‘business’ terms. It answers the question – how do you make money?

There is no one business model for community media. Business models of different community media projects will have many things in common – but each one will also be unique. As discussed in Section 2, *Understanding Sustainability*, community media are increasingly turning to mixed business models to sustain their media services.

For example, Radio Desi, a community radio station which serves Punjabi diaspora communities in the UK (see the example titled “Without information one is lost” later in this section), has a business model centered on advertising – but training people in community media skills and ‘sale’ of volunteer services to dance at weddings are also parts of their model.

Homeless Talk, a community newspaper in South Africa, which is owned, run

and published by homeless people has a business model centered on advertising, sponsorship of editorial content, newspaper sales and sales of services including design and editing, vending other publications, training and a childcare center. Have a look at www.homelesstalk.org.za.

A community media operation may comprise a number of small businesses all of which cover their own costs and support the community media service.

WHAT MAKES UP A BUSINESS MODEL?

Idea or need – the mission statement

Community media arise out of a community’s need for a specific service which could be broad, for example, news and information, or quite narrow, for example, providing health information. Both the idea and the need are usually expressed in the form of a mission statement, or as a set of aims and objectives, or both.

Product – community service; community opportunity

Because community media are generally run as non-profit projects aiming to produce social benefit or gain, ‘product’ is best expressed as the ‘outputs’ or ‘results’ of the service.

For community media, the main outputs or results are:

- Community development / social gain / community empowerment
- Community communications– the news, information, education, entertainment, development, discussion, communication *content* that is created by and distributed to readers, viewers, listeners

Ownership / governance

Community media are owned in a variety of ways. As discussed in Section 1, community media owners may be communities who own projects through community elected or appointed boards. Community media can also be owned by NGOs, educational institutions or local government structures. Our broad operational definition includes media that are run by for profit structures, so long as there is a quality community service and produced in ways that involve the communities being served.

The owner will be responsible for

- The legal right to run the project, including registration and title for newspapers, or broadcast license for radio or TV.
- The assets of the organization – infrastructure, equipment, computers, vehicles.
- Any agreements or contracts.

Customers

Customers are people who buy goods or services because of their value (or their perceived value). In community media operations, production processes involve communities. Community members are therefore producers of the service rather than customers. With the exception of some online community media that are funded through subscriptions and some community newspapers which are sold, people who receive community media generally don’t pay for it.

Who your customers are will depend on your business model. Most community media build – or try to build – business models based on advertising sales or sponsorship of content. The customers in these models are advertisers who buy space or airtime, or sponsors who want the name of their company or service linked to particular content. In exchange for their money, advertisers

and sponsors receive exposure for their name, products and services.

Where community media run other businesses to supplement the income of their media operations, customers can include people who buy the goods and services that your organization offers *other* than content, for example, some community radio stations have set-up cybercafés and rent out computers to clients to fund their radio services. In the case of Homeless Talk, above, mothers buy childcare services; Radio Desi listeners become customers when they hire Radio Desi's traditional dancers.

Partnerships

What other individuals and organizations support your media operations in ways that bring value?

In the development sector, donors and funding agencies are key partners, providing start-up grants, operational and development support and development expertise. Other partners can include local institutions. For example, schools can organize school children to write for community newspapers or to produce radio content; university departments can provide expertise on many subjects; business associations can encourage corporate donations; training institutions and training providers.

Selecting, managing and maintaining partnerships can take a lot of energy – but partnerships are fundamental to a strong and sustainable business model and so are worth the time and energy.

Competencies

These are your organizational capabilities, and include all kinds of skills required to sustain your service – leadership, management, content production, business and technical skills, partnership building, networking and a host of others.

Costs

What does it cost to run your organization? It is important to analyze the organization's costs – being very careful to differentiate between core or general costs and project costs. It is particularly important to ensure that core costs are built into project proposals. Many donors do not like to fund core costs like salaries, rent or electricity – but will consider them as part of project costs. There are various ways of drafting project budgets in ways that make sure core costs are included. The Esmee Fairbairn Foundation in the United Kingdom provides a good guide to on their website www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk (<http://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/docs/FullCostRecovery.pdf>)

Income

What are your sources of income? Including all the ways you make money. Two models of income are presented earlier in the article in this section, titled *Models of sustainable funding*.

Developing a business plan

Your business model will form the core of your business plan. A business plan is a complete description of a business and its plans for the next one to three years. It suggests who will support the business, product or service and why and provides financial forecasts to show that the business is sustainable. It explains what finance is available and what finance is needed.

A business plan is both a way of organizing your activities and convincing donors (or investors) that the business is viable and worth funding. It should be short (no more than 10 pages), properly researched, well presented, convincing and honest.

Developing a business plan requires a planning process. A good plan gives

you direction and security. It helps your organization thrive by ensuring your activities are structured and are consistently moving you forward towards your goals. A plan is not binding – rather, it gives you a base for flexibility. Having a plan helps you recognise new opportunities and respond to them without losing sight of your goals.

Once it is written up, the plan is both a guide to your activities and a useful way of explain to outsiders what you do, how you do it and why it is worth investing in.

Business plans are expressed in different ways – depending on the planning process, the context and the business. A business plan is useful for a community media operation – it is also useful for community media wanting to start up other businesses to supplement their income.

There are many different ways of going about developing a business plan. The following web-sites have some good examples of business models, business planning, sustainability planning and core funding strategies.

Resources

www.comunica.org explore the Community Media Management Resources blog

www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk (under Our Funding / Business Planning and Costing Projects)

www.radioregen.org (under Community Radio Toolkit, or www.communityradiotoolkit.net)

Diverse sources of funding keep the Five Rivers flowing strongly

BY TUPUR CHATTOPADHYAY

Born out of dark and divisive political events in India, Desi Radio 1062AM aims to unite London's Punjabi community, who come from all parts of South Asia, through broadcasting poetry, writing and music. Located in studios in the busy London suburb of Southall, the station has no trouble attracting advertisements. But regulations in the United Kingdom restrict the amount of advertising income that community radio stations can earn and so Desi Radio must diversify its income streams. While they are upset about the cap on advertising, because they could do a lot better without it, station members agree that the need to diversify enriches their station and strengthens their community links.



Radio Desi's wedding dancers generate income for the station while promoting its cultural mission.

One would most definitely think of the Punjab as the vast plains in the northwest of South Asia, divided in 1947 into India and Pakistan. But what also comprises Punjab are the 200,000 strong Punjabi speaking populations of West London. Broadcasting from the hub of this diaspora comes Desi Radio – a community radio station defined by a strong sense of community identity and a commitment to promote Punjabi language, music and culture.

London's Punjabi community first started talking about community unity

and the potential of radio as early as 1978/79. But what brought matters to a head was the Indian Government's attack on the Golden Temple, the holiest of the Sikh shrines. What followed was definitely one of the darkest phases in the modern history of the Indian subcontinent – the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and large scale anti-Sikh riots in 1984.

Though the thinking behind the formation of a community radio station may have been triggered by events of a darkly political nature, the content of the radio is far from political or religious. The sta-

tion caters to Punjabis on both sides of the border and music is rarely categorized as ‘Muslim’ or ‘Hindu’. Notions of space and homeland are thoroughly flexible, as second and third generation Punjabis of Southall see themselves as a cohesive part of English society while still being able to retain their distinctive flavour as Punjabis. The station’s name, Desi, is derived from the Punjabi word Des, meaning a specific space or homeland. For Radio Desi, this is the Land of the Five Rivers, Panjab. The station aims “to analyze our practices and heritage and so ensure a better understanding of the Panjabi culture and traditions”¹.

Desi Radio is a project of the Punjabi Center, a registered charity whose goal is to promote community culture. Like many community radio stations in the UK, Desi Radio began broadcasting with the RSL (Restrictive Service License) which Ofcom² the broadcast regulator granted before community radio licensing systems were in place. In 2002, under intense pressure from the community media sector – and despite protests from the commercial and public broadcast sectors – Ofcom granted 15 community radio stations “pilot” licenses. Desi Radio was one of them. The license cost UK£600 pounds (about US\$1,100) and lasts till 2011.³

The Punjabi Center, which owns Desi Radio, engages in a variety of activities to promote Punjabi language and culture. The radio station is its biggest project. The center – and therefore Desi Radio – is governed by a board of five directors. Community members are invited to quarterly meetings to give advice, guidance and feedback to the center’s board and the radio management team. The Punjabi Center also reports back to the community through its annual general meetings.

Desi Radio has not done formal audience research, but they use UK census

figures as a guide and claim a listenership of about 156,000 – the number of Punjabi speakers in their coverage area. They believe they reach all of these people – and more, because they also stream their programs through their web-site (www.desiradio.org.uk), which gives them a global audience.

Ms. Amarjit Khara, a director and full time volunteer, explained programming policy: “We are here to provide information. Without information one is lost.” The primary broadcast languages are Punjabi and English. Programming includes health, with two doctors coming in every week, family welfare, consumer advice, local council issues and events in South Asia that will affect Punjabi people living in the UK. The station’s cultural programming focuses on poetry and music, and in line with their aim to unite all Panjabi people, they are careful to steer clear of religion and sensationalism.

Radio Desi’s business model

At present, Desi Radio’s financial backbone is funds received from training and advertising.

Advertising

Ofcom regulations have capped income community radio stations can generate from advertising at 50% of their total income. Although reaching this target is a dream most community radio stations, this is not so for the extremely popular Desi Radio – and advertisers are queuing up to buy airtime. The station’s marketing department argues that the cap on advertising not only hinders Desi Radio in its quest for financial sustainability, but also jeopardizes small business in their area which would really benefit from on air advertising.

In a recent letter to Ofcom, they argued: “At Desi Radio we are in the enviable and rare position of being approached by small, local businesses that are at-

tracted to Desi Radio’s success, targeted programming and no doubt our low cost advertising.... Desi has to turn business away and may have unwittingly contributed to the demise of a number of small enterprises in our area. Very many of the business’s that do or desperately wish to advertise with us are small, very local and sometimes fragile, they are also very definitely part of the local community....”

The Community Media Association has also been lobbying Ofcom to lift the cap on advertising. One strategy they are using is to calculate the value of volunteer time. They estimated Desi Radio’s volunteer time as being worth £201,713 (about US\$403,426) a year. The CMA argues, and Desi Radio agrees, that volunteer time should be added to their overall income. This would significantly increase the amount of advertising the station could take.

Desi Radio will only consider itself completely financially sustainable when all volunteer time is taken into account, and they are able to pay their staff.

Training

Their second main source of income is training. The Punjabi Center’s funded training schemes are a key way in which Desi Radio can empower the community and bring in money. Desi Radio has built up an impressive track record as a training station. The training programs are supported by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and the European Social Fund (ESF) at around £50,000 (US\$100,000) and a smaller grant from the London Development Agency. The main training program consists of an 18-week radio production course run twice a year.

Desi Radio also runs a young people’s media training initiative for 10-18 year olds, besides providing shorter radio “taster” courses for young people, senior

citizens and women. Involvement of women in the radio station is remarkable – many Asian women with no prior experience of radio or even using a computer, volunteer their time and gain in skills and experience.

Cultural services

Desi's most unique income generation activity – and the most fun – is dancing at weddings. A team of 10 talented women – all volunteers – have adapted traditional Punjabi wedding dances to Punjabi weddings in Britain. The station hires the team out to weddings and women's events to perform the *Jago*, a women's folk dance. The troupe charges £250 (about US\$500) for a girl's wedding and £300 (about US\$600) for a boy's wedding. The discrimination in price, says Ms. Khera, is simply to encourage the families to hire them even for the girl's wedding. In good years, the station has raised over £12,000 (about US\$23,000) through dancing at weddings.

Grants

The balance of funding comes from a variety of sources, including grants.

Diverse, difficult to manage – but it works

The funding sources are diverse and sometimes difficult to manage – but Desi Radio's management say even if they are allowed to bring in more money from advertising, they'll keep

up their community fundraising efforts – especially the wedding dancing – because it is these activities that really market the station and generate the kind of community support that will keep the sounds of the five rivers flowing strongly.

This article is based on interviews conducted by Tupur Chattopadhyay at Radio Desi's premises in Southall, London, in June 2008.

Tupur Chattopadhyay is a student at London's School of Oriental and African Studies, where she is completing an MA in Post National Communication. While studying, she has worked on several research projects for organizations including Youth For Peace and Act Now for Harmony and Democracy. Tupur also edited the University of Delhi's History Society magazine, Tarikh. Her MA thesis is on Muslim Identities and Secular Nationalism in Indian Cinema.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 The station's objectives are set out in its website, www.desiradio.org.uk
- 2 Ofcom is the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services. www.ofcom.org.uk
- 3 A couple of years later, Ofcom opened up the licensing process and 145 licenses have been issued.



Welcome to Desi Radio

Broadcasting 24 Hours a day on 1602AM in West London and around the world via the World Wide Web. We aim to present Panjabi ideas, concepts and ideals to our listeners through a variety of poetry, writings and music. We are also seeking to improve links with other communities within West London to reflect the cultural diversity of the area.

Sustainability through partnerships: A lasting cup of coffee

BY JEAN FAIRBAIRN

Coffee farmers in Rwanda are benefiting from a unique partnership between a local radio station and coffee roasters in the United States.

The partnership was initiated by Peter Kettler, a trader in the specialty coffee industry based in Madison, Wisconsin. “I was struck by the fact that coffee farmers – the people at the beginning of the supply chain – could not afford to eat, while customers in cafés in the United States were paying \$3.50 for a cup of speciality coffee,” said Peter. “If coffee farmers don’t see coffee farming as a viable means of making a living, what will happen to the rest of the supply chain?”

It was with sustainability of the global coffee industry in mind that Peter Kettler began exploring ways of improving the lives of coffee farmers. Two things immediately stood out: firstly, many coffee growers were not consistently using farming methods that would produce quality coffee; secondly, farmers were not aware of coffee prices and so were often being cheated by buyers.

There are over 500,000 coffee farmers in Rwanda, and coffee is Rwanda’s primary export, followed by tea and bananas. “The price of coffee changes every three minutes,” said Peter. “Prices

Capacity to forge and maintain partnerships is vitally important to sustainability. In this article, Jean Fairbairn explores a unique partnership between a local radio station, an international foundation and the international coffee industry. The example also points to two other often neglected but crucial sustainability issues. The first is affordable access to specialist information for program makers: problem solved through development of a web-site. The second is affordable listening: problem solved through donation of Freeplay wind-up and solar powered radios to ensure sustainable access to programming by people without access to electricity and who cannot afford batteries.

were being broadcast on national radio, but messages were not getting to farmers because they did not have radios or could not afford batteries. The people buying the cherries (raw coffee seeds) were taking advantage of the farmers’ ignorance.”

Peter approached the Freeplay Foundation, an international charity which distributes wind-up and solar-powered radios to provide sustainable access to information and education to people in need. The Freeplay “Lifeline” radio was especially developed for use in rural conditions. It is robust, can withstand dust and heat and has powerful speakers for group listening. It is cheap to use because it is powered through renewable energy.

The Freeplay Foundation and Peter Kettler formed the Coffee Lifeline project and set about raising funds from coffee companies to purchase Lifeline radios to distribute to coffee farmers. It was difficult in the beginning. “But once I started presenting the project as a supply chain investment as opposed to a charity, then doors started opening,” said Peter. InterAmerican Coffee, a specialty coffee importer based in Houston, Texas, funded the initial pilot project which included 60 radios, and soon money for radios started flowing in from coffee roasters. By 2006



LINDA CULLEN

Coffee farmers listen to programs in the fields, using Freeplay Foundation’s wind-up and solar-powered Lifeline Radio.

over 130 had been distributed to coffee cooperatives working with PEARL, an NGO helping Rwandan coffee farmers to improve their crops.

The second phase of the Coffee Lifeline project was to create information that

coffee farmers would value. PEARL closed in 2006, but some of its work is being carried on by a new NGO, SPREAD, which operates with funding from USAID. SPREAD's Director, Dr. Tim Schilling, saw the benefits of radio education for coffee cooperatives and private farmers and agreed to sponsor a coffee-focused radio program. SPREAD's offices in Butare, in southern Rwanda, are next door to the National University of Rwanda and about three minutes walk away from Radio Salus.¹

Radio Salus describes itself as a "university/community" radio station. The station has two main activities – broadcasting and training students from the university's journalism department. Its signal covers almost the whole of Rwanda and spills over into neighboring Burundi. Peter Kettler's proposal that Radio Salus develop as program specifically for coffee farmers made sense to Radio Salus's manager, Aldo Havugimana. "It fits in with our mission to reach rural Rwandans," he said.

SPREAD, Radio Salus and Coffee Lifeline have developed a weekly program for coffee farmers, titled *Imbere Heza* (Bright Future), which is presented by one of Radio Salus's most popular presenters, Emma-Claudine Ntirenganya.

Using the guidelines that emerged from the focus groups, Emma-Claudine compiles *Imbere Heza* as a 30-minute program that includes international news about coffee, which she finds on websites such as the Cup of Excellence (www.cupofexcellence.org); an interview with someone from the Rwanda coffee sector; health issues and a children's story.

Topics have included a history of cooperatives. "Cooperatives are fragile because farmers don't understand them. Ownership and the democratic ethos are being lost. The programs talk about the philosophy and structure of coopera-

tives and include stories about different cooperatives, dealing with real problems of membership, even tackling embezzlement," said Peter.

The radio program is being sponsored for the next two years through a donation by the US-based company, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters. Through this donation, Radio Salus receives US\$450 a month to cover airtime, the presenter's salary and administration. Actor Tom Hanks, the Freeplay Foundation's US Ambassador, funded more Lifeline radios and now almost 450 have been distributed.

Coffee Lifeline recently conducted surveys and focus groups with farmers to find how they were responding to the programs: "From the responses we were able to determine that even in its short history, *Imbere Heza* has become *the* voice for coffee in Rwanda," said Peter. "Several farmers said that they were able to expand their farms based on the agronomic information they heard, and one farmer said he was able to put an addition onto his house due to the increased revenue he had received. A number of farmers said that their neighbors were now planting coffee trees after seeing how profitable coffee farming could be."

Future programs will include the journey of a Rwandan coffee cherry from the farm, to the washing station and from there to the supermarket or café. "Most farmers don't know what happens to their crop once it leaves the washing station – just as most coffee drinkers have very little idea of how the coffee gets into their cup!"

The Coffee Lifeline project is now being evaluated. The project is financially sustainable at present through support from Green Mountain and other coffee traders in the USA. However, for the longer term, Peter hopes that it will be funded by Rwandan coffee cooperatives, which are slowly starting to become

profitable. "We would like the program to become part of Rwanda's internal coffee economy, so that it is internally driven and the partnership is a direct one, between the radio station and the community of coffee farmers."

After the evaluation, the intention is to expand Coffee Lifeline to other countries. As part of this expansion, Peter has raised funds from another coffee importer, Volcafe Speciality Coffee to develop a website – www.coffeelifeline.org.² The website will inform the public about Coffee Lifeline, include information about coffee prices, farming methods and other issues for coffee farmers in different parts of the world and serve as a data base for future Program producers like Emma Claudine who will be able to get up to date information from the website for their programs.

"You expect to have the best coffee in the world when you visit a coffee growing country – but just the opposite is happening. Coffee is more valuable as an export and so there is not even a coffee drinking culture in Rwanda."

Emma-Claudine confirms this: "Even I don't drink coffee very much, but I am now starting to like it," she said. Emma-Claudine is also determined to continue to include information for coffee farmers in her programs even if *Imbere Heza* is discontinued. "The farmers are listening and they like the program. It has made me more aware, and I will now always weave coffee information into my programs."

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Radio Salus broadcasts on 97.00 Mhz and 101.90 Mhz.
- 2 Under construction at the time of writing.

Listener supported public radio in the United States

BY BILL SIEMERING

While we have focused on how communities support local radio in some of the poorest countries in the world, it is worth looking at how public radio is supported in the most affluent country.

Public support is one of the defining features of public radio everywhere. Public radio receives some or all of its funding from the public, it may be directly from voluntary donations, or license fees or as state subsidies raised through taxes. The assumption behind all public broadcasting is that broadcasters need additional support to produce information and cultural programs that may not attract a commercial size audience.

In the United States, public radio receives a combination of these *plus* corporate and foundation underwriting.¹ All community radio stations in the United States are public radio stations, and this means that they are also eligible for public funding. In practice, the line between public radio stations and those “self-described” as community stations is blurred. What makes community stations distinct within the broad public radio landscape is the amount of locally originated programming.² On average, local programming on community stations comprises 65%-95% of the schedule in contrast to 35% originated locally by the large public radio stations.³

Self-defined community radio

There is no simple definition of a community radio station. The National Federation of Community Broadcasters (NFCB) has these key values:

- Localism
- Encouraging collaboration
- Providing quality public service
- Diversity of media ownership and diversity in operations and programming

- Cultural preservation
- Empowering people with information
- Building community

Not all community radio stations meet these core values and not all are members of the NFCB. The core of what are regarded as community stations include 40% in rural areas, stations on Indian Reservations and those serving Latina communities, including farm workers, and other ethnic minorities.

Community stations often have a variety of both on-air and in-community outreach projects. For example, one station in a community of 5,000 held 10-15 discussion groups about community issues that informed a weekly radio program, called *First Thursday Conversations*. Other stations sponsor local music festivals, organize citizen journalism programs and engage with diaspora populations.

The majority of public radio stations, as we use the term in the United States (which is to include stations that describe themselves as community stations), are either licensed to a community non-profit or a college or university.

Broadcasting began in the United States as non-commercial educational radio at the University of Wisconsin, and because of its reach, radio fit perfectly as a medium to implement the motto, “The boundaries of the campus are the boundaries of the state.” Eventually, programs for farmers, in-school educational programs for rural schools, university lectures and classical music comprised the schedule. At first, commercial radio networks also produced educational, cultural and information

programs; the NBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini is one of the best examples of this commitment to the arts by commercial radio. However, as time went by, this kind of programming gave way to more profitable entertainment programming, which by default made the case for the unique role of non-commercial radio.

Creation of a grant structure

With the advent of educational television that was ten times the cost of radio and community-based broadcasters, the need for additional funding to support broadcasting was necessary. In 1967 the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) was created as a way of distributing federal funds without government interference with programming. The United States Congress makes grants to CPB and CPB then distributes them to public radio and television stations, to support local programming and to enable stations to acquire national programming.

CPB was also mandated to create a national network to connect public stations, and so National Public Radio (NPR) was formed as a non-profit organization that would make and distribute news, current affairs and cultural programming. Using grants from the CPB, public radio stations pay fees to broadcast NPR programming. In this way, the funds to support national programming go through the stations to the national producers rather than directly to NPR. Stations are not obliged to broadcast NPR programming and will only take it when they believe it is of value to their listeners.

NPR does not own any stations. Most of the NPR board of directors are elected from the pool of public radio station managers. This means control is from the bottom up. In this, public broadcasting in the United States is very different to the British Broadcasting

Corporation (BBC) and other European state public broadcasters, which own and operate stations and are supported by mandatory fees.

Listener supported public radio

Initially, fewer than 100 radio stations met the CPB criteria. The number of stations has grown – as have their operating costs. However, the federal grant did not grow sufficiently, and stations turned to listeners for support through on-air fundraisers.

Now there are 850 stations that reach 32 million people weekly⁴. NPR's audience has grown more than 80% in the past 10 years, despite a general decline in overall radio listening. On average, 30% of programming that airs on NPR stations is locally produced by station staff, 35% is produced by NPR and 35% comes from other public radio producers and distributors.⁵

Now, on average, the CPB funds account for 16% of a station's budget (with a low of 6% and a high of 21%). However, stations that specifically serve rural and minority communities, including African-American, Native American, Latino and multicultural licensees receive higher funding from CPB, in some cases, *as much two-thirds of their budgets because listeners don't have the financial resources to provide the support.*

Roughly half of the income [45-55%] for the majority of public radio stations comes from listeners' *voluntary* contributions. This means that the programming must be significantly different from commercial radio and of a high quality, so that listeners are motivated to give.

Stations devote an average of 30 days a year to on-air fundraising. Fundraising drives generally go on for a week, during which announcers create a number of 10-minute breaks each day within the

regular programming and remind listeners of the unique qualities and values of non-commercial radio and that it is 'listener supported public radio'. Contributions increase 40% when incentives, such as CDs, coffee mugs and books are offered in exchange for larger donations. The range of giving per listener ranges from 1 in 6 to 1 in 10.

Because many public radio listeners are well educated, influential and have relatively high incomes, they are an ideal demographic for corporate support that is given through underwriting announcements, such as, "Programming is made possible with a grant from Barnes and Noble booksellers"⁶. NPR receives 42% of its income from corporate sponsors and 64.7% from the fees that public radio stations pay them for programming. Local stations earn up to 30% or more from underwriting.

The system has its downside

Stations are stronger with these diversified sources of funding. Relying on listeners for half the income forces producers both locally and nationally to deliver high quality programming. Is there a downside to this source? Yes. For example, news and public affairs listeners are the largest contributors – and their musical preferences do not include solo piano, violin or vocal music, so these forms of music were eliminated from the playlists of stations that also carried classical music. Gradually, news and public affairs programming pushed out classical music altogether, and so fewer stations have this mixed information and music format now.

As a member of the founding member of the NPR board of directors, I wrote the original NPR mission and goals statement. I wanted to differentiate public from commercial radio and wrote:

National Public Radio will serve the individual: it will promote personal

growth rather than corporate gains; it will regard individual differences with respect and joy rather than derision and hate; it will celebrate the human experience as infinitely varied rather than vacuous and banal; it will encourage a sense of active constructive participation, rather than apathetic helplessness.

Now 38 years later, research has found that over 94% of NPR listeners reported taking action specifically because of something they heard on NPR.

Paul Kaiser, chair of the African Studies Center at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote:

What is not sustainable in the UNITED STATES is indeed expected to be sustainable everywhere else. For any initiative to be sustainable there needs to be a number of shareholders with a stake in the outcome to complement an organizational goal of self-sufficiency. International donors, government, civil society, and private sector are essential partners here.⁷

Public radio in the United States would not have grown as it has without government support. And as noted above, this can still be up to two-thirds of the income for stations serving the poor. If this is the case in the wealthy United States, the accomplishments of stations described elsewhere in this report are all the more remarkable.

Given the proven value of local radio with limited resources to achieve development goals of improving health, agriculture and livelihoods, hold public officials accountable, and strengthen civil society, coordinated donor action to support the sector is obvious.

Bill Siemering was the first director of programming of NPR. He is president of Developing Radio Partners, a non-profit that supports local radio in developing countries and is on the advisory committee of the Community Media Sustainability Guide.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Underwriting is similar to advertising. The main difference is that underwriting tends to be more factual and informative: there are restrictions on qualitative and comparative statements, for example, better, cheaper, the best etc.
- 2 The legal system does not distinguish between public and community stations. Within the public sector, stations describe themselves.
- 3 Ginny Berson, vice president, NFCB, in conversation with the author, August 26, 2008
- 4 NPR Facts and Financial Profile, pdf file from www.npr.org (2006)
- 5 NPR Facts and Financial Profile. pdf. file from www.npr.org (2006)
- 6 This is an example of ‘underwriting’– it simply notes the sponsor, without comparing the sponsor or its products to anyone or anything else.
- 7 e-mail to author, April 2, 2003.

Programming creates audience that creates income

BY BILL SIEMERING

Content production and all the activities associated with it are community media's main expense. Content that is relevant and accessible is also community media's greatest source of income and support. In community radio, mission-driven programming means "radio that speaks" to people. Bill Siemering discusses some of the issues related to mission-driven programming, and illustrates the issues with examples from developed and developing countries.

The premise is simple enough: people listen to radio that speaks to them and is worth the time they spend listening. They want programming that is trustworthy, informative, and enjoyable and gives them voice. The programming creates the audience that results in sustainability.

Community media by definition reflects the needs and interests of the community it serves, which requires community engagement. This informs the mission and purpose of the station that is then translated into programs. The challenge is to produce programs that create a significant audience and remain true to the mission.

and get feedback from listeners. This passion is often returned.

Built from the ground up

In Section 1 of this guidebook, Bernice Robertson tells how community members helped Radio Vwa Peyizan Abriko (RVPA) in Haiti as they set up their studio at the side of the road when they couldn't occupy their station.

Here's another snapshot of a grassroots started station. It is written by Developing Radio Partners consultant, Jessica Graham, in September last year (2007) about Radio Etoile in the Ivory Coast.

Usually there is a strong sense of purpose for starting the station in the first place as an alternative to state and for-profit radio. I've often found that the producers also have a passion for the medium that is reinforced when they see positive results in their communities

Innovative program production can go straight to the station's bottom line — Every time a new audience is created there are new opportunities for funding and sponsorship.

— John van Zyl (2005). *A sense of belonging, community radio and civil society*, p12.

The station broadcasts from a little room in the back of a restaurant in Danane, a rebel-controlled area in the west of the country. The station was born in 2005 when members of a local social club decided that they needed to find a way to get information to their friends and neighbors in the midst of conflict. The war had cut off the radio and television in the town. "If we're not informed it's dangerous," says one of the station's founders, Drissa Traore. "This town was dead. We needed to do something for our people."

The station was literally built from the ground up; members of the social club rigged a homemade transmitter to the top of a tree in the restaurant's backyard. With a borrowed mixer and microphone, Radio Etoile made its first broadcast chiefly to dispel rumors about clashes between rebel and government forces. Today, the station has a full program schedule. Built out of necessity, Radio Etoile evolved organically. Listeners attend live weekly public forums in a palava hut, a round thatch structure where people gather for conversation, behind the restaurant. None of the staff are paid. Danane is an ethnically diverse city and the four board members are from four different ethnic groups and meet once a month.

In the competitive world of new media, radio needs to capitalize upon its unique strengths. The words I use to describe these strengths are: personal, storytelling, imaginative, immediate, accessible.

A commercial radio format of entertainment music creates an audience but this does not sustain a community any more than a diet of sugar water soda. The process of creating programming that nourishes a community, that can change behavior, that gives voice to solve difficult problems, that holds public officials accountable, that tells stories and plays local music – all this – is more complex.

‘It’s your baby – it needs food’

BY BILL SIEMERING

Community media have a special role to play in post-conflict situations. Radio Gbafth, Mile 91, Sierra Leone, was started by a rebel soldier who wanted to promote peace. Today the station broadcasts in the open and takes care to ensure programming meets the needs of the people. Financial sustainability is a problem – and the station must educate its community about ownership.

Some 75% of Sierra Leoneans live on less than two US dollars a day, and one in four of the population is food poor, meaning they cannot afford a basic diet, according to the World Bank. Youth unemployment is rife in the country. Two thirds of the population is illiterate and unemployment hovers at seventy percent, with 2 million jobless young people. These include a large pool of ex-combatants who could take up arms again. High unemployment rates and low expectations of a better future are a major cause of instability in West Africa. - *UN Office for West Africa Report; December 2005*

This is the context of Radio Gbafth, Mile 91, Sierra Leone.

Mission statement: To give voice to the poor and marginalized, to gain access to information and education through radio pertaining to their own welfare and development.

Radio Gbafth is located in the sprawling trading center, Mile 91, situated on the road between the capital, Freetown, and Bo, the second largest city. Mile 91 was also on the border between rebel and government held territories during the civil war. The origin of the station is the combination of this location, the work of Talking Drum Studio and individuals dedicated to using radio for peacemaking.

Ahmed Muckson Sesay was a rebel who wanted to be a bridge between the two

sides and wrote to the government asking forgiveness and permission to form an organization for ex-combatants to work for peace. After the government granted his request, he formed the Organization for Peace and Reconstruction and Development (OPARD) and they transformed from rebels to peacemakers.

Ahmed worked with the Talking Drum Studio (TDS), an organization that was also dedicated to conflict resolution through creating and broadcasting radio plays and current affairs programs. TDS served as a bridge and recorded interviews with rebels and the messages of children who had escaped from the rebels, urging those still with the rebels to meet with their families and return. When the children met with their families in person, they were persuaded to return. He believed that a radio station in Mile 91 could play an important role in peace making in Sierra Leone.

During the fighting, Radio Mankeneh from Makeni was relocated to Mile 91 to escape the destruction back home. While they were in Mile 91, they were able to provide some training and guidance to the new station. “Mankeneh” means “hidden” in Krio¹ which described the station at that time. When the planners in Mile 91 looked for a name, they decided on the opposite and named it Radio Gbafth, which means “open”. Ahmed is the chair of the board of directors and the manager is Hassan Yamba Koroma. Hassan also has personal reasons to work for peace: the rebels killed his mother.



Hassan Koroma, Manager Radio Gbafth, Mile 91

Hassan is an enthusiastic advocate for community radio. He, like many of the 16 staff members, is a schoolteacher who takes no salary. The eleven-member board of directors meets every three months.

Programming that makes a difference

Radio Gbafth is on-air from 7:00am to 11:00am and then again from 4:00pm to 11:00pm.

Tatasu, which means ‘it is ours’ in Temne² focuses on local music, local sounds and messages sent to loved ones and relatives and is one of the most popular programs. When people identify from where they are calling, the station learns about its coverage area.

While many radio stations earn money by dedications and greetings from listeners, Radio Gbafth takes this one step further: the salesman goes around the community recording people’s greetings in their own words on a mini disk recorder, for 500 SLL (21 US cents), giving truth the words, “the Voice of the People”, painted on the outside wall of the station.

Spider Web introduces a character, the Spider, who sometimes deals with a

serious topic with a light touch. The Spider deals with health and farming and community issues such as litter and trash and promotes clean up campaigns. For example, the Spider will call attention to dirty areas in the market or along the roads and within a few days, the citizens have cleaned it up. The Spider also

deals with difficult issues like early marriage and violence against women.

Local council members come on the air on *Waytin Daie Bi* (What Is Happening). The focus is on development to explain how the local council money is generated and spent, as well as the responsibility of citizens in decentralization. Youth monitor events and talk of how to move from destruction to construction.

Takaran, a program to promote quality education with panel discussions with teachers, pupils and parents, aired twice a week.

Learning Zone, secondary teachers present instructional programs and lectures three times a week that are heard in classrooms.

Salone in the News, translates news from local weekly newspapers and international sources into local languages.

There are two programs by and for women; one deals with women’s health and sex, advising girls not to get pregnant and to use condoms.

The other, *Woman in the House* discusses the responsibility of men towards their wives and children and issues such as

violence against women. In one case they reported on a 45 year old man who raped a 9-year-old girl. As a result, the man was tried and sent to prison.

The station monitors audience response to programs and conducts informal focus groups and surveys. If a program is not having social impact, it is taken off the schedule.

Support from the community: It is your baby – it needs food

In the beginning, the station was built from the ground up by community in-kind support: the community donated the land for the station, young people made the bricks, artisans built and painted. In 2003 Hassan met with all the paramount chiefs and other stakeholders and they agreed to collect money from citizens for the radio station. Teachers, youth and pastors went house-to-house and collected 1,000 leones (34 US cents) from every house. However, that did not continue in subsequent years.

Hassan explained why in an interview with Grant Fuller³:

One very interesting thing about community radio, the word ‘community’, sometimes it ‘it is ours’, ours in the sense that is their own radio, but looking at the responsibility in keeping the sustenance is very challenging...in giving support, it is very, very difficult because they need more education...They need more education that the radio you are listening to is your baby, but as a baby, it needs food. So this is our challenge.⁴

As an alternative way to raise funds from the community, they organized an annual Radio Gbafth Festival December 30, 31 and January 1st. The festival includes music, soccer and other games. This proved to be a good way to pro-

mote the station, provide entertainment and raise funds. After expenses, the station earns US\$1,500 from the festival.

Dedications are aired Monday and Fridays and generate US\$100 USD a week during peak times, January through March. There are fewer dedications in the rainy season because transport is so difficult and business is reduced.

Other sources of income include sponsorship of programs, that includes Anti-Corruption Commission US\$500 every three months, Special Court for Sierra Leone when in session, US\$74, National Lottery US\$51 a month, Celtel, US\$33 a month. Adverts also vary by the season and the station does not accept ads for tobacco or alcohol because they are destructive to the health of the people.

The monthly expenses are US\$1,625 and monthly income is US\$1,059. The Yoni Community Bank extends a line of credit until program sponsoring grants are received.

Power in the partnership

The largest single expense is for fuel to run the generator and the motorbike that reporters use to go out and cover stories. Between them, they consume about 600 liters a month at US\$1.40 a liter which totals about US\$840 a month. To solve this, Hassan plans

to move the station to a new location where Africell mobile phone company will let Radio Gbafth tap into their generator for electricity in return for adverts. The new location is also more centrally located and they would offer photocopying services as another source of income. The community has once again donated the land and many will donate their labor.

Hassan estimates that once the station has Africell electricity, they will increase the broadcast day and pay stipends to key staff.

Meanwhile, Hassan will organize a meeting with Paramount Chiefs and other stakeholders to ask them to support the station's fuel expenses until the new facility is built and operational. He believes they need to educate listeners more about the importance of their support for the community radio station.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Krio is the *lingua franca* as a second language throughout Sierra Leone, where there are 23 languages.
- 2 Temne is a tribal language spoken as a first language by nearly a third of the population, mainly in the north.
- 3 Grant Fuller is a volunteer consultant based in Sierra Leone.
- 4 Interview with Grant Fuller, Makeni, Sierra Leone, August 19th, 2008.

The road from community service to social enterprise

BY JEAN FAIRBAIRN

Media for Development (MFD) is a non-profit organization based in London that uses media to reach, engage and empower communities in the United Kingdom and internationally. Like many non-profits, MFD is always under pressure to become financially sustainable. Jean Fairbairn visited MFD and spoke to Chief Executive James Greenshields about MFD's entrepreneurial approach and an innovative prison-based community television program that is helping MFD generate income to fund its operations.

When Media For Development's Chief Executive, James Greenshields defines financial sustainability "as having sufficient reserves to see you through the next six months" he is taking a realistic view of what it means to be a medium-sized, mostly donor-funded media support agency based in London.

There are literally thousands of grant-makers in the UK, including individuals, family foundations and trusts, community and corporate donors and large international agencies. However, media support is a competitive environment.

Tired of being fully supported by donors, MFD began looking seriously at other avenues for income generation a couple of years ago. Two prison-based community media projects have shown them a way forward.

Radio Wanno is a community radio broadcast and training unit in HMP Wandsworth, a men's prison in the Wandsworth area of London.¹ MFD trains prisoners in all aspects of radio management and programming and prisoners broadcast live and pre-produced programs through the prison's in-cell broadcast system. Training is accredited and so when the prisoners are released, they take into their new lives valuable work experience and recognized qualifications in different aspects of media and radio.

The Media House at HMP Downview, a women's prison based in Sutton in Surrey, is a prisoner-led TV channel. Prisoners produce programs for a channel titled T.I.M.E. which is broadcast over the prison's in-cell TV system. T.I.M.E. provides a mix of programs, including debate, interviews with prison staff, true life stories of prisoners and entertainment. Like Radio Wanno, the Media House is both a community media and a training unit, providing accredited training and work experience.

'The meaning of media for development'

"We have men and women to go going into further and higher education – which is the meaning of media for development. We are helping people grow and change," said James.

Although it was difficult to convince the prisons service of the value of the projects at first, the partnership is now blossoming. According to James, prisons education normally leans towards literacy and numeracy and prisoners are sometimes too proud to "go to school".

"We ask for a certain amount of literacy and numeracy, but we can weave it into other skills – administration and using computers, working as a group, better communications, improved self-esteem. This is more attractive to prisoners." After training, prisoners can work in the two projects and are paid according to

prison rates. MFD dedicates a full-time professional project manager to each of the two prisons projects, and training is contracted out to further education institutions.

For the first 18 months, the project was funded by a combination of donor and in-kind support from the prisons. MFD worked hard at building a relationship with the prisons. This has paid off and now the prisons support the projects through an agreement which makes the projects fully self-sustainable.

"We were clear at the outset that we could only support the two projects for 18 months, and then the prisons would have to find resources if they wanted us to play a role. At end of 18 months, we signed a service level agreement with both prisons for a full-time media for development manager, costs relating to running the radio and TV stations and a contribution to core costs of MFD. The costs of the tutors are paid for by Learning and Skills Council."²

The projects provide what prisons want, on a number of levels, says James: "Prisons are set targets by government for to provide prisoners with qualifications and for engaging prisoners in meaningful activities. Radio Wanno and T.I.M.E. not only do this – they also improve communications in a communications-poor environment. Prisons are competitive for good publicity and good press, and these projects have attracted

positive publicity. They also look good when inspectors come around – they are memorable.”

T.I.M.E. has had another significant spin-off for MFD. The Downview prison community television project led MFD to consider creating a television production unit outside the prison walls but which would build on the talent, learning and energy of the Downview project. They formed Inside Job Productions, which is a unit run from MFD’s London offices and staffed by a combination of MFD personnel and women prisoners on day release.

Commissions

The unit accepts commissions from the prisons service to make training and other material and also takes contracts to make films, CDs and videos for other NGOs and charities. The principles are developmental – promoting communications, involving community and developing people – but the unit makes a profit:

“We employ graduates from courses run by the Media House at Downview as production assistants on all commissions, giving them valuable media and small business experience. The serving prisoners come to our offices on day release and return to prison in the evening.”

Inside Job Productions is run as a social enterprise – a business that is run primarily for social rather than financial gain. James sees himself as a social entrepreneur: “That is, an individual who identifies social challenges and applies the skills and attitudes of entrepreneur to address those issues. Commercial entrepreneurs want to make money; social entrepreneurs want to improve people’s lives.

“I am comfortable with risk; opportunistic; I love ideas and difficult social challenges and how to address them.”

An enterprise structure

Taking a social enterprise approach has implications for MFD’s structure: “We are not a charity – you cannot be a charity and be entrepreneurial. If you are a charity, you need a particular structure and a board. I know that when we come up with an idea we need to move – not wait for the next quarterly board meeting. We are a company limited by guarantee – a non-profit structure which ensures we can remain flexible, nimble, low on bureaucracy.

“There are disadvantages of not being a charity – we lose out on tax exemptions and there are certain pots of money you cannot access. But even this is starting to change with the development aid sector increasingly realizing you don’t need to be a charity to institute social change.”

Inside Job Productions is still operating with grant support, but it is already contributing to the core running costs of MFD, allowing for new projects to be developed internationally and within the UK without development grant support.

“While we will always recognise the value of donor support in starting MFD, and donor loyalty, we have become tired of being wholly grant funded. We took Inside Job Productions to donors and made this clear. We said with a grant of £250,000 over three years we could develop the unit to the point where it could substantially fund all our operations. We received the money on the basis that it would help MFD become sustainable – and we are starting to move in that direction.”

MFD have been lucky with donors, in that they have been able to build the kind of relationships that foster financial sustainability. “The donors we don’t know that well aren’t interested. But the donors working with Inside Job are interested in the impact on financial sustainability of MFD and are funding with that in mind. They have, for example, funded salaries of senior people to work with the prisons project – this frees me up to think about different directions for the organization.”

James makes another point about donor relationships: “The money can be focused on the relationship you develop with individuals in a donor agency. Donors need to trust – they have to like you. But I always know where the power lies. I am the one who always properly responds to emails. They are the ones who have the money. If they behave badly, I’ll be the one who turns the other cheek. That is the price of power imbalance. Where there is a proper partnership, things are different.”

FOOTNOTES

- 1 HMP – Her Majesty’s Prison
- 2 The Learning and Skills Council is a publicly funded body in the UK which plans and funds quality education for people other than those in universities. Its aims are to improve skills among young people and adults and to improve education and training delivery.

Making Funders Work for You

There are many, many different kinds of funders working at all levels – international, national, local – delivering vastly different amounts of money to projects big and small. It's a fair guess to say that at some point everyone engaged in community media will have been touched by at least one funder, either directly through being funded, or indirectly through receiving content or training, attending funded conferences or workshops, being evaluated or through membership of funded forums or associations.

The funding environment is constantly changing. Instability of the global economy is squeezing government, philanthropic and corporate giving. Government development agencies, like the Danish aid agency, Danida, or the United Kingdom agency, DFID are subject to both economic pressures and changes in policy and agenda when new governments are voted in.

Big international aid also follows political upheavals and humanitarian crises. European funding budgets for Africa and Latin America shrank considerably when the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 exposed need for development

support in new states born out of the dismantling of the Soviet Union. The 2004 Asian tsunami, which killed over 250,000 people, acted like a magnet for funders anxious to provide relief for hundreds of thousands of desperate people whose villages and livelihoods were swept away by the giant waves.

A lot has been written about grant funding, its benefits and flaws. Grant funding has kick started many excellent community media projects – and in some cases, whole community media sectors. In Mozambique, for example, there would most likely be no community radio stations if funders like UNICEF and UNESCO had not got involved; in South Africa, which is much richer than Mozambique, community radio stations serving disadvantaged communities were heavily reliant on Open Society Foundation for South Africa for start-up funds, equipment and development support.

But grant funding comes with restrictions on spending and weighty bureaucratic reporting procedures that small projects often do not have the capacity to manage. Grant funding can also create dependency. Where there are flaws in the way that funds are delivered it directly affects the quality of projects and can create negative results, like greed and corruption. Many community media projects have collapsed or nearly collapsed through mismanagement of grants. Mismanagement can arise out of loose contracting and reporting requirements; setting unrealistic goals and targets; inadequate assessment of the situation. Responsibility in cases like these must be shared between the grantmaker and the project. (This is not to say that responsibility never rests with those who are directly guilty of wrongdoing – it does. However, if care is taken at the outset, there are fewer opportunities for mismanagement.)

Issues, sources and kinds of grant funding

In some places, like the United Kingdom, funding is divided into two categories – restricted funding and unrestricted funding. Restricted funding is any grant or donation that the grant-maker intends for a particular purpose, whether it is a large sum of money or a small donation from an individual. The responsibility of the project is to ensure that the money is spent in accordance with the donor's wishes.

Unrestricted funding is funding that is given to the organization to further its mission as a whole, but not to a specific project. In the United Kingdom, organizations use unrestricted funding to cover general operational costs (also known as core) costs that are not related to projects, for example, the costs of marketing and fundraising.

While only some countries may legislate in this way, most funding is restricted in one way or another – and mostly along the lines of projects / core costs. Funders generally don't like to fund core costs. This is problematic for projects that have staff, rent and bills to pay. Covering core costs therefore requires careful budgeting around projects.

It is very important *always* to balance project and core funding. There have been many stories of organizations in the United Kingdom which are forced to close despite having health bank balances – because the money is restricted to projects and the organization cannot pay rent or salaries.

All grant funding is governed by contracts, which means it is restricted to a particular agreement. This does not mean you cannot use the money for anything else – you can. But any changes *must always* be negotiated with the donor in advance of spending, and

changes to contracts should always be made in writing so that everyone is clear.

Where grant funding works best

Where funders have in-country offices and staff to visit, discuss your needs and assess your proposal on-site.

Where the partnership is developmental and funders are willing to negotiate terms and conditions.

Where agendas and interests are open and transparent.

Where relationships between funders and projects are equal and respectful.

Where community media have other sources of income to tap into.

Where projects have access to the Internet, and can conduct research online to find out about the funder's policies, criteria and funding procedures.

Some advantages of grant funding

Some funders are willing to give large sums and cover whole projects.

Funders sometimes provide other development support, like organizational development and training.

Funders are able to connect you to international support networks.

Some disadvantages of grant funding

Funder funding tends to be short-term – most partnerships last from one to three years.

Unless a sustainability plan is built into the partnership from the beginning, grant funding can create dependency.

Managing grants can take a lot of energy – writing applications and submitting reports takes skill and time.

There may be hidden agendas to grant funding.

“Sustainability does not begin and end with funding, but with effective planning and management”

— An introduction to sustainable funding, NCVO Sustainable Funding Project, July 2006.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 www.communityradiotoolkit.net Chapter 6.
- 2 <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/index.asp?id=2090>
National Council for Voluntary Organizations – book not available online, but can be ordered from NCVO. The website has excellent information about sustainable funding for non-profit organizations.
- 3 http://www.ned.org/cima/CIMA-Community_Radio-Working_Group_Report.pdf
- 4 John Wilson and Dan Taylor (2005). Financing Development Practice: How can we start to make the difference that makes a difference? Published by the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, <http://www.un-ngls.org/publications.htm> ; <http://www.un-ngls.org/cso/cso6/financing.doc>

Getting your support to community media right

BY BIRGITTE JALLOV

Birgitte Jallov reflects on her personal experiences as a development facilitator, mediating the different needs of community media organizations and the donors that want to support them. Birgitte works mostly in development contexts, among community radio stations serving the some of the poorest and most marginalized communities. These experiences shape her perspective. The key to building sustainable developmental community radio, Birgitte argues, is to acknowledge the need for clearly-phased and slow development processes.

In your opinion, what is an ideal donor strategy for supporting community media organizations? This was the question given to me by the editor of this guide. There are various levels of answers to such an important question – but my immediate and quick answer was that it is, actually, not very difficult at all, because it is a win-win.

For the funding / development actor:

A community radio station is a powerful and positive tool for reaching communities. Community radio means information being listened to and trusted, information being turned into communication as community broadcasters work with it. It means communicating from within about issues and challenges of importance, about the future, about the community's dreams of better lives for themselves and their children. It means communication being a continuous dialogue. In many places, it means 90 % listenership – often more.¹

For the community radio station:

Donors bring many resources. Interaction with a professional development actor can lead to strengthened broadcast content; development of concrete ways of reaching for dreams and solving problems; gathering the resources to turn ideals into realities – like being able to move around a little more, visiting parts of the community living far away

from the station, and funding that can contribute towards long-term sustainability.

The partnership at the core of sustainability

The win-win partnership is at the heart of how to ensure sustainability. The core message to the funder is to enter into an engaged partnership that will benefit both parties.

Negotiating the development process with the community and funder

A partnership that will generate sustainability must have a solid foundation. But how to build a solid foundation is not self-evident. I have worked with these issues in different contexts for over 20 years, as a manager, a researcher, an adviser and process consultant, an evaluator and a trainer – in short, as a development facilitator. I have first-hand experience of what it means to be in the middle – between the community-based project, the international development agency and sometimes governments – working to mediate different experiences, expectations, perceptions and ideas about development and what community radio is and can do.

While all parties involved *say* that they want community participation, there are many agendas influencing the process.

The funders: common dilemmas based on tradition and regulations

International development agencies, international NGOs and sometimes even fellow-consultants often think of the establishment of a community radio station as being about equipment, initial training, initial payment of running costs for some months or years - and ... off you go!

In some cases funds for community radio creation are simply given to the national government who will ask their public service broadcaster (or government/state radio) to establish what – more often than not – become small, local public radio stations geared to the community, but with limited community involvement and – usually – with no community ownership at all. The resulting absence of community empowerment and involvement, and the failure to address local development challenges is therefore no surprise.

Such “quick fix” solutions will create small radio stations. Often very beautiful radio stations. More often than not small radio stations that attract the interest by the local community. But in my view, such “quick fix” stations usually do not have a longer-term perspective.

The “quick fixes” are often explained by funds having to be spent swiftly, for results to be recorded quickly, for the government and community to quickly see that the agreement was serious – and not just another development promise turned cold. But in my experience, slower processes simply need to be planned for and the rate of project / support spending needs to be adjusted to a healthy “bottom-up” pace, so that results are not measured just in hardware delivery and stations launched, but also in community development and empowerment processes.

The community: impatience, high expectations, needs

I have also met communities who view slower community development – and “bottom-up” processes with scepticism: is this just another so-called development agency with impressive promises and plans that are never transformed into action? I have met people who initially engage in research and organizational development, but who, as time goes by, become impatient and consider abandoning the process. It is important to listen carefully to these people at this stage, and to find the right balance. But it is still important to persist – to insist – that it has to be done right, and in the end people will realize the immense benefit coming from owning, managing, and deeply understanding the community radio station.

Development facilitators are often people from the outside, who do not live in the communities they work with – at least, initially, until local players take over their role – and so the early stages will need at least a year, often beneficially slightly more, to ripen and mature.

Many people participating in donor-funded community projects expect money to flow in and jobs to be created. Once they realize that with community radio this is usually not the case – on the contrary, it requires a lot of volunteer involvement – some participants leave the process, disappointed that their expectations are not going to be met. Those who become interested in the longer-term development objectives will be those who form the initial core group of organizers of the new development tool.

The role of the development facilitator

The role of the development facilitator in the processes described above is crucial: mediating, explaining and making

both the funder and the community realize that adjusting the funding framework to allow for a slower process is the right thing to do. It is through slower processes that community radio will come to realize its promise as an agent of development, going far beyond just hearing friends and family on air. It is through slower processes that communities will realize the value of the station – and it is this that ensures sustainability.

In this way, everyone’s investment pays off.

So what does a funder need to do to get it right?

In supporting establishment of a community radio station, it is important to clarify whether the objective is to have a small public, local radio station or whether it is to set up a community-owned and community-run radio station. The approach will be very different. To set up a community radio station, the funder needs to consider the following steps:

- Identify whether radio is the right channel for addressing development needs;
- Develop plans for a community-based, “bottom-up” development process;
- Facilitate the process from the early community mapping stages to design of a strategic plan (for a description of these stages, see Section 7, Audience Research);
- Ensure that the process builds on community culture and tradition;
- Request that all “communities within the community” (interest groups) are involved;
- Plan for at least a one-year community development-oriented planning phase before bringing in the equipment – once the equipment is there, it is difficult to find time for meetings and community planning processes;

- Ensure development of an effective organizational framework with transparency and good internal governance;
- Ensure on-going training programs including coaching, study visits and space for ad hoc crash courses and seminars to address problems as they come up;
- Plan for effective involvement by community members in editorial groups;
- Ensure equipment is sturdy, repairable and appropriate for local conditions and use;
- Plan for slim budgets and build realistic sustainability plans, including development of a strong partnership strategy;
- Provide assistance to networks for lobbying and advocacy through sector development; supporting associations and forums;
- Support development of research methods and research to establish the impact of community media;
- Where other donors are present, find ways of coordinating support to ensure development is coherent and not competitive;
- Market donor programs - many organizations are unaware of existing opportunities.

Birgitte Jallof has worked in the field of media development, press freedom, communication for empowerment and community radio in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East for twenty-five years. Birgitte has worked with community radio as a producer, a trainer, an organizer, a lecturer, a writer, a film maker, a development strategist, an evaluator and an adviser.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 This figure is based on impact assessment studies carried out by the author of this text. In all community radios surveyed in a variety of African countries, the rate of regular, daily listening was above 90%.

Good luck!

Sustainable energy for sustainable stations

BY BILL SIEMERING

When you drive into a rural town in Sierra Leone, and many other countries, at night you see a blue haze composed of a toxic mix of fumes made up of smoke from kerosene for the little lamps lighting shops along the road, charcoal for cooking and diesel fumes for the few electric generators.

In many developing countries, community radio stations are to be found in places where grid electricity is non-existent or at best, prone to frequent and lengthy breakdowns. In the discussion of sustainability, something stands out: many stations could double their available funds by substituting renewable energy for diesel-powered generators.

Over half the budget for Radio Gbafth in Mile 91, Sierra Leone, is used to pay for diesel fuel that costs US\$5.60 a gallon. Once they connect to grid electricity, they will be able to use the money spent for fuel and extend the hours of broadcasting and provide stipends for some of the staff. Similar stories can be told at countless stations across Africa, Asia and South America.

Some stations are powered by sustainable energy sources. For example, in Mali Olivier Alais, Geekcorps Mali program manager, reports that he used six solar panels, each producing 60 watts, to power the transmitter and audio equipment.

The package includes:

- 6 solar panels of 60 watts each (US\$375)
- 6 batteries of 12 V 100A (US\$230)
- One charge controller of 45 A (US\$600)

With other small equipment, panels and wire Olivier estimates that a radio station can be powered by solar with an investment of about US\$4,500-US\$5,000.

A few public radio stations in the U.S. are hydro and wind powered. [See links at the end of this piece.]

A new generation of sustainable energy sources is now coming onto the market these include:

- Powerful solar parabolic that costs US\$1.00 to US\$4.00 per watt to construct, so for a cost of US\$4,000 it would produce 1,000 watts.
- Gravitational vortex hydro power that can operate with a water drop of as little as 0.7 meters costing US\$1.00 per watt installation.
- A power playground with a merry-go-round that can produce 400 kw, enough to power a small village.

A far-sighted donor might see this as an extraordinary opportunity to transform hundreds of community radio stations throughout the developing world and improve the information service – and health – of millions of people.

For further information, try these links to public radio stations using sustainable energy:

WJFF, Jeffersonville, New York-Hydro-powered <http://www.wjffradio.org/wjff/index.php?section=19>

KTAO Radio, Taos, New Mexico–Solar Powered Radio <http://www.ktao.com/home.php>

KRCL Community Radio, Salt Lake City Utah - 50% Wind Powered Radio <http://www.krcl.org/> <http://utahpower.net/Article/Article14573.html>

KBSJ Boise State Radio, Jackpot, Nebraska – Wind Powered Transmitter <http://radio.boisestate.edu/KBSJtransmitters.html> <http://radio.boisestate.edu>

HCJB World Radio, Ecuador – Loretto Hydroelectric Project http://www.hcjb.org/mass_media/loreto_hydro_project/overview.html <http://www.hcjb.org/>

Information on Hydroelectric Power <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hydroelectricity> http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Small_hydro http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_turbine

Malcolm Brown has gone on to spearhead the **Hull Wind community wind project** in Hull, Massachusetts. <http://www.hullwind.org>

How to Write a successful funding proposal – and achieve your goals

TIPS FOR WRITING FUNDING PROPOSALS

Don't just ask for something— market your project as an investment opportunity.

Success sells more than sympathy. You do great work— there's no need to ask for a hand-out.

Tell a story. Your story will go something like this— here's a need, here's a response, here's a plan to make it happen, here's how the donor fits in, this is how all of our lives will improve and this is how we will prove it.

Don't just make an application— develop a relationship. Some funders are keen to develop a constructive dialogue with the grant recipient in order to ascertain what kind of funding best meets the organization's needs, and where appropriate, to provide resources to enable the organization to grow and develop.

BOTTOM LINES – TO BE SUCCESSFUL, A PROPOSAL MUST BE

Comprehensive

Cover all the information that is required by the funder

Relevant

Only include information that is needed by the funder. Do not include information that is not relevant – this just gives project assessors more to read and padding makes your proposal look flimsy.

Attractive

Make the layout and design inviting. Break up the text with clear headings; include photographs; include your logo on the front cover; if you are delivering a hard copy, bind it with a cover that makes a reader want to open it.

Coherent

The proposal must be properly planned. There should be a narrative flow – with an introduction and conclusion. The information should be presented in logical order.

PLANNING AND WRITING A FUNDING PROPOSAL

Step 1 – Understand the funder's strategic aims and objectives

Who are they? What motivates them? What are their concerns?

What do they need to know about you?

Do they have a special format for a proposal?

Are you eligible – and can you fulfil the requirements? If the answer is no – don't waste time applying. Look for another opportunity.

Most funders have web-sites explaining their missions, policies and applications procedures and what they do and don't fund. Many have proposal writing guidelines and forms to print off. Some funder web-sites also include useful guides to strategic planning, writing proposals and drafting budgets.

If you can't go to the web-site, write to the funder or phone and ask for information and an application pack.

Step 2 – Define the purpose of the proposal

Once you are clear about what you want the funds for, write it down. This statement will introduce the proposal, and should be short, clear, simple and motivating. What will be the impact of your work, who will benefit and how will you prove it? Your opening statement must grab the funder's attention. It should include basic information about your organization

- what it does
- a very short description of what you want funds for
- how the funder's support will help you achieve your objectives.

Step 3 – Plan your proposal

Brainstorm the information you want to put into the proposal.

Group the information under headings e.g. background, aims, objectives.

Arrange the headings in logical order and note the points you want under each heading.

Work through the document and change headings or rearrange information if you need to.

Step 4 – Write the proposal

Write a first draft, and then get at least one other person to read it.

Based on feedback, write a second draft (and third if you need to) and get the same person to read it again, to see if it makes sense.

Once you are sure that the content is fine, write a final draft paying special attention to spelling, layout and presentation.

Add in photographs, graphs, statistics.

Proofread and edit carefully to get rid of any mistakes and formatting problems.

Basic information to include in a funding proposal

- Mission statement – include this early on in the proposal.
- Background – a brief history of the organization, who founded it, when and why. Who you serve and where you are based.
- The need for your service – a brief description of the need that you are addressing. Why it exists, what solutions are being provided by others (including the state, the private sector, other NGOs). How you work fits in with other services.
- The structures of the organization, and who is involved – funders are particularly interested in how staff are accountable to Board members and to the community. An organogram (diagram of organizational structures) is a useful way of illustrating governance and reporting relationships. Include a list of the names of your Board and staff members in an appendix.
- Partnerships and affiliations - is your organization affiliated to any association or forum? Who are your partners and supporters?
- Aims – explain the overall aims of the organization.

- Objectives and plans – what are your long-term and short-term objectives. What are your plans for the next couple of years?
- Very important – a monitoring and evaluation plan. Donors want to know what results and impact their 'investment' has produced, and many donors will fund monitoring and evaluation as part of their grant.
- A business plan – the business plan spells out your plans in detail. For more about business plans (see Section 3).
- A budget explaining
 - what the project will cost
 - what parts of the budget you are asking the funder to fund
 - what other income you already have or are expecting to come in
- Contents page - if your proposal is longer than 10 pages include a contents page with page numbers at the beginning.

- adapted from Curriculum for Training Community Radio Station Managers, prepared by Benita Pavlicevic for the Open Society Foundation for South Africa, 1999; tips from NCVO website, Advice on Funding Proposals <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sfp/funding?id=2123&terms=motivat#Understand>

The role of national networks in sustaining community media

Networks, associations and forums are critically important to the development and eventual sustainability of community media. The best known global network is AMARC (www.amarc.org), the giant World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters. Organized into five regions – Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America, Europe and North America – AMARC has over 4,000 members. Most of these are community radio stations, but AMARC also embraces community media federations and other stakeholders.

In most countries where there are flourishing community media there are national associations and networks. Most networks perform functions that go way beyond their core work of lobbying and advocating on behalf of their members. In some places, community media associations were established in order to create and build community media sectors. For example, the Community Radio Association¹ in the United Kingdom was launched in 1983 as a membership body to lobby and advocate for an enabling environment some 20 years before the first community radio station was licensed; the National Community Radio Forum in South Africa was launched in 1992, three years before the first station was licensed.

In countries where community media are better off, national associations can earn a fair percentage of their income from membership fees, but almost all also receive grant support and / or public funding and seek other ways of generating income. Olon, in the Netherlands is an example of how networks can diversify their income base. Representing some 300 broadcasting organizations that provide radio, television, text television, teletext and internet services, Olon receives over

half of its income from structural funds distributed by the Dutch Broadcasting Services Corporation. The balance of its funding comes from membership fees services charged to members and project income. The Community Media Asso-

“The main global impact of AMARC since its creation in 1983, has been to accompany and support the establishment of a worldwide community radio sector....”

— AMARC web-site, www.amarc.org

ciation in the United Kingdom’s income comes from a combination of grants, membership fees and service provision, including selling Internet streaming services to member stations.

In Colombia, there are 23 regional groupings, but there is no strong national association. Historically a strong national network, South Africa’s National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) is establishing decentralised “hubs” to provide services to stations grouped according to region and language. One activity of the hubs will be to market groups of stations to advertisers and – an important service in a country where national commercial advertising agencies charge 35% commission. In some places – like Mali – networks have both community and commercial stations as members.

Despite their value, networks and associations also struggle with financial sustainability, particularly in places where membership cannot afford to pay for services or to pay fees. In some places, networks are heavily reliant on grant

funding, and in some places, networks have been criticized for competing with their members for funding.

A World Bank Institute study of the development of community radio in five countries found that national or sub-national networks were instrumental to the development of community radio. The study identified nine ways that they can support community radio.²

- Represent member stations in negotiations with government and lobby on their behalf;
- Represent stations in negotiations with other bodies such as performing rights organizations and advertisers;
- Provide advice on licence application and renewal procedures;
- Provide or arrange for training and technical assistance for member stations;
- Produce training materials for use by members;
- Facilitate the exchange of news and programs;
- Coordinate solidarity actions and campaigns to defend stations under pressure from political or financial interests because of their programming;
- Mobilize support for the stations from donor organizations;
- Provide spaces for debate, exchange of experience, cooperation among stations etc. by organizing meetings, publishing newsletters, websites, etc.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Now called the Community Media Association – visit www.commedia.org.uk
- 2 Girard, Bruce, Empowering Radio: Good practices in development and operation of community radio – Issues important to its effectiveness, World Bank Institute, 2007. <http://comunica.org/radio2.0/archives/69>

In this study, Bruce Girard demonstrates the value of Peru’s Coordinadora Nacional de Radio, one of Latin America’s oldest and most active community radio networks. CNR contributes to financial sustainability of its members in many ways, including selling and producing advertising for its members. CNR’s national news and information service also connects local communities and ensures community news reaches all parts of the country.

Peru’s CNR: A decentralized network

BY BRUCE GIRARD

With a population of 29 million spread out over an area twice the size of Germany that encompasses a coastal desert, the Andes mountain range with peaks of nearly 7,000 metres, and tropical rainforests, Peru faces enormous communication obstacles and radio plays a key role in helping to overcome them. In addition to 2,000 licensed radio stations there are hundreds of unlicensed broadcasters.

The vast majority of the stations are private and commercial. Most visible among these are a handful of national networks, each sending their centrally produced programming to dozens of repeater stations in the interior of the country. Listeners to these stations know more about the traffic conditions and weather in Lima than about events in their own town.

Turn the dial a little and you’ll find hundreds of tiny stations, most little more than a computer hooked up to a transmitter, pumping out fare of cheap music and canned chat. Amongst this commercial cacophony are some 200 community radio stations providing local programming to primar-

ily rural audiences. Peru’s community stations are diverse – ranging from stations with a paid staff of 20 or more broadcasting to entire provinces, to entirely volunteer stations with signals that do not travel beyond the limits of their tiny village.

Founded in 1978 the *Coordinadora Nacional de Radio* (CNR) is one of Latin America’s oldest and most active community radio associations. CNR has 76 members comprised of 49 radio stations and 27 production centers that produce programs for broadcast on both member and non-member stations.

Production centers are usually NGOs that produce radio programs for broadcast on one or more radio stations. Some production centers are local groups that are unable to get their own radio station because, for example, they are in a city where no frequencies are available. Others produce programs for syndication to a number of stations. In both cases the programs may be broadcast on community or commercial stations, but the NGOs share the democratic and participatory principles of community radio.

Three areas of work

CNR has three main areas of work: economic sustainability, capacity development and impact and public opinion.

In the area of **impact and public opinion**, CNR operates a national network news service. In contrast to the rest of Peru's national news services, which focus on events in Lima, CNR gives priority to events in the interior. In its decentralized model, CNR member stations produce news and programs that are then sent to Lima and packaged for national distribution. Twenty-two of the 49 member stations receive CNR's programming by satellite and most of the rest access it via the internet.

Programming includes two daily national newscasts, regional newscasts for the north, south and Amazon regions, a national daily one-hour program of analysis and interviews, a half hour national sports program, a weekend news and analysis wrap-up program, a weekly debate program as well as in depth documentaries. Via the satellite, CNR members also receive programming from the Latin American satellite service ALER, which includes news and analysis from the continent and the world, music and culture and daily programs in Quechua produced jointly by CNR and ALER.

In addition to reversing the traditional news flow from Lima to the provinces, CNR's programming seeks to promote a pluralistic debate on themes related to democracy and development and to ensure the issues of decentralization, poverty, peace and the environment are present on the national public and political agendas.

In the area of **capacity development** CNR provides training for management, production, and technical staff of its members to contribute to both individual and institutional capacities.

Finally, in the area of **economic sustainability** CNR's main activities are in **advertising and production**. It sells ads on its own network programming, defraying some of the production costs, and also has an intermediate advertising agency to represent its members in the provinces to national advertisers based in Lima. CNR also produces radio for external clients from government, civil society and the private sector.

CNR's intermediate agency was established to respond to a problem faced by community radio stations located outside of major cities – advertisers are located in major cities and they find it easier to buy time on the national networks than on hundreds of small stations.

Commercial advertising agencies that represent stations charge exorbitant commissions or simply refuse to represent community radio stations.¹ As a result local stations only have access to local advertisers, even though their listeners would be of interest to national advertisers.

CNR's agency represents a network of more than 100 stations, including both member stations and stations that broadcast the programming of production centers. The agency works with commercial advertisers but the particular characteristics of CNR's network, including for example stations in remote rural areas with programming in indigenous languages, have made it particularly interesting to government agencies and NGOs running campaigns about health, education or human rights issues. Most of the revenue goes to the stations, with CNR charging a small commission to maintain the service.

Value in cooperation

According to CNR, the agency's service is especially valuable because it is run cooperatively with its member stations,

giving it a unique ability to provide specialized advice to clients.

CNR has developed a production service allowing it to harness its expertise in radio production and offer high quality production of informational, cultural, religious, educational and commercial programs to a variety of clients. Productions include advertisements, radio theatre, documentaries and complex campaigns. CNR's production facilities in Lima are supplemented by facilities within member stations in the regions, giving it a unique ability to produce programs in a variety of languages and dialects and to adapt them to local culture, knowledge and tastes, ensuring that programs are meaningful and accepted by local people. As with the services of the advertising agency, CNR's production services are of particular interest to government agencies, NGOs and other clients with social and developmental objectives.

FOOTNOTES

1 The problem is almost universally experienced by community radio stations outside of major cities. In South Africa, for example, intermediate agencies take a minimum 35% commission, occasionally running as high as 65%.

Intercontinental Radio Communication System

BY BRUCE GIRARD

The Intercontinental Radio Communication System (known by its Spanish acronym, SICR) is a complex and high quality program production unit that reaches some 270 stations in Central and South America. How does it do this on a lean budget of US\$250,000 a year? Bruce Girard discusses the secret of SICR's financial sustainability.

The Latin American Association for Radio Education (ALER – Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación Radiofónica) was founded in 1972 by eighteen educational radio stations. The stations, all associated with the Catholic Church, were inspired by a model pioneered by *Radio Sutatenza*, the world's first community radio station.

Established by a young Catholic priest in a remote rural community in Colombia in 1947, *Radio Sutatenza* was an educational radio station that focused on teaching formal skills, especially literacy and mathematics. Listeners were organized into informal classes and would meet mornings or evenings at neighborhood houses to listen to the programs and discuss their lessons. *Sutatenza* also broadcast religious programs, but it was its educational work that made it stand out and that eventually led to the creation of dozens of similar stations throughout Latin America.

Like *Radio Sutatenza*, ALER originally promoted formal education and the Catholic Church, but during the nearly four decades of its history, it has evolved into an association of community radio stations committed to the social, political and cultural development of the region and to the participation and empowerment of poor and marginalized communities. Perhaps the most important change took place when ALER formally changed its status from an association of “Catholic/Christian” radio stations to one of “Christian and/or humanist” stations, opening up to stations that shared its social justice goals

whether or not they were connected with the Church.

ALER now has 118 members in seventeen Latin American countries, including national community radio associations in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina. The association is located Quito, Ecuador and its 25 staff members concentrate on 5 strategic areas. In terms of both budget and staff, the Intercontinental Radio Communication System (SICR – Sistema Intercontinental de Comunicación Radiofónica) is the most important of these strategic areas. The others are:

- The *political communication project* involves an ongoing process of reflection and evaluation of the cultural and political role of each community radio station and network, ensuring the relevance of their objectives and practices;
- Through its focus on *sustainability* ALER helps member stations and networks develop their own social, financial and institutional structures and practices;
- Training and research have been key strategic activities since the early days of the Association. The area includes a regional network of experts from the region who develop, test and implement methodologies and course materials;
- *Policy and legislation* that enables free and democratic communication has been identified as a key priority for

the region. ALER's policy work seeks to influence public policies regarding broadcasting, access to information, access to information and communication technologies, and the democratization of communication.

The Intercontinental Radio Communication System (known by its Spanish acronym, SICR) has two main components – technological infrastructure and radio production.

Technical infrastructure

At the heart of SICR's technical infrastructure is a satellite network with groundstations for uploading programs from nine countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela). The groundstations serve as national content aggregators, delivering programming to the network from the national associations as well as from individual stations.

At the receiving end are 270 satellite receivers in South and Central America. One hundred and twenty of them are ALER's member stations and networks and the rest at non-member stations.

In addition to its satellite network, SICR makes extensive use of the internet. SICR programming is available worldwide as a live audiostream from www.aler.org and its principal programs can be downloaded in MP3 format. The internet is also used by correspondents filing reports and actuality via FTP when they are not able to use one of the satellite uplink stations.

SICR's production system comprises a network of digital studios with connections to the satellite or the internet. The main production facilities are in ALER's Quito headquarters with additional facilities placed in corresponding stations and national community radio associations.

According to ALER, SICR's network is the largest and most powerful in the region, giving the association and its members unprecedented political and social influence.

Thematic Networks

SICR was conceived as a participatory project able to call on the collective knowledge, talent, will and technical capacity of a large and diverse team of producers, journalists, correspondents and others in Latin America and the world. These dozens of collaborators are organized into a series of specialized networks.

Continental News Network

The oldest and largest of the thematic networks is the Continental News Network (Red Informativa Continental). It draws on 50 correspondents in 18 countries to produce three daily editions of its flagship news program, *Contacto Sur* (07:00, 12:00 and 16:00) and two weekly news analysis programs, *La Ronda Informativa Latinoamericana* and *Buscando América*.

The News Network is coordinated from Quito but editorial decisions are decentralized with correspondents actively participating in structuring the daily news agenda as well as in the network's ongoing evaluation and planning.

This involvement is one of the network's strengths. Not only does it make for sound and well-informed editorial decisions, but it also inspires a level of commitment to the project that is essential to its sustainability. SICR does not pay Continental News Network correspondents. Some are employed at ALER member stations and their reports are the members' contribution to a project that they are institutionally committed to.

Correspondents who are not associated with members volunteer their reports

for many practical reasons, such as the training opportunities offered at bi-annual meetings and also because of a personal and political commitment to the project and a desire to be part of a uniquely Latin American and alternative news service.

Other networks

The Kichwa Satellite Network (Red Kichwa Satelital) comprises 35 radio producers in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. The network's name is a fusion of Quechua and Kichwa, indigenous languages with similar roots.¹ Network programming promotes inter-cultural communication, collaboration and reflection. The Kichwa Network is unique in its approach to decentralization. Not only do producers participate in editorial decisions, planning and evaluation, but every few years the network center moves to a new radio station in one of the three participating countries.

The Migration and Communication Network (Red Migración y Comunicación) deals with migration in a series of intercontinental and interactive programs. *Callos y Guatita*², one of the programs produced by this network, is broadcast live simultaneously on several radio stations in Ecuador and Spain. Using the satellite, audio streaming over the internet, and the telephone, the program links Ecuadorians at home and in Spain. Topics for discussion include immigrant rights and discrimination as well as providing a forum for exchanging news between resident and Diaspora communities. The program has also taken up campaigns, succeeding, for example, in exposing financial institution practices that took more than 20% of the value of the remittances sent by migrants to their families in Ecuador.

The Amazon region provides the theme and the location of one of the newest networks. More than 80 communicators from 25 radio stations in 6 countries³

with territory in the remote areas of the Amazon river and rainforest are involved in the **Intercultural Amazonian Radio Network**. In addition to continent-wide distribution of co-productions including news, radio theatre, and health campaigns, the Amazon network helps stations develop communication strategies and provides otherwise unavailable training to hundreds of isolated journalists and radio producers.

Special coverage and campaigns

In cooperation with its members and associations such as AMARC, SICR organizes special coverage of themes and events of particular interest to the region. Special coverage has been extended to global events such as the World Social Forum and to local ones with regional impact, including national meetings on communication rights and environmental issues, for example.

SICR also lends its production capacity and infrastructure to national and continental campaigns on a variety of social themes. Special programs and public service announcements are produced, distributed and then broadcast on local stations, often in collaboration with specialized international agencies such as the United Nations Environment Program, UNICEF, or with the support of national development agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Sustainability

The first secret to SICR's financial sustainability has been to keep its costs down. It is the largest network of its type in the region, with high levels of complexity, quality and productivity and impact, yet it operates with an annual budget of less than \$250,000. The key strategy for keeping its budget low is providing a high quality service specifically tailored to the needs and interests of its members, who in turn freely contribute the content for hundreds of hours of programming. Without the

volunteer contributions of hundreds of radio stations and individuals, SICR's budget would be much higher.

Another important contribution to keeping costs low is SICR's strategic cooperation with the Dutch international broadcaster, Radio Nederland, which has provided free satellite receiving antennas and decoders for 270 Latin American stations, including ALER's 120 members, enabling them to receive SICR and Radio Nederland's services for free. Once again the strategy has multiple objectives – not only is SICR able to have more impact by making its material available to more stations, but as relationships develop some of them eventually become members of ALER.

Of course reducing costs is only one part of the equation. Equally important is the fact that the contributions of hundreds of community radio journalists and producers committed to a Latin American and alternative radio network differentiates and adds value to SICR's offering, which in turn makes it valuable to ALER's members, most of which are small stations with limited production capacity and which count SICR's quality alternative programming as an important contribution to their own sustainability.

While \$250,000 is a small amount of money for a radio network of the size and scope of SICR, it is a massive commitment for ALER, accounting for 10 of the 25 staff working in the Quito office. Fully 85% of SICR's budget is financed by projects from foreign donors. Only 5% comes from member contributions and 10% from the sale of production and distribution services. Increasing revenue from production and distribution services, such as producing and distributing audio material for health and human rights campaigns, has been identified as a priority, but donor support will continue to be essential to SICR's sustainability for years to come.

ALER is committed to SICR for a number of reasons. Among these is the value of the information and communication service's contribution to Latin America's development and democratization but SICR is also appreciated for its contribution to the sustainability of ALER and of its member stations.

As ALER's highest profile activity, SICR is a constant reminder to funders and members of the value of the association. This translates into more committed members, essential to the sustainability of a membership-based organization, and into funder support for SICR and ALER's other activities.

For members, SICR is a source of high quality programming and international news that as individual stations they could not produce. This programming supplements local production, helping stations build and maintain a committed listenership and advertising base.

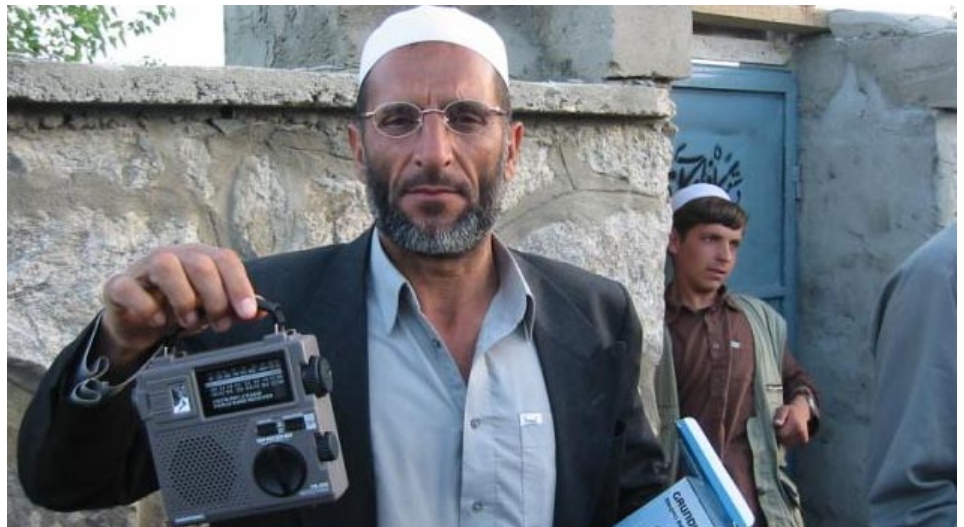
FOOTNOTES

- 1 Quechua is spoken in Peru and Bolivia and Kichwa in Ecuador. Although an estimated 10 million people in the region speak one of the languages, the Kichwa Network is unique in its transcultural nature.
- 2 The program's name refers to traditional tripe dishes from Spain (callos) and Ecuador (guatita). For more information on the program, see *Callos and Guatita: Radio and migration in Ecuador and Spain* by Luis Dávila and José Manuel López in Girard, Bruce, *The One to Watch*, FAO, Rome, 2003. Available for download from <http://comunica.org/1-2-watch/html/download.htm>
- 3 The countries are Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil and Venezuela.

Balancing continued aid with public service mission in a competitive market

BY JEAN FAIRBAIRN

Since 2001, when a United States-led military intervention drove out the Taliban, Afghanistan's media scene has begun to change. Under the Taliban regime, which ruled Afghanistan through a strict and extreme interpretation of Islamic Sharia law, the media were strictly controlled. The Taliban banned television, renamed the state radio network Radio Voice of Sharia and devoted airtime mostly to religious programs and official propaganda.



Qarabagh man with radio.

After the toppling of the Taliban regime, a period of reconstruction and democracy development saw international aid pour into the country. With support from USAID in 2002, the international media development agency, Internews, launched an ambitious media assistance program that has seen the creation of a network of radio stations that broadcast to communities throughout Afghanistan. Internews simultaneously created Salam Watandar, a program production unit that makes quality current affairs and development programming for broadcast by the network of stations.

From the start, Internews emphasized financial sustainability of Salam Watandar and the stations. Jean Fairbairn discussed with Internews and Salam Watandar staff some of the issues and problems facing the Salam Watandar and the network of stations as they seek a sustainable business model. Her findings are summarized below.

Since the launch of its media development assistance program in Afghanistan in 2002, Internews has established 33 community radio stations, reaching an estimated 11.3 million Afghans (about 35% of the population). Internews is currently working on 9 more stations.

Simultaneously, Internews set up Salam Watandar, an independent radio pro-

duction unit in Kabul. Salam Watandar's role is to produce quality development and democracy programming to be aired by the network of stations. Today, Salam Watandar broadcasts 14 hours of programming a day, including over five hours of content produced by Salam Watandar producers, 50 minutes of content from other producers and just under seven hours of music. The stations receive the shows through standard digital television satellite decoders and rebroadcast them over local transmitters.¹

One of Internews's core goals is to leave behind sustainable local media entities in the countries in which it works. From the start, therefore, business development for Salam Watandar and the radio stations was central to their implementation strategy.

Sustaining the stations

For the Afghan program, Internews' provides support and resources to local radio stations. These stations have the character of community station, with a focus on local programming and local participation. All have local ownership, although Afghan media law until recently) has restricted holders of broadcast licenses to individuals rather than companies and many are privately owned.² The later stations are now licensed to community associations, which manage the community radio station. All have a strong local orientation, report matters of local concern and invite community members and leaders to discuss local issues.

As part of its sustainability plan, Internews based its selection of stations to assist on three main criteria: an assessment of the station's proposed leadership, local focus and engagement, and location and potential audience. Internews sought a demonstrate community support from potential station owners or managers, whether in the

form of donations of land or housing for the station and transmitter, or a local council's pledge to pay some expenses or license fees.



Salam Watandar, Kabul, August 2004: Editor Isahan Tahiri edits a program to air nationwide.

Support for each station included technical advice, broadcast and production studio equipment, portable field recorders and microphones, a 150-watt FM transmitter, a 30-meter tower, and a generator to power the station and transmitter during power outages. In addition, Internews provided grants to cover salaries and some operating costs for the first six months – with the size of the grant contingent upon the size and capacity of the station. Internews also provided – and continues to provide – management, broadcast and journalism training, including intensive mentoring of most stations in those fields, numerous training programs, and co-production opportunities.

The stations sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which states that Internews retains ownership of the equipment for the initial broadcast period and is obliged to provide technical, training and other support for 12 months. In return, the stations must comply with quality broadcasting requirements, keep proper financial records, report regularly to Internews and broadcast Salam Watandar's peak hour news and current affairs programs. Salam Watandar markets the programs and the airtime to advertisers. The sta-

tions receive the programming for free and Salam Watandar pays the stations a percentage of the advertising income to broadcast the programs.

Sustaining Salam Watandar

Salaam Watandar was created as both a production unit and a training device, targeting a specific information need in the post-conflict and stabilization period following the war. The program was designed to provide news and information to local audiences, and to create a local ownership and capacity in Afghan's information market.

Whether or not Salaam Watandar is sustainable is not only a question of resources but of alternatives. Over five years, SW has trained and worked with dozens of journalists, who are now part of Afghanistan's thriving media scene. The value of Salaam Watandar is first relevance as a public service, second a question of sustainability; third a question of ability to generate resources for the appropriate model.

Partly due to the 2004 and 2005 elections, for which millions of dollars were spent by the international aid community (USAID, UNDP and others) on public outreach, income generation was not initially a problem. After the elections, as availability of sponsored democracy and voter education programming dried up, public information funds declined for mass media, affect-

ing resources for the entire sector. Since then, business development at Salaam Watandar has focused on commercial advertising and commercial and development-oriented program sponsorship. At the same time, competition for advertising was increasing with the growth of the Afghan media sector, with the appearance of commercial television and more commercial radio stations.

Initially, most of Salam Watandar’s business partners were aid and development donors and agents acting on behalf of donors, buying time for public service announcement (PSA) campaigns and spots. Today, through the efforts of the marketing department, most of Salam Watandar’s income is mostly from commercial sources.

The table below shows how Salam Watandar’s income source has changed.

SW Finances

Business Earned Directly From	2005	2006	2007
	%	%	%
NGOs Community	97.20%	44.73%	18.88%
Commercial Sources	2.80%	55.27%	81.12%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Figures provided by Salam Watandar, June 2008

Income distribution

In accordance with the MoU that Internews signs with its network of stations, Salam Watandar must distribute a percentage of its total income among the network of stations. At present, Salam Watandar’s programs are broadcast on 37 stations, including the stations set up with Internews’s assistance.

Salam Watandar distributes 68% of its total advertising income among the stations. The balance of 32% is split

between Salam Watandar (22.7%) and Internews (9.09%) to cover overhead costs.

Salam Watandar uses a simple ‘rate card’ for the stations, dividing them into tiers of large and small stations. Stations with an estimated audience of over 100,000 people receive a higher percentage of advertising income than those with fewer than 100,000 listeners.

Different expectations

According to Jon Nyswonger, the relationship between Internews and the stations is “finely balanced”.

“The expectations of the two parties (Internews and the stations) are different. Internews set up the stations with the aim of them becoming independent and they are – that is, they are expected to build their revenue base in the market

and keep the money. But many of the stations seem to believe that Internews should be responsible for ongoing support.

“One of the constant battles has been revenue sharing. Stations have asked many times for a greater share of the advertising revenue and Internews has obliged by increasing the percentage that stations receive. Unfortunately, at the same time as the percentage shared with stations increased, the advertising revenue declined. As a result the sta-

tions were receiving a larger percentage of the pie, but the pie was smaller and stations did not see an increase in the amount of money they received.”

While the revenue from Salaam Watandar provides variable amounts of income for different stations depending on their local markets, it is difficult for Internews to establish precise numbers. This is because stations do not regularly provide Internews with financial information, a situation which validates the auditors’ concerns. The absence of information also means Internews cannot at present say with confidence how many of the stations it has helped set up are financially sustainable.

Access to a limited pool of resources

The unhappiness of some stations with their “slice of the pie” is a concern to both Internews and to Salam Watandar, says Jon.

“From the Internews side we would like the stations to play the programming they are required to play. In keeping faith with advertisers on the network, we have employed an outside monitoring service to listen to the stations and report back on what they are playing. The information from the monitoring service shows that occasionally stations are off air or are airing local programming rather than airing the Salam Watandar’s broadcast.”

A “strange and unknown” commercial market

Internews has dedicated significant resources to business development over the years, including international program managers and advisors international marketing officers, finance personnel, and local station-based business development officers. In a planning document aimed at addressing Salam

Watandar's future, Internews refers to Afghanistan's "strange and unknown" commercial market and "the ever changing media environment" and increasing media competitors.⁴ By this, Internews points to the challenge of identifying accurate pricing for advertising in the absence of accurate monitoring information, the bias in public information and sponsored programs that are driven by aid and development budget priorities rather than by market forces, and the nascent local advertising market in smaller cities and towns.

Through the network, Salam Watandar has an estimated audience of 7.5 million people in 22 provinces from 35 radio stations. The stations' audiences are the keys to Salam Watandar's sustainability. Similarly, the stations depend on Salam Watandar's ability to secure international and national advertising, which they could not access on their own.

One of the challenges for Salam Watandar is that it does not have a reliable audience in some major centers. In Kabul, Internews supported the establishment of Radio Watandar, but they proved not to be a reliable broadcast partner. Radio Watandar refused to play Salam Watandar programs when it started and then played the programs but not the advertisements. In Kandahar, Salam Watandar's partner station broke away and stopped broadcasting its programs. In Jalalabad, Internews' partner station is commercially independent and does not have a strong need for Internews programming. Internews has found a second partner station in that city.

Masood Farivar, Manager of Salam Watandar, discussed some of the obstacles that Salam Watandar will have to overcome if it is to become financially sustainable.

Lack of an advertising culture

One of the main problems, according to Masood, is the lack of an advertising culture in Afghanistan. "The lack of an advertising culture means there is tough competition for advertising in a limited market. Advertisers do not realize the value of advertising, and do not want to advertise.

"Advertising is also interesting from the listeners' point of view – most viewers couldn't really distinguish between a TV commercial and a TV program, and they actually watched TV commercials for their content."

Masood estimates that about 80-90% advertising is by banks, telecommunications companies and construction companies. Businesses are slowly starting to advertise consumer products. "The big guys do realize value of advertising and will flood airways, but other commercial advertisers are almost non-existent. There have been no real attempts to adapt our Western commercial model to the Afghani context. We use the same techniques imported and used by foreign run media agencies in Kabul. There is some local adaptation in terms of creativity and creative content, but not in the way the airtime is sold."

Reliance on donors

Masood is very conscious of Salam Watandar's dependence on funding from USAID. Masood argues that full financial sustainability is not really possible for Salam Watandar. "I would define financial sustainability as Salam Watandar becoming largely independent through advertising revenue, but not wholly. Salam Watandar is not a commercial radio station; we are more like a non-profit commercial company. We are not in the business to make money. We take commercial adverts to support our operations but not beyond that."

"While I think it is important to go after every available dollar for Salam Watandar we should also try to limit that if it compromises our editorial independence. Salam Watandar has complete editorial independence right now. Internews doesn't interfere with what we put on air, and that is how it has been all along. Content should not be dictated by any sponsor or advertiser. We have to be careful against a back-drop of government agencies and sponsors and advertisers not knowing and respecting the firewall between editorial and business."

Monitoring the stations

Salam Watandar has contracted an agency to monitor broadcasting of Salam Watandar programming. "They monitor 20 stations at a time and send us daily, weekly and monthly reports to make sure the partner stations do abide by the MoU, and broadcast the programs uninterrupted," said Masood.

This is an expensive operation, costing Internews \$45,000 a year. "It is very important for us to monitor broadcasts. The monitoring has had a good impact – the stations were not all that diligent broadcasting Salam Watandar.

"This is another discussion – dealing with the stations, trying to get them to broadcast Salam Watandar regularly – there are some stations that want to slip in local adverts during our peak hour programs, and we have tried to stop that. The big problem is that they are obliged to broadcast during peak hours and they argue that we have taken away from them their golden time, and that this has made it difficult for them to find adverts and air them during off peak hours."

Keeping up with the competition

Salam Watandar (and the stations they air their programs on) compete for

listeners with Afghan services of international broadcasters, including the BBC, Voice of America and Radio Liberty. They also compete with the national broadcaster, Radio-TV Afghanistan and other local broadcasters.

Salam Watandar (and the stations they air their programs on) compete for listeners with Afghan services of international broadcasters, including the BBC, Voice of America and Radio Liberty. They also compete with the national broadcaster, Radio-TV Afghanistan and other local broadcasters with a commercial mandate. Salaam Watandar has long sought to pitch its programming to less educated, and less wealthy, audiences, as part of a public service mandate. This means that they are less likely to attract advertisers interested in an audience with disposable income.

At present, Salam Watandar has 25 full time staff making programs; three full-time staff working for their program distribution unit, Tanin and 12 provincial stringers who send in news stories. Although Internews is at present handling Financial Management and Human Resources, the long-term plan is for Salam Watandar to take over these functions.

Challenging times

“It is a difficult time, but I like a challenge, a job with a very long job description. My goal is to raise the quality of Salam Watandar content and also to make it stand on its feet, and then I am done with my mission,” said Masood.

“We have talented people and it is a great program making unit. It is very valuable. At the gathering of station managers I gave a presentation and my message to them was – Internews decided to set up the program unit because local stations do not have resources to produce programs.

“I demonstrated this with sound clips and they all agreed, and confirmed the value of Salam Watandar. A couple of station managers say when we are on air no-one wants to listen to VOA, BBC and the others. That’s what I get a kick out of because those programs are put together with millions of dollars and our programs are put together by 25 people.”

FOOTNOTES

- 1 From studios in Kabul, the signal is uplinked via the Russian AM-1 satellite to Milan where it is multiplexed into a DVB (Satellite TV) bouquet and re-transmitted on HotBird6. Hotbird6 reception equipment is cheap and readily available in Afghanistan.
- 2 There no media laws specifically defining community radio. There was no culture of independent local stations in Afghanistan at the time.
- 3 Internews: Salam Watandar, Future. Document provided by Internews in June 2008.

Community research for community media sustainability

BY BIRGITTE JALLOV

Community media everywhere struggle with audience research. In more developed countries, there are commercial audience research companies that count and categorise commercial and public audiences for advertisers. But most research agencies don't take too much notice of small, local media. These kinds of companies hardly exist in the developing world. In any case, commercial audience research does not generate the kind of qualitative information that is needed to understand community media's social and development impact.

Audience research is essential to sustainability – it is necessary to build community media, to make sure services provided are relevant and accessible, and for organizational development. **Birgitte Jallov** suggests some cost-effective yet rigorous methods. While these suggestions are made for stations operating in developing contexts, the methods and approaches work in other contexts as well.

Does research play a role when working to identify ways and means to ensure sustainability of community media? Yes, yes and yes. It is an integral part of many of the processes involved in working to ensure that community media are properly anchored in the community, in ensuring participation by all “communities within the community”, in strategic planning and in assessment of community media impact – and all of these issues are fundamental to long-term sustainability.

In most of this article, I focus on community radio, because this is my main area of work. However, community radio shares its central features of community ownership, participation and not-for-profit business model with other community media forms, such as community multimedia centers, community telecenters and community TV.

Obviously, the specifics of research design and method vary for different kinds of media, but the same overall principles about the need to do credible, cost-effective research at key points apply.

There are many reasons to conduct research – the two main ones are:

- to build and improve the organization, and
- to demonstrate impact to community media users, practitioners and, very importantly, to funders and other paying partners.

All community media struggle to do research, but all need it for sustainability. Community radio stations and the organizations around them have come up with some creative, cost-effective ideas for doing credible research. These ideas are the focus of this article.

Research around community media: Why? How? And who does it?

Usually, research is expensive, hard to manage and difficult to analyze rigorously. It is also often not used effectively. If you imagine a community radio station in a poor rural or peri-urban area somewhere in Africa or Asia, and then consider the seemingly overwhelming research requirements, you might wonder: is sustainable community radio possible in these settings?

The answer to this is that to create a sustainable community radio station, research is essential. It forms the basis for planning, effective implementation and understanding impact. The research can be managed by the person responsible for training and coordination in the station, and it can be incorporated into the daily life of the station. It requires some training and some attention, but is absolutely possible to do.

Research can be used to strengthen community media and the communities they serve. If this is the goal, community-based research is recommended. This is

Participatory - involving community broadcasters and managers. Benefits are that the research starts from a strong base of insight into the community; research capacity is built in the station and broadcasters become better known in community.

Regular - to ensure a steady flow of information and feedback for the station and its partners and to keep up research capacity in the station.

Transparent - as with all research, if the methodology is explained when results are presented, the research will be trusted.

Simple - straightforward questions will provide straightforward answers that will be easier to interpret.

Where is research needed to create sustainable community radio stations?

As discussed below, sustainability requires a clear strategic direction and the capacity to identify, manage and maintain partnerships. To become sustainable, you need to know what you are doing and why. Research is needed at three stages:

Stage 1: In the early planning phase, involving the community in assessing needs

Research at this stage is used to find out about local development needs and whether community radio is the right medium to meet them, or if there are alternatives.

Research will center on

- Clarifying legal issues relating to community media.
- “Mapping” the community to ensure involvement of all sectors, and to ensure community ownership.
- Identifying the development dreams and aspirations of the community as a whole, and those of sub-groups.
- Identifying the community’s information and communication needs. Which of the communication needs can be met by a community radio station? Which will require other types of community development intervention?
- Is a community radio station the right answer and is it feasible?

Research methods at this stage would include community mapping and simple data collection exercises. The community is involved throughout the process, which takes place in facilitated workshops and meetings. With some training, the facilitator could be drawn from the community – perhaps a school teacher or administrator?

Stage 2: When community radio seems right, research for strategic planning

The next step is to merge the information gathered during Stage 1 into a community-led planning process, and to develop an implementation framework.

Developing sustainability takes time – but the benefits fully justify this

When planning a community radio station, it is important to focus on the radio as an “indigenous” organism” with a long-term life expectancy, and which is solidly rooted in a community that organizes around it. Too often community media are considered “projects” and referred to as “projects”. This signals “theirs” instead of “ours” and creates an unhealthy alienation in the community towards the new institution – with a high probability that the station will only working for as long as a donor runs the show.

In view of the changing funding environment and the increased donor awareness of the importance of community radio for empowerment and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, increasing numbers of community radios will be recommended and initiated by donors as part of a community development process. This is in principle not a problem in itself.

But it is very important that the initiating donor inverts top-down development processes, and involves community members. This is the only way of ensuring longer term community ownership, community commitment, community confidence and thus: sustainability.

This takes time. But that has to be accepted and planned for. For this reason it is also recommended that an initiating / founding donor always plans to support the radio station for at least the first five years.

Stage 2 builds the overall plan for the station, and the sustainability plan. The focus will be social sustainability resulting from community ownership, institutional sustainability resulting from a participatory organizational development process and financial sustainability – the core focus of this guide.¹

The Mozambican community radio development process with which I have worked over the past 10 years has used the definition of sustainability developed by Lisa Canon in her book *Life beyond Aid*. In Canon's definition, sustainability is generated through structured management of partnerships:

“...the ability of an organization to secure and manage sufficient resources to enable it to fulfil its mission effectively and consistently over time without excessive dependence on any single funding source [...] Sustainable organizations have, at minimum, a clear mission and strategic direction; the skills to attract resources from a variety of local, national and international sources and the know-how to manage them efficiently [...]”
- Lisa Cannon, *Life Beyond Aid*, 1999.

A partnership strategy thus becomes an integral part of a strategic plan. The strategic planning process will outline the starting point for the station. It will identify steps towards achieving the community's development vision and mission – in parallel with other community development activities. It is essential that the strategic planning phase is participatory – this will ensure that the station develops from the bottom up.

Community ownership is generated by ensuring that all the “communities within the community” – all interest groups – are involved in the life of the station. This means working with the interest groups identified in the strategic

planning process. It is important to include all localities, religions, age groups and genders, socio-economic groups. In this way the radio IS the community.

In Stage 2, the main research questions will be:

- How to establish a sustainable organizational structure that is also inclusive and transparent.
- How to ensure that all interest groups are continually involved.
- How to structure the volunteer broadcasters to answer the programming needs.
- How to develop a programming format, structure and style that is true to local culture, history, situation and needs.
- How to identify the equipment needs.
- How to plan for (preventive) maintenance of equipment.
- What kind of ongoing training to plan for. Elaboration of a training policy.
- What kind of ongoing impact assessment is needed.

Stage 3: Impact assessment: are we moving towards our dreams and vision?

There are many ways of doing impact research – yet it is an area of research and follow-up that is under-prioritized. Impact assessment is important to:

- Report back to the producers on the effectiveness of their programming. Are the target audiences happy with the programs? Are the programs fulfilling community interests and expectations? Are they interesting and accessible?
- Report back to the listeners about the station's performance. This can be done in feedback programs.
- Report back to the funding partners about the effectiveness and impact of the messages.

- Demonstrate to future funding partners that the station is making an impact and is able to document it in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Once community members realize the importance and value of impact assessments, motivation to carry out assessments generally increases.

How is community research carried out? Who does it? What does it cost?

Impact assessment and “qualitative indicator monitoring” are among many development tools that have emerged with the trend towards “results-based management” and sharpened international focus on cost-effective development assistance. However, many organizations still do not monitor their impact in any significant way – but the ones that do are the ones that are more likely to attract positive attention.

One example of an impact assessment methodology developed among eight community radio stations in Mozambique is presented below. This methodology assesses impact at three levels: (i) internal governance and functioning; (ii) community satisfaction with programming content; and (iii) social change; impact on community life.

Checking content quality can be done in a variety of ways, including the rather resource-heavy content and reception analysis.² While there is no doubt that in-depth analytical work with content would be useful, community radio stations do not have the capacity to carry it out. There are, however, simpler ways of measuring listeners' satisfaction. The example here is based on experience in the Media Development Project in Mozambique (1998-2006)³.

- **Regularly hearing out the community:** Every time program makers and presenters went out into the commu-

nity to gather material, they would informally interview people about their views of the station and its programs.

- **Registration of callers' details and opinions:** A set of basic questions were placed next to the station's telephone as a reminder to producers to ask them. This technique enabled station members to establish the profile of callers (gender, age, address, etc.) and to record their opinions about the station. They would also ask questions about changes that had taken place in the community since the station began.
- **Registration and analysis of listeners' letters:** Listeners' letters provided considerable unsolicited feedback about programming. Listeners would also write to the station to complain about inadequate public services, providing the station with an opportunity to act as the community's voice and act as an intermediary between the community and local authorities.
- **Responses to questions on the back of message slips:** An important function of radio stations in Mozambique is to broadcast listeners' messages. These messages are also a vital part of a station's income. A listener buys a printed message slip on which s/he writes the message, the sender's name, the preferred broadcast time, and any other important information. Questions to elicit opinions about the station were printed on the back of the slips, and collated and categorized when they came in.
- **Interviews with people living near individual programmers:** The eight radio stations that were part of the Mozambique development program have community programmers living in practically all different areas of the communities served (the different bairros). If a radio has some 50 volunteer programmers and each of them carries out six interviews – three with women, three with men – the radio

has 300 interviews gathered in a very simple, quick and cost-effective way. This method was successfully used in a community where a person living with HIV/AIDS was interviewed on radio for the first time. The next day 50 volunteers carried out interviews about the program in their bairro – and the station had instantly taken the pulse of the community.

- **Interviewing people attending public events.** In Mozambique, public events gather large crowds nearly every month. Interviews at events have focused on the topic of the event in relation to the radio's programming. For example, on Women's Day the interviews would primarily focus on women's programming.

All of these methods are simple, yet have to be planned for and carried out in a structured and rigorous way. The first time these research processes are developed and conducted, it is useful to engage a facilitator or trainer to work with management and broadcasters, also to assist when data is compiled.

The research is extremely cost-effective and can be built into the everyday life of the station. The main costs will be facilitation, transport, purchase, installation and training in computer software like Excell – and perhaps a festive lunch for volunteers.

Three more participatory impact assessment methods

Three useful methods for community media are introduced here.

Most Significant Change

Most Significant Change is a story-based impact assessment tool, systematized by Rick Davies and Jessica Dart (2005) which builds upon the strong oral traditions that often prevail in communities with low levels of literacy – some of the communities where com-

munity radio as a development tool has a very special role to play.

Most participatory evaluation and impact assessment methods require comparison with baseline study or other earlier research findings. Often, this information does not exist. The Most Significant Change method has been developed to meet exactly these situations.⁴

Most Significant Change is a tool that is easy for community groups to use. For impact assessment, the most important question will be: What is the most significant change that has taken place in your life – or in the life of the community – since the advent of the community radio station?

Through structured interviews with carefully identified interest groups a series of “significant changes” are registered. These are rigorously categorized and grouped, and at meetings, community members vote to develop a hierarchy of significant change. In this way, the community decides what is the most significant change.

The Most Significant Change method has been further elaborated by the Communication for Social Change Consortium, in the publications “Who measures change? An introduction to Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication for Social Change”⁵.

Information and Communication Needs Assessment

Assessing information and communication needs is an effective way of identifying what channels communities usually use to communicate, and what communication and information needs are unmet.⁶ This is an effective tool when planning a radio station, and for internal planning once the station is up and running – asking, how can we

DOING A 'BAREFOOT' IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Area of assessment

What to do

Ensuring that the radio works effectively as an institution and that all groups within the community are involved (twice yearly)

Use a checklist:

Staff: any vacancies? Are responsibilities clear? How long have people been involved? What training has been received?

Volunteer structure: how many? Duration of involvement? Training received?

Work/action plans: do they exist? Are they used? Status of budgets, accounts, time-plans?

Programs: content variation, relevance, local production, source of content?

Community involvement and participation: who comes to meetings? Who doesn't?

Sustainability: status of partnerships? Fundraising initiatives?

Satisfaction: of staff, volunteers and community members

The impact of radio on community development (ongoing and annual assessments)

Conduct informal interviews while out preparing programs or doing other radio work

Register opinions of listeners that telephone in

Register and analyze letters received from listeners

Register and analyze responses to questions printed on the back of returned message slips (used to announce births, deaths, community events, meetings and so on)

Conduct interviews with people living near individual programmers

Conduct interviews with people during major public events

The impact of community radio content (ongoing assessment)

Conduct individual interviews

Conduct focus group interviews (distinct profiles, such as young women, young men, women in rural areas, men in rural areas, women in town-like areas, men in town-like areas), with 6-10 people per group

Keep identified problems at the forefront of organization and planning (in Mozambique these are: food security; health; and security & infrastructure)

further strengthen the ways in which we provide information and act as a community voice and forum for dialogue and debate?.

Barefoot Impact Assessment

See the box titled Doing a barefoot impact assessment, which includes a summary of the method.⁷

FOOTNOTES

- 1 The three part sustainability model of social, institutional and financial sustainability is drawn from the work of Alfonso Gumucio Dagon. See Section 2 for a description of the "tripod" sustainability model.
- 2 This section on assessing content quality was also presented by the author herself in her article in Radio Journal: "Assessing community change: development of a 'bare foot' impact assessment methodology", Volume 3:1 July 1995
- 3 These specific methodologies were identified and tested by the sociologist Nelia Taimo within the UNESCO/UNDP Media development project.
- 4 <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.htm>
- 5 http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/who_measures_change.pdf
- 6 As presented in: http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/A2I_guides_communication-forempowerment.pdf
- 7 The case used in the below box was conceptualized, tested and implemented by the UNESCO/UNDP Media Development Project in Mozambique 1998-2006 under the leadership by the author of this chapter. The summary checklist presented in this box was extracted by the ids in their newsletter: <http://www.id21.org/insights/insights58/art07.html> based on an article written for Radio Journal by Birgitte Jallo: <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/71540/307>

Sustainability is about community investment and community commitment

BY MANISHA ARYAL

For Radio Madanpokhra in Nepal, sustainability would not be possible without community support, which covers the annual license fee, raises funds and extend listenership.

Sustainability is not just about revenue stream, says Gunakar Aryal, Station Manager of Community Radio Madanpokhra in Palpa District, West Nepal. “It is about a community’s investment in the station and their commitment to keep broadcasting despite all odds.”

Gunakar should know! Community Radio Madan Pokhara, located some hundred mountain miles outside the capital Kathmandu, went on air eight years ago with initial technical support from UNESCO, and 65,000 rupees (US\$1,000) in an endowment fund collected from the community. The station had a 100 Watt transmitter, with the broadcast console at the manager’s house and a recording studio next to Gunakar’s cow shed.

Three years later, the station collected \$6,500 as contribution from organizing a reading of the Hindu scriptures and constructed a building with a professional recording studio. In 2004, UNESCO helped the station add a community telecenter to expanded Community Radio Madanpokhara’s service to the community and its listeners’ access to information – through training in ICT use and integration with radio via programs like Radio Browsing. The station now has a 500 Watt transmitter, broadcasts 18 hours and reaches all 65 Village Development Committees (VDC) in the Palpa district. The endowment fund has grown to 235,000 rupees.

“We need transparent local government,” says Gunakar Aryal. “And our radio fosters participation at the most local level and makes local democracy strong.”

Recognizing the importance of the radio station, the Madanpokhara VDC puts in an annual budget line item to pay for the annual license renewal fee. This helps the station meet 50% of its license renewal cost to the government. The rest of the licensing cost, and the running costs comes from the station’s own earnings



The Radio Station – Community Radio Madan Pokhara.

– revenue collected from running public service announcements and local government information campaigns as well as from commercial advertisements (barring those of fast food, fizzy drinks and tobacco and alcohol based products).

“Community involvement has key to running this station from the beginning,” says Gunakar Aryal, who used to be a high school teacher. “If there is no involvement, it makes no sense to have a community radio station.”

Three other voluntary groups support the station in 36 of the 65 Village Development Committees of Palpa district – Radio Sangi Samuha or Friends of Radio conducts public hearings on issues raised on radio and acts as a bridge between the stations’ program staff and

Radio Madanpokhara mobilize resources from within the community. They collect Musti Daan (voluntary contribution equivalent to a handful of rice per day) for the station and have helped increase the stations’ endowment fund exponentially. Another innovative rev-

broadcasting. Radio Representatives attend weekly meetings with the stations’ program staff, contribute news items from their VDCs, and in consultation with Radio Sangi Samuha and Mahila Sanchar Samuha produce a monthly 30 minute program.



Station Manager Gunakar Aryal consults with Friends of Community Radio Madanpokhara.

listeners; Mahila Sanchar Samuha or Women Communicators’ Group seeks to mobilize women listeners through radio and involve them in community development; and Radio Sahayog Samiti or Radio Support Committee is made up of local public officials and helps with seeking funds for the radio station.

Radio Sangi Samuha and Mahila Sanchar Samuha also help Community

enue generation stream is Daura Daan (contribution set aside by Forest Users’ Committees active in Palpa.) These also help the station meet its operating cost.

Each of the 36 VDC where Community Radio Madanpokhara is heard, also selects a Radio Representative from their VDCs. Radio Madanpokhara trains these Radio Representatives in community reporting, radio production and

“This involvement is priceless,” says Station Manager Gunakar. “No amount of money can buy a radio station this commitment. Imagine – the community organizes around radio; extends the reach of broadcast through public discussions; and contributes to news and programming. This is sustainability.” Community Radio Madanpokhara is expanding its volunteer support group and its community mobilization activities to six new VDCs each year and hopes to cover all of Palpa District by the year 2012.

Manisha Aryal, Pakistan Resident Journalism Advisor and South Asia Regional Development Officer for Internews Network, is a Nepali-born journalist based in Pakistan. Manisha works with Pakistan’s emerging independent media and trains radio and television journalists. Manisha has worked in media development across Asia, including in Nepal where she set up Antenna Foundation - a non-profit radio and television production house that works on programming and sustainability issues of Nepal’s thriving community radio sector.

The enabling legal environment for community media

KATE COYER

The need for an enabling environment

The political will to create and protect community media and an enabling legal environment are fundamental to long-term sustainability. According to the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC), the lack of proper enabling legislation is the biggest single barrier to community media's social impact and sustainability.

Legislation is by no means a panacea for solving all the issues related to sustainability, nor do the authors of this guide wish to imply that excessive and complex legislation should be the aim. Supportive legislation is crucial, but unfriendly or non-existent legal frameworks remain a constant challenge to community media practice.

This section focuses on the role that enabling legislation can play in ensuring sustainability of community broadcasting, and suggests some legal and regulatory “best practices”. Underlying the discussion is the view that to promote sustainable development of community media, practitioners, funders, advocates and activists should concern themselves with policy debates.

A brief overview of the legal status of community radio internationally

A scan of community radio legislation around the world finds a sector dominated by a lack of cohesive policy. There are countries with well-established community radio sectors (Australia, South Africa) and countries where community radio is still not recognized (Japan, Chile). In recent history countries as

diverse as Argentina, Bolivia, Uganda, India, Bangladesh and the United Kingdom have adopted reforms that assist community media.

Where there is no licensed community radio, there are often thriving landscapes of unlicensed community stations. In Thailand, for example, there is currently no way for local groups to apply for a licence, but there are an estimated 4,000 to 7,000 “pirate” radio stations. Even where there is legal community broadcasting, unlicensed “pirate radio” might

still operate, because of limitations of national policy, lack of spectrum availability or because there are people who want to operate outside state infrastructure for ideological or political reasons.

Some community radio stations operate under threat of harassment in highly volatile and dangerous conditions. In 2005 the government of Nepal imposed a ban on news and public affairs programming on commercial and community stations that lasted until overturned by the courts. In Mexico in 2008 two

Key requirements for an enabling environment

- Community broadcasting should be recognized in law as a distinct type of broadcasting to be supported and encouraged through specific and explicit licensing arrangements that guarantee fair and equitable access to radio spectrum for civil society and community-based organizations.
- Community broadcasting can be defined as independent broadcasting that is provided by and for the members of a community in a particular geographical location or that belongs to a particular community of interest. Its primary purpose is to deliver social benefit and not to operate for private commercial profit. It should be owned by and accountable to the community that it seeks to serve and it should provide for participation by the community at all levels.
- Licensing processes for community broadcasting should be fair, open, transparent, and set out in law and should be under the responsibility of an independent licensing body. Criteria for application and selection should be established openly and in consultation with civil society.
- License terms and conditions for community broadcasting should be consistent with the objectives of broadcast regulation and be designed to ensure that the community broadcasting service characteristics are protected and maintained for the duration of the license period.
- Community broadcasting services should have access to a diversity of funding sources according to local circumstances. There should be no restrictions on funding sources other than those deemed necessary to maintain the character of the service and to avoid unfair competition.
- Community broadcasting may be supported by public funding, including direct public subsidies. Where there is a regular and guaranteed system of public funding this should be fair, open, and transparent in its administration and under the responsibility of an independent public body.

- Excerpt from Broadcasting, *Voice and Accountability*, by Steve Buckley, Kriztina Duer, Toby Mendel, with Monroe Price and Marc Raboy, published by the World Bank Institute in 2008

women journalists with community radio *La Voz que Rompe el Silencio* (the Voice that Breaks the Silence) were murdered en route to a public demonstration. In 2005, a community radio station in Paraguay was bombed.

In other countries, regulation remains unclear or has built-in limitations. In Indonesia, community radio has had legal status since 2000, but there is no regulatory system in place. As a result there are about 500 community stations that are legal but unlicensed. In Bosnia, community radio licenses are available, but to date, not one application has been filed because (say college radio organizers) the law imposes so many limitations on funding that there is no way for stations to support themselves financially.

KEY ISSUES IN DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY MEDIA FRAMEWORKS¹

Recognition of community media

Community broadcasting should be recognized as a distinct sector, with its own rules and procedures, and sufficient access to the radio spectrum. Unless specific provisions (including setting aside frequencies) are made for community radio, long term sustainability remains in doubt.

In the United States, community radio has a long and rich history, but the growth of new FM stations has been drastically limited by laws passed under pressure from commercial and public broadcasters (including commercial broadcasters and National Public Radio). Because there is no specific provision for community radio, community stations fight for frequencies with religious broadcasters and other groups. In Ghana, there have been problems with commercial radio stations applying for licenses under the pretext of community service provision. Similar concerns

were documented in a UNESCO report on Nepal, which found that a poorly defined policy framework resulted in many stations being captured by local elites, even though there also exist stations with good practice there.

Definitions vary, but certain policy principles should be adhered to

There is no one single regulatory definition of community broadcasting. Policies focus on definitions emphasizing broadcasting that is not-for-profit, participatory, and made for and by a local audience. It makes sense that there is no “one size fits all” approach. The specific shape and feel of each national system will differ to because it reflects local conditions and cultures.

Characteristics which should be a part of any legal definition of community broadcasting include:

- independence from government and commercial entities;
- servicing either geographic communities or communities of interest;
- ownership and management by the people of the community; and
- operating for social gain not private financial profit.

It is also important for policies to have some mechanism to counter corruption, or co-option by local elites. When community media become mouthpieces for local government they lose credibility. One way of preventing control by government, or perceptions of control, is to channel government support through an independent body.

The broader enabling environment and the function of an independent regulatory body

Community radio policies can only be as strong as the broader environment within which they operate. A strong media environment supports a free

and open media, has safeguards for the rights of journalists and freedom of expression, rights of racial, ethnic, religious and other minorities and women, recognition of non-profit organizations and a legal system with the capacity to enforce these rights.

Another necessity is a functioning and independent regulatory agency, and transparency and fairness in licensing.

With respect to the function of the regulatory agency, the following criteria are necessary:

- The regulator should publish members’ interests and affiliations, proceedings of meetings, licensing decisions and reasons for those decisions;
- Public consultations should be held on licensing and regulatory policies, codes and procedures, and the annual plan and priorities of the regulatory body should also include input from community media advocates and practitioners;
- Major policy decisions should include a 3-stage public consultation process:
 - notice of a new decision that is to be made;
 - collection of public input on the possible decision, and
 - final decision issued publicly.

Sustainability and licensing processes

Certain principles in community radio licensing should be adhered to. Here is a compilation of key licensing principles that are recommended:

- Ensure fair and equitable distribution between public service, commercial and community broadcasters.
- Legislation should reserve a portion of radio frequency spectrum for non-profit community broadcasting (10-15% of the FM bandwidth is the norm, but 20% is ideal).

- Community stations should have minimal or no license fees. In Mali and Colombia, for example, the license fee for community radio stations is around US\$20. In Bolivia, community stations pay 10% of what commercial stations pay. By contrast, in Ghana, stations are expected to pay an application fee of US\$100, a licence fee of US\$2,000 and an annual fee of US\$800. High fees dramatically limit the spread of community stations.
- Licensing processes for community radio should be fair, open, transparent, set out clearly in law. The importance of clear regulation from the outset can be seen in the case of South Africa, where the Independent Broadcasting Authority began issuing community broadcasting licences in 1995 but only clarified the regulatory framework in 1997. For two years, community stations operated in uncertainty and on temporary licences.
- Criteria for application and selection should be established openly and in consultation with civil society and community radio practitioners.
- Ownership of community stations should be limited to not-for-profit entities and stations should not be owned by individuals (some countries also ban ownership by political parties).
- Local community ownership, management and composition of oversight committees and boards should be a requirement.
- The least invasive technical limitations should be applied; arbitrary restrictions on coverage area, antenna height, or transmission power are not recommended.
- The regulatory agency should have sufficient capacity to handle community radio applications.
- Policy transparency includes specifying the technical characteristics of the service and duration of the license;

requires stations to comply with general broadcast law and regulations; requires stations to provide the service proposed in the license application – and maintain characteristics of a community broadcasting service for the duration of the license period; and sets out sanctions in the event of non-compliance.

- Procedures for obtaining community radio broadcasting licences should include the elimination of unnecessary engineering studies.
- Regulators should set up a special support office or officers within the agency dedicated to assisting community radio stations (for example in Colombia and the United Kingdom); and should make technical expertise available to applicants and stations.
- Sufficient length of licenses – five year renewable licenses are standard.

There are also specific issues regarding the shape and form of the applications procedure and licensing process. India passed long awaited community radio legislation in 2006 - however, actual implementation of the policy has taken longer than expected. One issue of contention is the requirement that applicants must be legal not-for-profit entities registered as such for a minimum of three years. On one hand, it could be argued that this helps ensure that groups applying have roots in the communities they are hoping to serve. But in rural villages or areas where there may not be a history or context for formal non-profit registration, this could place serious limitations on who can apply.

Applicants should be required to specify the following²:

- Legal status and membership of the applicant;
- Proposed coverage and intended audience;
- Content of the program service to be provided;

- Involvement of and accountability to the community;
- Proposals to ensure the delivery of social gain;
- Financial plans and sources of finance.

In Benin, an independent regulatory body (HAAC) is responsible for licensing of private radio and television services. The HAAC identifies community radio by range, focus on a specific community, use of specific languages, and focus on local information and mobilization, cultural development and further education. The HAAC publishes the list of available frequencies and publishes a call for applications from all sectors, public, private and commercial. Applications are processed and frequencies allocated based on the proposed program content and the viability of the service.

Irish community radio policy is flexible on the question of ownership. It states that stations must be owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations, and that stations should provide for membership, management and operation by the community served. Under this model, the station is accountable to the community and the community controls the station. But the model acknowledges that it might be unrealistic in all circumstances to expect groups to establish a separate legal ownership structure, and accepts that ownership and control are not inseparable.

Sustainability and social gain criteria

If a key aim of community radio is to empower neighborhoods and villages, legislation should reflect this value. Clear criteria will play an important role in the sustainability of community-oriented stations and help protect stations from pressures such as commercialism, authoritarian control, or co-option by a non-representative body.

For example, if one of the aims of community radio is to encourage multi-lingual or minority programming, policies should be written to encourage this kind of content. If community participation in management and development is important, policies could have some kind of criteria as to the composition of station governing boards.

At the same time, it is important that specific criteria are not overly-perscriptive and difficult to implement. Broad legislative frameworks allow for greater flexibility while at the same time providing some overarching requirements. In South Africa, for example, legislation encourages community participation in both the production of programs *and* in the organization and planning of the station itself.

In the United Kingdom, the application process focuses on community service plans. Licensing criteria include four elements: social gain and access, programming, evaluation and measurement, and finance and ownership. Specifically, applicants have to provide evidence of social gain and/or public service broadcasting; not-for-profit status; accessibility for people living within the area; training and community participation, and engagement with disadvantaged and underserved people and communities.

United Kingdom legislation allows applicants to define their own community and allows for communities of interest and geographic communities. As a result, community stations range from Forest of Dean Radio, the only local service broadcasting throughout the Forest, a remote region in the west of Britain, and stations like *Takeover Radio* in Leicester, the first children's station in the United Kingdom, *Chorley Radio* in Chorley, Leicester, serving gay, lesbian and transgendered people there, to *New Style Radio* in Birmingham that serves the Afro-Caribbean community there.

Rural community radios in Mali

Mali is a large, sparsely populated country with a thriving rural community radio sector serving a large majority of the rural population in local languages. Mali has tried different ways of introducing ICTs into rural areas, including the rural telephony, Internet, sound and television broadcasting. Of all of these attempts, the greatest impact both socially and economically has been through the establishment of local rural radio stations.

As in most West African countries, broadcasting in Mali has traditionally been a state monopoly, with the ORTM (Office de Radiodiffusion au Television de Mali) broadcasting primarily French-language programming produced in Bamako to the entire country.

The country's first independent radio station was established in 1988 in the remote community of Kayes, a product of a presidential decree. Start-up financing for Kayes Rural Radio came from an Italian NGO, but the station's sustainability was met by local sources and by a strong relationship with Malian expatriates living in France who regarded radio as a vehicle for their own communication with the community.

Following the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1991, Mali formally allowed private radio and television stations to operate and adopted one of the most democratic broadcast laws in Africa. Within a few years dozens of private radio stations, both commercial and community, were established, most of them local stations.

Mali now has one of the strongest and most diverse radio systems in Africa. Fifteen years ago, the ORTM broadcast programming via repeater transmitters across the country. Now there are as many as 300 radio stations broadcasting local programming throughout the country in more than a dozen local languages.

Rural community radio operations

One reason for the sector's growth has been the absence of bureaucratic and financial hurdles in procuring a licence; if an individual or community has the funds for equipment, they can start and operate a station. There are no license fees to establish a radio station, and the only requirements are citizenship and that a simple form is filled out to check for frequency availability and technical integrity of the application. If the proposal is technically sound and the requested frequency is available, the radio station is granted a license to use that frequency. Otherwise, a new frequency is allocated. Each year, a frequency allowance of about USD 20 is paid by each radio station.

URTEL (l'Union des Radios et Télévisions Libres du Mali) is an organization that offers training and advocacy services to its 168 member stations throughout the country, including 121 community stations, 38 commercial stations, and nine religious ones. URTEL also offers advice to new stations; for example, it recommends a suggested package of studio and transmission equipment for a 250-watt station costing approximately USD 11,000.

While many of Mali's stations have received support from donor agencies, most of them are self-sufficient. The Netherlands, the FAO, USAID and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie are agencies that have provided support.

Even though the stations have received external support, local people have been involved at all stages, including with the projects' initial designs. In many cases the villagers themselves constructed the stations' buildings. Management is overseen by boards of directors and committees elected by the communities. Staff is hired locally, and women are actively involved at all levels.

Language is an important issue in Mali. While French is the official language, many people,

In Ireland, Irish culture is an important criterion. Applicants are considered based on the quality, range and type of programs proposed, of programming proposed in the Irish language, and the opportunities the applicant will create for Irish talent in music, drama and entertainment.

Financial sustainability can be addressed at the policy level

The question of whether or not states should directly or indirectly finance community radio can be a controversial one. In some places, direct state support would dramatically reduce independence or create the perception that the station is the voice of government. However, most policies that encourage long term sustainability are those that also include some form of indirect financial support.

When there is government support, in order to ensure independence, it should

“Community broadcasting services should have fair and equitable access to a diversity of funding sources according to local circumstances. There should be no restrictions on funding sources other than what is necessary to maintain the character of the service and to avoid unfair competition....”

— (Buckley et al 2008).

especially in rural areas, do not speak French. In 2004, some 90 per cent of the radio stations in Mali broadcast in local languages.

Success factors and ongoing challenges

The success of rural radio can be explained by the accessibility of this medium; illiterate or preliterate, much of the population can listen to broadcasts in their own language. In an area of very high illiteracy, only oral means can ensure effective communication.

Local stations have largely met the challenge of language barriers. On many stations, programs are broadcast not in Mali’s official language (French) or in the widely spoken language (Bamana), but rather in the local language of that specific small area.

The government’s deliberate policy to encourage the emergence of local broadcasters has also been important, especially in minimizing financial and bureaucratic hurdles.

However there are shortcomings of the community radio movement in Mali. For example, many of the radio broadcasters lack professional expertise. Also, many stations make do with archaic technical equipment, which constitutes a significant problem since they do not have the funds for replacement parts.

From the ICT Regulation Toolkit – www.ictregulationtoolkit.org/en/index.html

be administered through an independent public body, separate from the regulatory agency or government ministry. It should also include civil society representation.

Some examples of the kinds of state financing that can be provided for include:

- A community radio fund supported through taxes;
- A levy on cable concessions;
- A percentage of license fees from commercial stations;
- A percentage of commercial broadcaster’s advertising revenue;
- A proportion of the general license fee for public service broadcasting;
- A direct tax;
- Indirect public funding in the form of schemes not directly targeting community media such as employment support, social inclusion programs or neighborhood regeneration schemes;
- Support from regional bodies such as the European Union; and/or

- The ability for community stations to receive advertising support and sponsorship.

A review of best practices around the world finds that the most sustainable community radio sectors are those that encourage mixed models of financing so that no one entity (be it a government or a private company) can claim “ownership” of the station. In many cases, there is a cap of 50% on any single form of revenue, such as in the UK where the policy was set up to ensure stations are not “captured” by any single financial interest (commercial, government, foundation, etc) and rely on multiple funding sources. This might make sense only in countries where additional means of funding are provided for. Nonetheless, it does speak to the need for safeguards to address the relationship between funding and control.

Mixed funding models may include a combination of:

- State generated financing distributed through an independent body;

- Commercial revenue and sponsorship;
- Community-led fundraising and local forms of support (including fundraising events, fees for services, listener contributions, merchandise sales, etc);
- Foundation support from international or national NGOs and funders.

Sustainable funding in other indirect forms

In addition to providing some access to funding and setting criteria for commercial revenue, states can also provide other incentives for community media and relieve some of the economic burden through other means, such as concessions on rates for public utilities like electricity and water, free or reduced internet and telephone connectivity, access to solar or wind power, tax-exempt status as non-profit organizations and exemptions from sales tax and import duties on equipment purchased abroad, access to low cost satellite and mobile phone services, access to training programs, employee benefits, etc.

No restrictions on content beyond basic standards that apply to all media (decency, libel, etc)

Policies vary widely on this topic, but the most sustainable sectors are those with minimal interference from government with regards to content. That said, it is also not unusual to find requirements that a percentage of programming must be locally produced or originated (India requires 50% local content in the local language as much as possible through not specifically stipulated). However, India also has very restrictive content policy. Indian programming policy favors development content, though entertainment programming is not explicitly forbidden. This raises policy questions about the value of cultural programming and music that most practitioners and listeners would be hard pressed to argue is not valuable programming for community media.

Advertising revenue

The question of how much - and if - community stations should be allowed to support themselves through advertising is another area that sparks debate. In most parts of the world, it is generally accepted that community radio cannot sustain itself without access to some form of advertising and commercial revenue. Without this, stations can become too dependent on international donors. Donor funding is not necessarily guaranteed each year, and reliance on donor funding does not promote long term financial independence. This is a concern that has been raised regarding India's policy. Although stations are allowed to carry up to five minutes of advertising per hour, no program sponsorship is allowed unless that sponsor is the government and there is no central source of funding for stations.

In some countries such as the United States, Chile, Mexico and Brazil, there are much greater government restrictions on advertising, either all-out bans, limits that allow for on-air sponsorship but not actual commercials, or limits on the content of advertising such as bans on political party advertisements, or allowing advertising from local companies only. This makes sense in the United States, for example, where broadcasting is so dominated by commercial rather than public media. In other areas, however, there is broad opposition from the commercial broadcast sector to any kind of commercial revenue for community stations. However, this opposition is not supported by any evidence that the development of successful of community radio stations has resulted in significant loss of revenue for commercial broadcasters.

In addition to general station support, there are also examples of state money earmarked for expenditures beyond basic operational costs. For example, Ireland provides funding for station research and development, such as station evaluations, listener surveys and audience studies, feedback, monitoring, Board of Director development, etc. Dutch law provides funding for the community media association there. Venezuelan, Bolivian, and Colombian governments make funds available to support training, equipment purchases and/or provide indirect funding such as fee and tax waivers. Bangladesh has also earmarked funds for training, technical support and research and development.

The reality is that for most examples of good effort by policy makers in providing mechanisms for financial sustainability, there will inevitably be some limitations or areas that can be improved upon. Critiques are included in the examples that follow.

Colombia

Since 1998, Colombia has awarded over five hundred community radio licenses. Like many countries, Colombian media policy seeks to regulate the airwaves in the public interest and prevent market monopolies. Community radio was seen as one way to promote local ownership, local content, and citizen participation in public debate.

Community stations are given access to a variety of funding sources on the condition that all funds received would be invested in the radio station or "other investments that guarantee the adequate continuity of services and the development of the community objectives". Sources include Universal Access and Service Funds (UASF) managed by the Ministry of Communications; the broadcasting of advertising and sponsorship messages up to a maximum of 15 minutes per hour (which is the same amount commercial stations are entitled to carry), and donations from national and international sources.

Providing a means through which community stations could access a variety of funding sources was seen as essential to their sustainability. Thus, Colombia has fewer restrictions on the amount of advertising stations can carry than in many places. The argument was that low income and rural communities would not be able to pay for their operations without outside funding.

The transition from analogue to digital broadcasting poses new challenges that need to be addressed

The growth of digital radio provides both new opportunities and new challenges for community communication. Though there are few places in the world where the switch off of analogue radio is on the immediate horizon, there are decisions and debates taking place that will have a major impact on the future of community radio.

As yet, most of these decisions and discussions do not yet adequately address the needs of community broadcasters and are being led by industry interests not consumer needs. Questions include: What will the new platforms for delivery be? What will happen to analogue radio in the long term? Who are the new gatekeepers to accessing the airwaves (such as multi-plex operators) and can there be laws requiring them to carry community stations? Which will be the most suitable for community media uses? What are the regulatory barriers that would need to be overcome?

Opportunities in the digital transition include greater frequency availability - the so-called “digital dividend”. But without public service obligations in place, there are no guarantees that this new airspace will result in greater opportunities for community media.

Debates about the future of radio (be it digital or analogue) should include the needs and interests of local communities and small-scale, not-for-profit media for a truly pluralistic media environment to flourish. This might seem far removed from the immediate needs of community radio in large parts of the world, but AMARC Africa has begun to tackle this issue at the regional level, as well as in Europe and Latin America.

France

France has one of the highest numbers of local radio stations per capita in the world, including a high number of community-oriented stations, the diversity and number of which testify to a balanced regulation that ensures variety in programming.³ There are an estimated 600 “associative” or community radio stations in France, many of which are Catholic radio stations, licensed under a framework for non-commercial radio.

What is most striking in the French legislation is the level of state support offered to associative radio stations. Stations are allowed to receive a percentage of their annual revenue from commercial advertising (capped at 20% if stations are to take government funds). However, a substantial amount of funding is provided by the Fond de soutien à l’expression radiophonique (Support Fund for Radio Expression) created in 1982. The Fund is sourced from a tax on advertising revenue of commercial broadcast media that is then redistributed to associative radio stations. Funds may be used to support start-up costs; equipment upgrades; and operational costs related to general overhead, with selective preference given to stations with demonstrable training programs for station employees and volunteers, cultural and educational initiatives undertaken, collective program making activities, total hours of local programming, measures to promote social integration and fight discrimination and measures to promote environmental and local development issues. In 2004/05, the Fund provided 676 grants averaging €35,000 each, for a total of 21 million Euros granted to community radio stations.

Hungary

The movement for community radio began shortly after the fall of the Iron Curtain. After the political change, the newly elected government and newly formed political parties promised to create media laws that would open up broadcasting, but the change did not happen as quickly as promised and some radio activists decided to take matters into their own hands. These new pirate radio stations took to the air with the hope of breathing new life into the radio waves whilst fighting for a democratic landscape through direct action. By 1996, the community broadcasters were successful in their efforts for inclusion and the long-awaited Media Act included provision to create non-profit oriented broadcasters, defined as: “a broadcaster who/which agrees to serve national, ethnic or other minority goals, cultural aims or a disadvantaged group, or intends to serve as the public life forum of a community provided it uses the financial profit generated by the broadcasting, as recorded separately, solely for the maintenance and development of the broadcasting” (Act I, of 1996 Article 2). Hungary licenses both full power and low power community stations and there are over sixty community radios in the country.

Community stations can broadcast up to three minutes of advertising in any given hour (as compared with twelve minutes for commercial and six minutes for public service radios) and are exempt from paying a license or broadcasting fee. Significantly, the Hungarian legislation also includes provisions for between half to one percent of the annual revenue from the Broadcasting Fund (itself created by law and funded by government to support public, service, non-profit and cultural broadcasting and administered by the National Radio and Television Board (ORTT) to support non-profit broadcasters. This generates approximately 500,000 - 1 million Euros (750,000-1.5 million USD) for the sector per year. Individual stations are allowed to apply to this fund to support annual operating costs (including transmission costs); technical development and studio equipment costs; and the creation of news, sports or magazine-style programs. However, stations are required to contribute from 15-50% in matching funds (self-financing) at the time of application, a figure prohibitively high for many stations. That, plus a demanding application process has resulted in an estimated 15-25% of these funds going unallocated each year.

In order to gain eligibility for a license application, stations should first achieve non-profit status and no less than fifty percent of airtime must be committed to serving the specific com-

Conclusion

For community media to flourish, there should be an enabling environment and not just a policy on paper. The best practices include: recognition of community media as a formal “third sector” alongside commercial and public service media; criteria that ensures participatory, open and community driven media emerge; mixed models of funding that include some form of ongoing and renewable government subsidy; flexibility that allows for communities to self- identify and define their own area of service coverage as much as possible; recognition of the social gain and value community media can provide; and support for research, impact measurement and audience studies to improve community service.

Finally, there must exist the political will on the part of policy makers to support sustainable community media, which should be a clear part of national media democracy strategies.

Related documents and websites

- Buckley, Steve, Duer, Krisztina, Mendel, Toby, with Price, Monroe and Raboy, Marc (2008) *Broadcasting, Voice and Accountability*, World Bank Institute
- Buckley, Steve (2007) “Community broadcasting in an all-digital environment: A preliminary assessment of options and challenges”, paper presented at *Broadcasting Communities? A*

munity interests the station is seeking to serve (for example, Roma station *Radio C* programming includes at least half its content in one of the Roma languages and/or Gypsy music and cultural programming). Despite the challenges that exist, the Hungarian system of licensing and supporting non-profit radio remains the strongest in the region.

- Workshop on European Community Broadcasting Policies, CEU, Budapest
- Coyer, Kate (2007) ‘Access to Broadcasting: Radio’ in Coyer, Kate, Downmunt, Tony and Fountain, Alan (2007) *Handbook of Alternative Media*, London: Routledge
- Coyer, Kate (2005) *Community radio licensing and policy: An overview*, *Journal of Global Media and Communication*, Sage
- Coyer, Kate and Hintz, Arne (2009 forthcoming) “Developing the ‘third sector’: Community media policies in Europe”
- European Parliament (2007) *The State of Community Media in the European Union*, report by Kern European Affairs for The Directorate General Internal Policies of the Union
- Gosztonyi, Gergely (2007) “Community Radio in Hungary. It has a past. It has a present. Does it have a future?”, paper presented at *Broadcasting Communities? A Workshop on European Community Broadcasting Policies*, CEU, Budapest
- ICT Regulation Toolkit online
- Ofcom (2004b) ‘Licensing Community Radio’, http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rl/commun_radio/#content, London.
- Planšak, Mojca (2008) *Community Broadcasting Policy in Europe: Slovenia with references to Macedonia*, paper presented at *ESF Exploratory Workshop on the impact of digitalization on community broadcasting*, CEU, Budapest
- Pringle, Ian and Subba, Bikram (2007) *Ten Years On: The state of community radio in Nepal*, UNESCO, 2007
- Stevenson, John Harris (2006) “Community Radio Support in Other Jurisdictions”, report for NCRA / ANREC

See also websites for national regulatory agencies

FOOTNOTES

- 1 This section draws on two particularly useful sources, *Broadcasting, Voice and Accountability*, by Steve Buckley, Krisztina Duer, Toby Mendel, with Monroe Price and Marc Raboy, published by the World Bank Institute in 2008, and the *ICT Regulation Toolkit* found online at www.ictregulationtoolkit.org.
- 2 From *Broadcasting, Voice and Accountability* (2008).
- 3 Available at <http://www.csa.fr/multi/independant/independant.php?l=uk>.

Conclusion

Across the world, community media are growing and are becoming more accepted as part of the media scene. Urban and rural communities in developed and developing countries are organizing themselves around community media – asserting its value; going to extraordinary lengths to ensure their organizations survive. Many people are turning to community radio, the most prevalent community medium, because its affordability and reach make it so attractive to communities and development agencies. New forms of community media are emerging as digital technologies and convergence present new opportunities and platforms for communities and individuals. The role of community media in reaching communities that are hard to reach, in empowering historically oppressed people, in development, in strengthening local cultures and democracy is increasingly recognized.

With recognition comes responsibility and community media – like all other media forms – must face the challenge of sustainability in an increasingly competitive environment. We've argued that sustainability is not just about money – even financial sustainability is not just about money – but about deciding what

are the right resources at the right time and engaging in activities to secure and manage them, without compromising community service and community development. Radio Vwa Peyisan Abriko in Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the developing world, operating with an annual budget of less than US\$6,500 but with strong community support, is arguably more financially sustainable than Jozi FM in South Africa, one of the richest countries in the developing world, operating with an annual budget of US\$650,000 but serving a community that is deeply divided about the station's value. Radio Izuba in Rwanda faces a difficult question – how to accept money from the provincial government without jeopardizing their political independence. Community media all over the world face similar problems.

Constructed as a set of activities, sustainability cannot be an exact science because it is determined by so many different factors: mission, culture, context, local economic base, organizational and leadership style and approach, and many others. In many respects, it is not even a priority – what is the point of sustaining an organization that is not producing a quality community service?

We have touched on all of the internal and external factors we believe are needed to build community media sustainability, and have tried to deepen understandings of the often difficult and fraught – but very necessary – donor-community media relationship. There is no perfect community media model – and even if there was, it would change: community media are by definition dynamic and must change as community needs and interests change. For external support agencies, community media can be frustrating and difficult to work with (and vice versa) – but community media have demonstrated that it is worth staying the course. Working towards sustainability is an important responsibility, to be shared by all stakeholders. But if too strong a focus on sustainability means compromising the extraordinary role that community media can play in healing communities torn apart by conflict, in mobilizing communities to engage in local development, in stimulating local economies, in giving voice to local cultures and traditions, in disseminating basic information and education... it raises the question – is it worth it?

Guide to resources / further reading / web-sites

Geographic focus	Resource	Author and source	Date published	Summary
Guides & Manuals				
Afghanistan	BBC Afghan Women's Hour	BBC World Service Trust	January 2006	Practical guide for journalists on radio programs made by women in Afghanistan for the BBC World Service trust, containing interview techniques and journalism skills.
Africa	Live News Africa: A Survival Guide for Journalists.	http://www.newssafety.com/ Published by International News Safety Institute International Press Centre.	2007	A Survival Guide for Journalists, is designed to help journalists to prepare themselves mentally, physically and psychologically for potentially dangerous assignments.
Africa	The African Community Radio Station Manager's Handbook	AMARC Nick Ishmael Perkins http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/15714/1084292183505.pdf/05.pdf	2005	The key section on financial sustainability is the business plan outline, which provides guidance on planning income and expenditure.
Africa - Mozambique	Gender Sensitive Reporting Guide	UNESCO	2008	Practical guide for reporters on gender sensitive reporting and tackling gender issues.
Africa - South Africa	A Sense of Belonging, Community Radio and Civil Society	John van Zyl – ABC/Ulwazi http://www.abculwazi.org.za/files/senseofbelonging.pdf	2005	Examines the role that community radio plays in building an effective civil society. It explores the value of community radio and highlights the importance of the community radio sector for the consolidation of local government, the growth of democracy, and the rebuilding of civil society.
Africa – South Africa	Community Radio Manual	Open Society Foundation for South Africa www.osf.org	2002	Guide to setting up a community radio station – covering mission, advertising, programming, research.
Africa – South Africa	Curriculum for training community radio station managers	Benita Pavlicevic Open Society Foundation for South Africa www.osf.org	June 1999	Has sections on financial management and raising funds.
Africa – South Africa (International)	Community radio Technical Manual	Martin Sims - Open Society Foundation for SA / National Community Radio Forum	2002	Basic studio design, operations and maintenance.
Africa - Southern / Eastern	Developing Radio Partners- Guidebook on Sustainability	Bill Siemerling and Jean Fairbairn www.developingradiopartners.org	2006	Through presenting studies of six local independent radio stations, the authors propose a different understanding of sustainability. The studies highlight different factors, including context, leadership, management, partnerships, programming, human and technical capacity, will, community support, audience research and many others, and show how they work together to contribute to the overall sustainability of stations.
Africa - Southern Africa	Financial Sustainability Model for Community Radio in Southern Africa	SAIMED Soulbeat web-site or www.comminit.com/en/node/189522	2007	Presents a financial sustainability model developed by The Southern Africa Institute for Media Entrepreneurship Development (SAIMED). Aims to assist community radio stations in Southern Africa to become financially sustainable from inception. This model based on research conducted in Namibia in 2002 among six community radio stations.

India	Community radio in India- step by step	UNDP.	2004	Information on community radio in India, legal guidelines, technology issues, sustainability issues, field experiences etc.
India	How to do Community Radio	Louie Tabling UNESCO Published by (UNESCO), Asia-Pacific Bureau For Communication and Information. http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/17593/11014593681Com_radio.pdf/Com_radio.pdf	2002	A manual for community radio operators. This goes through concepts and practice of community radio, equipment, the community and radio council, ethics and codes of conduct, securing a broadcast licence and community radio programming. They have a chapter on managing finances and sustainability of a community radio, citing several pointers to achieve successful finance generation and management.
International	Fundraising for People Powered Community Radio	http://prometheusradio.org/content/view/158/145/	2008	The Prometheus Radio Project offers a guide to fundraising. It includes various creative tips about different options to raise funds, such as grants, events, and underwriting.
International	Community Radio Start up information guide	Karina Barker, Farm Radio International	April 2008	Provided a list of useful resources to community radio covering legal and funding issues, selecting equipment, management and broadcasting.
International	Community Radio Handbook	Colin Fraser and Sonia Restrepo Estrada, UNESCO http://www.unesco.org/webworld/publications/community_radio_handbook.pdf	2001	This guide provides a detailed description of the steps involved in setting up a community radio station, and provides case studies from around the world. It has sections on sustainability that particularly highlights sections on outside funding and issues of legislation and advertising. This handbook provides a list of possible options that can be used to raise revenue to cover Day-to-day costs. This list includes: Advertising, Sponsorship, Donations, Membership Fees and others.
International	Fundraising	Prometheus Radio Project. http://prometheusradio.org/media/pdf/KYRS_Fundraising_Handbook.pdf	2007	The Prometheus Radio Project offers a guide to fundraising. It includes various creative tips about different options to raise funds, such as grants, events, and underwriting. While this guide is written for an American audience, the information may be adaptable to fit other communities.
International	Community Radio- The people's voice.	John Van Zly http://www.abculwazi.org.za/jsp/ABC_Ulwazi.jsp	2003	Written for a South African audience, but much of its content can be adapted to fit other countries. Handbook is divided into six chapters: What is Community Radio?, Why human rights are essential, Managing a Community Radio Station, What Community Radio Journalism Involves, Why production is the heart and soul of community radio!, and How to make your community radio station self-sustainable.
International	A Handbook For Telecenter Staffs	Royal D. Colle and Raul Roman Cornell University	2003	Provides an overview of many factors that may come into play in the planning and daily functioning of a telecenter for community development; a self-learning tool and management guide for telecenter staffs; ALSO a reference resource to guide the reader toward a future search for additional educational materials. . . THEREFORE a reference tool for organizations involved in telecenter development, or as a guide for trainers of telecenter staffs. The Handbook is organized into ten modules.

Evaluations, research reports				
Africa	Analysis: Looking at Community Radio in Africa	Mike Hickcox http://www.umc.org/site/c.gjJTJbMUluE/b.1857989/k.4B88/Analysis_Looking_at_community_radio_in_Africa.htm	June 2006	This is a report by the director of radio and audio ministries, United Methodist Communications, and looks specifically at the contribution of UMC in sustaining community media in Africa.
Africa	Towards an African E-Index: Household and Individual ICT access in 10 countries across Africa.	http://www.researchictafrica.net/	2005	Takes a comparative perspective of ICT usage across ten African countries and reflects on the values of ICT usage in financial sustainability.
Africa – South Africa	The People’s Voice: The Development and Current State of the African Small Media Sector.	www.hrcpublishers.ac.za Adrian Hadland, Karen Thorne	2004	Provides an overview of participants, policies, opportunities and challenges facing the small media sector in South Africa currently.
Africa- Sudan	The State of Media in Sudan	CIMA, Spencer Hayne http://www.ned.org/cima/cima-sudan_report.pdf	September 2007	Training for journalists, the development of self sustaining media outlets, support from international organizations, and efforts to bring about change through, among other things, full implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, can lead to significant improvements in Sudan and provide tremendous benefits to the people, including increased access to information.
Africa – Madagascar	The Contribution of Radio Broadcasting to the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals In Southern Madagascar	Leo Metcalf, Nicola Harford, Mary Myers, - DFID	January 2007	Evaluation of Andrew Lees Trust’s Projet Radio. Looks at ALT/PR’s methods and organization and finds many advantages to its particular three-way process of working.
Papua New Guinea	Yu Tok Radio	http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEAPREGTOPSOCDEV/Resources/502632-1163365702511/PNG_YuTokRadio_report.pdf World Bank		Case study of the World Bank initiated Youth Community Radio as a part of the Youth Outreach Project.
Afghanistan	Evaluation of USAID assistance to the Radio sector in Afghanistan.	USAID	October 2005	Looks at how far USAID goals have been met in Afghanistan.
International	ICTS And Large Scale Poverty Reduction	Panos London (SDC / IICD) http://www.panos.org.uk/PDF/reports/ICT_poverty.pdf	2005	Studies of ICT contribution in different countries and contexts. Useful for ICTS and community sustainability
International	Broadcasting, Voice and Accountability	Steve Buckley, Kreszentia Duer, Toby Mendel, Seán O’ Siochru’, with Monroe E. Price and Mark Raboy, World Bank, Washington.	2008	Deals with the importance is the policy, legal, and regulatory framework that influences the shape, content, and social impacts of the broadcasting sector as a whole.
International	U.S Public and Private Funding of Media Development.	CIMA (Center for International Media Assistance) NED (National Endowment for Democracy). www.ned.org/cima/CIMA-Community_Radio-Working_Group_Report.pdf	December 2007	This report is based on results of a survey conducted by CIMA of public and private media sector funders and implementers, interviews, and a review of literature.

International	Community Communications: The role of Community Media in Development	UNESCO Frances J. Berrigan	1979	Defines development in the context of community media, dealing both with rural and urban development.
International	Media Assistance Challenges and Opportunities for the Professional Development of Journalists	CIMA (Center for International Media Assistance) NED (National Endowment for Democracy) http://www.ned.org/cima/CIMA-Professional_Development-Working_Group_Report.pdf	July 2007	Examines the different aspects of training local journalists, and the interaction between this training and the donors.
International	Scaling a Changing Curve: Traditional Media Development and the New Media	CIMA (Center for International Media Assistance) NED (National Endowment for Democracy) www.ned.org/cima/CIMA-New_Media-Report.pdf	March 2008	Through an examination of the use of ICT in independent media development, this paper sheds light on the state of current practice with respect to media development and new technologies.
International	Independent Media's Vital Role In Development.	Peter Graves. CIMA (Center for International Media Assistance) NED (National Endowment for Democracy) www.ned.org/cima/CIMA-Investigative_Journalism_Report.pdf	December 2007	To demonstrate the importance of fostering independent media, this report provides examples of how access to information has transformed political, economic, and social systems. It shows what can happen when conditions allow independent media to operate and flourish. Section on Media and the Economy - The author frames this discussion in figures on mergers and value of media. He describes the high market value of linking people with one another to share information, stating that information at the core of commerce fuels economic growth through open markets governed by transparent pricing. The author observes that the widespread use of technology, including among the economically poor, has resulted in media expansion to serve the interests of a wider spectrum of economic classes.
International	The Role of Media Support Organizations and Public Literacy in strengthening Independent Media Worldwide	Ann C. Olson CIMA (Center for International Media Assistance) NED (National Endowment for Democracy) http://www.ned.org/cima/CIMA-Media_Support_Organizations_and_Media_Literacy-Report.pdf	February 2008	Seeks to study the relationship between funders and local journalists, and the importance of donors supporting media literacy programs, it lays out certain frameworks donors should keep in mind when funding independent media projects.
International	Media law Assistance: Establishing and Enabling an Environment for a Free and Independent Media to Flourish	CIMA (Center for International Media Assistance) NED (National Endowment for Democracy) http://www.ned.org/cima/CIMA-Legal_Enabling_Environment-Working_Group_Report.pdf	May 2007	Studies the co relation between media law development, government and private donors, the criteria for media development and building up of information and resources.
International	Towards Economic Sustainability of the Media in Developing Countries.	CIMA (Center for International Media Assistance) NED (National Endowment for Democracy) CIMA	June 2007	Examines several aspects of financial sustainability like public service and consumer centric media, situation specific programs, business skills, media beyond democratization and increased awareness.

International	Empowering Independent Media: US Efforts to Foster Free and Independent Media around the world.	CIMA (Center for International Media Assistance) NED (National Endowment for Democracy) http://www.ned.org/cima/CIMA-Empowering_Independent_Media.pdf	2008	CIMA's 2008 Inaugural Report provides an in-depth assessment of U.S. international media development efforts, both public and private, and calls on future efforts to be more long-term, comprehensive, and needs-driven. Section on media sustainability - key recommendations are increasing training in management, advertising and market research, finding entrepreneurial local partners, making available low interest loans and developing the advertising market
International	Community Radio, Its impact and challenges to development.	CIMA (Center for International Media Assistance) NED (National Endowment for Democracy). www.ned.org/cima/CIMA-Community_Radio-Working_Group_Report.pdf	October 2007	Examines the impact of independent media, and the importance of financial sustainability, as well as other factors like geography, that affect its working.
International	Gender and ICTs	BRIDGE, IDS, Sussex, http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/CEP-ICTs-OR.pdf	September 2004	New technologies in the information and communications arena, especially the Internet, have been seen as ushering in a new age. There is a mainstream view that such technologies have only technical rather than social implications. The dramatic positive changes brought in by these information and communication technologies (ICTs), however, have not touched all of humanity. Existing power relations in society determine the enjoyment of benefits from ICTs; hence these technologies are not gender neutral.
International	The Economic Impact of Telecommunications on Rural Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction: A Study of Rural Communities in India (Gujarat), Mozambique and Tanzania.	DFID, Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization.	November 2005	Looks at the impact of telephones on rural livelihoods.
International	Journalism 3G- The Impact of Technology in the field.	Georgia Tech, College of Computing	N.A	Explores the intersection of computing and journalism.
Europe (Central and Eastern)	Evaluation of the USAID professional media program in Central and Eastern Europe.	USAID, Dan De Luce, http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/1481/PNACR756.pdf	September 2003	Looks at how far the goals of USAID in Central and Eastern Europe have been fulfilled, includes USAID grants for the creation of a private media sector, emphasizing on financial independence being the key to media independence.
Comparative: Africa, central America	Media for Sustainable Development Content Survey: a baseline study report on sustainable development content/ themes of community radio stations in Africa and central America	Panos and AMARC http://amarcwiki.amarc.org/upload/documents/M4SDStudyMay04L.pdf	May 2004	This report concludes that Investigations conducted through the study of different radio stations indicate that in general, community radio stations are still struggling with producing content on sustainable development. One of the reasons is the lack of understanding and distinction of what sustainable development content is especially in the specific context of the different communities. Findings also indicate that despite challenges, community radio stations are making some efforts to produce programs on sustainable development although they are also faced with challenges on identifying and working with stakeholders for content development.
Europe / Eastern and Central	Sustainable Journalism Training in Central and Eastern Europe.	http://www.jeffersoninst.org/	June 2007	Argues that democratization can only be possible through strong, independent media; report looks at the contribution of training to creating sustainable strong, independent media / journalism.

Books, papers, articles				
Africa – South Africa	Community Voices Over a Decade	Jean Fairbairn / Open Society Foundation for SA		History, workings of OSF-SA community radio support program
Africa	Transforming the Mediascape in South Africa: The Continuing Struggle to Develop Community Radio	http://eprints.qut.edu.au/	2002	As a new democracy, South Africa's adoption of community radio is significant on a global scale. It can be said to have more progressive broadcasting policies than other long established democracies. But the sector, despite its rapid growth, is struggling. This paper considers community radio in South Africa as an example of 'citizens' media' that is transforming the country's mediascape. It draws on interviews undertaken in South Africa during late 2001 to discuss the problems that the sector is facing. The role of legislation and regulation is considered as well as an example of a community radio station that serves a severely disadvantaged community. Social and economic underdevelopment in historically disadvantaged communities is seen as a major problem and an example of an initiative that seeks to develop such communities through community radio is described.
Africa- South Africa	Community Radio- Participatory Communication in Post Apartheid South Africa	Anthony A. Olorunnisola	May 2002	This paper evaluates the evolution of community radio in post apartheid South Africa where a three-tier broadcasting system—public, commercial, and community—has replaced the monopoly of a state-run behemoth, the South African Broadcasting Corporation.
Africa – South Africa	Community Radio: The People's Voice	Sharp Sharp Media, Jhb 2003		Chapter 6 on Sustainability
Australia	Community Radio in the Prosumer Era.	http://www.cbonline.org.au/3cmedia/3c_issue3/BarryERennie.pdf	2007	This paper takes SYN (a community radio licensee in Melbourne) as a case study and employs media ethnography and policy analysis to identify contemporary challenges facing community media. Community media requires a different approach to convergence than that which is commonly.
India	When India gets going...	Piya Kochhar http://www.thehoot.org/web/home/story.php?storyid=2966&pg=1&mod=1&sectionId=3&valid=true	2008	Interview with Steve Buckley on the potential of community media in India, where he defines community radio thoroughly, though does not talk much about sustainability, he envisages what the potential for community radio in India.
Nepal	What is community radio?	http://nepal.asiapacific.amarc.org/site.php?lang=EN	2008	Focus on Nepal - contains a number of definitions by AMARC Nepal

Nepal	Ten Years On: The State of Community Radio in Nepal	UNESCO, Ian Pringle ,Bikram Subba.	2007	The report finds that although all the community radios that have started in the past ten years are still on air, long-term sustainability, especially given current trends, remains, at worst, uncertain and, at best, an ongoing challenge for the vast majority of stations. The durability of the existing community stations likely has much to do with the social capital they derive from being 'community' stations, however as more stations go on air, including multiple community radios in the same listening area, and as more stations slip into market competition, they risk losing their social and organizational footing. For the majority of community stations, investments in social capital, rather than competing for commercial advertising through more marketable programming or higher transmission power, appear to be the best route to overall sustainability
India	Building Community Radio Links in India- BBC World Service Trust-	http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/developmentcommunications/story/2007/01/070123_india_radio_trip.shtml	2007	Highlights the role of women and activist media from the grassroots in their contribution to community media.
International	The WSIS as a Political Space in Global Media Governance	Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies Vol. 18.	2004	The WSIS has opened a new phase in global communication governance and global governance generally. Through a particular mix of official and parallel activities, the process identified the problematic issues in global communication, indicated the range of views on how to deal with them, provided various blueprints of what should and could be possible in the way of solutions, and gingerly explored ways of dealing with these questions in the future. This paper then examines some of these issues within the changing framework of global governance.
International	Radio, Democracy and Development: Evolving Models of Community Radio.	William Siemering	2000	Although community radio has a long history in South and North America, new models are evolving in other parts of the world from South Africa to Central Eurasia. True to its community roots, stations reflect the unique history, culture, and political climate of each country.
International	Broadcasting and Development	Carter Eltzroth, Charles Kenny, World Bank	2008	Broadcasting has an important role to play in development, in terms of promoting information transfer, as an important economic sector in its own right, and as a potential access point to new information and communications technology. The state dominates radio broadcasting in three-quarters of the world's economies, and sectoral reform is required in order to improve governance and transparency. Issues discussed include: sector ownership reforms, convergence regulation, support for community radio stations to improve access for the poor to ICT, and pilot projects in digital television to assess the potential to widen internet access.
International	The Alternative Media Handbook	Kate Coyer, Tony Downumt and Alan Fountain (Routledge)	2008	A brief history of alternative media in radio, video and film, press and activity on the web. It includes both theoretical and practical approaches and information, including sections on fundraising, podcasting, blogging, publishing, radio production, access to broadcasting, and more.

International	Democratic Institute, Sustaining Media and Civil Society.	Craig L. LaMay. http://www.aspeninstitute.org/site/apps/ka/ec/product.asp?c=huLWJeMRKpH&b=667387&en=kgJLIQzF8IKJXOrE7ILJ2PDK7JHJZNJiLSI1MAJIKOITNAKIKTKSNQF&ProductID=180612	2003	This report of the Third International Roundtable on Journalism and Freedom of Expression examines international perspectives on civil liberties and press freedom in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. The report questions certain assumptions made regarding the inevitability of a country's march toward democracy and press freedom, including an interesting case study on "Democratization and Asian Values". The report considers a more pragmatic approach to journalism, media sustainability, and building civil society.
Email discussions				
International	Community Radio for Development	The Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, http://www.id21.org/communityradio/finalreport/index.html	2006	4-page report summarizes an email discussion hosted by id21 in early 2006 focused on community radio. The discussion aimed to be an opportunity for community media practitioners and activists from around the world to share their experiences and views on the role of community radio in development processes. A main focus of the discussion was Sustainability, including financial, social and institutional aspects and the relationship between sustainability and social impact. The conclusions on reached were unless social, institutional and financial sustainability are considered equally; long-term sustainable communication processes are unlikely. Participation and ownership by communities is essential to sustainability.
Web sites / other resources				
Africa	http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/specials/1552_trust_amdi/page9.shtml	AMDI		Scanning media in 17 African countries. Reports on each one. Context / background
Africa	http://www.farmradio.org/	Farm Radio International		Farm Radio International is a Canadian-based, not-for-profit organization working in direct partnership with approximately 300 radio broadcasters in 39 African countries to fight poverty and food insecurity.
Africa	http://www.mediafound.org/	Media Foundation for West Africa		The Media Foundation for West Africa is a regional independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Accra, Ghana. It was established in 1997 to defend and promote the rights and freedoms of the media.
International	http://www.audiencedialogue.net/pmlra.html	Audience Dialogue		List of web pages and books relating to local radio marketing.
International	The Communications Initiative Network	www.comminet.com		Training guides, resources, discussion, debate, opportunities... conferences, grants etc. Comprehensive communications information
International	Comunica	www.comunica.org		Comprehensive resources on community media and ICTs. Also news, views and ideas.
International	http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/archive/story/2007/08/070718_2007archive.shtml	BBC WST		BBC World Service Trust Archive-
International / E. Europe	http://www.mdlf.org/en/mdlf/about_us/	Media Development Loan Fund		Media Development Loan Fund-

Iraq	http://www.iwpr.net/?p=irr&s=p&o=-&apc_state=henparr	Institute of War and Peace Reporting		General information on media in conflict/ post conflict situations.
Nepal	www.afn.org.np	Antennae Foundation Nepal.		Antenna Foundation Nepal is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organization, dedicated to the development of public service broadcasting in Nepal.
Southern Africa / International	Open Space www.osisa.org	Open Society Institute of Southern Africa web-site		Variety of resources, information about funding also a journal about media in Southern Africa.
Turkmenistan	http://www.iwpr.net/?p=trk&s=p&o=-&apc_state=henpirr	Institute of War and Peace Reporting		General information.
UK	http://www.commedia.org.uk/	Commedia – UK association of community media		Information about radio in the UK.
People and organizations				
International / USA	Internews	www.internews.org		NGO – training, development, advocacy
International / USA	Developing Radio Partners	www.developingradiopartners.org		NGO / Association of consultants – training, organizational development, advocacy
International / UK	Panos	www.panos.org.uk		NGO – dissemination of development news, research, training, development
International / US	Center for International Media Assistance / National Endowment for Democracy	www.ned.org		Policy development / research on media, democracy and development.
International / UK	Media for Development	www.mediafordevelopment.org.uk		Ngo - Training, development, advocacy
International	AMARC	www.amarc.org		Membership-based association; service provider – community radio stations
International	The Communications Initiative / Drumbeat, Soulbeat	www.comminit.com		Online information resource
International	Network Media Program	www.soros.org		Soros Foundations Network