Community Radio Handbook

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Colin Fraser and Sonia Restrepo Estrada

Acknowledgements

PREFACE

Much research interest has been devoted to mass media. In their findings, communication specialists have always acknowledged that there are many sectors, communities and minorities whose access to information, and means of self-expression are not always guaranteed by mass channels. They have recognized that more sharply focused, customized and essentially small and local media are crucial in filling this gap.

During the last two decades UNESCO has commissioned a number of studies and published monographs on the theme of community media. The first monograph published by UNESCO on the theme of community media was *Access: Some Western Models of Community Media* by Frances Berrigan, which appeared in 1977; and in 1981, the enquiry was extended to the developing countries in a study by the same author entitled *Community Communications – the Role of Community Media in Development* (No. 90 in the series of Reports and Papers on Mass Communication). A few years later, Peter Lewis prepared the UNESCO study *Media for People in Cities* (1984) which brought together a number of case-studies, and the conclusions of two research meetings, on urban community media.

During the ensuing years, UNESCO began setting up community radio stations in Africa (Homa Bay, 1982) and Asia (Mahaweli, 1986 and Tambuli Community radios, 1982) The growth of the community radio 'movement' was covered in a section of the *UNESCO World Communication Report* in 1997.

UNESCO sees community radio as a medium that gives voice to the voiceless, that serves as the mouthpiece of the marginalized and is at the heart of communication and democratic processes within societies. With community radio, citizens have the means to make their views known on decisions that concern them. The notions of transparency and good governance take on new dimensions and democracy is reinforced. Community radio catalyzes the development efforts of rural folk and the underprivileged segments of urban societies, given its exceptional ability to share timely and relevant information on development issues, opportunities, experiences, life skills and public interests. Given the audience's low literacy rate and radio's ability to involve women and to treat them not only as objects or merely as a target audience, but as participating agents and as a valuable source, community radio becomes one of the most promising tools for community development. This has been demonstrated by the special UNESCO project *Women Speaking to Women community radio stations for the empowerment of women.*

In the age of multimedia and online communication, the potential of community radio to provide for effective outreach to discuss and create demand for the Internet has become even greater. The Kothmale Internet radio experiment in Sri Lanka has proven that radio stations can promote and use the Internet in rural communities, overcoming language barriers and lack of infrastructure. By using radio and browsing the Internet to respond to listeners' direct queries, by sharing information and knowledge derived from the Internet, the whole community is involved and empowered with new opportunities.

Against this background of challenges, I believe that this handbook can contribute towards helping different communication actors, technicians, operators and radio producers in community radio stations to make more efficient use of community media for community development by getting people involved in clarifying issues and solving problems and in talking to each other.

The handbook is based on the experience and innovative thinking of communication experts and practitioners whose contribution I would like especially to acknowledge: the late Jake Mills, former Director of Engineering, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, who designed the prototype sound mixer; Martin Allard, electronics engineer, designer of the UNESCO prototype transmitter; Alex Quarmyne, former UNESCO Regional Communication Advisor in Africa and project manager for Homa Bay in Kenya, the first community radio in Africa; Carlos Arnaldo, former Chief of Communication Policies and Research Section at UNESCO as project manager of Mahaweli community radio; Georges Dupont-Henius, engineer, UNESCO Communication Development Division; Wijayananda Jayaweera, UNESCO Regional Communication Advisor for Asia and creator of Kothmale Internet Radio project; Kwame Boafo of UNESCO Communication and Information Sector; Louie Tabing, project manager of Tambuli community radios and creator of " Village on the Air. " For the time they took in producing this book and for their valuable comments, I should also like to thank Sonia Restrepo Estrada and Colin Fraiser for compiling these experiences and putting them together for publication.

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Introduction

There are more than 20,000 radio stations in the world and more than 2 billion radio receivers. Any notion that TV and other sophisticated communication technology will replace radio is unfounded, for radio is in constant expansion. Its waves reach almost every corner of our planet. It is the prime electronic medium of the poor because it leaps the barriers of isolation and illiteracy, and it is the most affordable electronic medium to broadcast and receive in.

The last two decades have seen a rapid expansion in the number and popularity of community radio stations. Among the reasons for this are: the democratization and decentralization processes in many parts of the world; deregulation of the media and the relaxing of broadcasting monopolies by state institutions; and disaffection with commercial radio channels.

Furthermore, awareness is growing of the social and economic benefits that can result when ordinary people have access to appropriate information. And it is also evident that when people, especially the poor, can participate in communication processes and consensus building about issues that affect their lives, it helps them to cast off their traditional state of apathy and stimulates them to mobilize and organize to help themselves.

◀ ANY COMMUNITY CAN START ITS OWN RADIO STATION

To start a small radio station is not as complicated and expensive as many people think. There is enough experience in many countries to prove that it is within the reach of almost any community.

Community Will is the Key

The primordial condition for a community to start its own radio station is a sense of internal cohesion and community consciousness. There must be willingness for cooperative work and to pool resources and enthusiastic consensus that the people want their own radio in order to advance their community.

As part of the consensus building that leads to the decision to establish a community radio, the community must analyze its communication needs and determine how radio could help to resolve them. The traditional approach to development is to provide support to agriculture, health, education, and so on, and a radio station may not normally be seen as a priority. But a community that analyzes its needs in detail, and thinks about the causes of its problems and marginalization, will often come to the conclusion that it needs communication processes to help people share common understanding and common goals. This is the first step towards a community taking action to establish its own radio station.

A basic Community Radio Studio in Burkina Faso.

Photo: UNESCO

"Community radio is a social process or event in which members of the community associate together to design programmes and produce and air them, thus taking on the primary role of actors in their own destiny, whether this be for something as common as mending fences in the neighbourhood, or a community-wide campaign on how to use clean water and keep it clean, or agitation for the election of new leaders.
The emphasis is on the ownership of democratic and development efforts by the members of the community themselves and the use of media, in this case radio, to achieve it. In every sense, this is participatory communication (not programmes made about them by somebody else!).
It is above all a process, not a technology, not merely a means, because the people are part of that means, and so is the message and the audience.
Community radio is most relevant to a group of people who live and act as a community, and this could be several families, several neighbourhoods, or even several villages or communities, but the important thing is that they interact. That is why I think of community radio as the community speaking to each other and acting together for common goals."

Carlos A. Arnaldo

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."
Right of information section, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Communities and Communication

"People live in a community by virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common." [1]

Producing Programmes does not need Magical Skills

The professional tasks of managing a station and producing programmes are not beyond the reach of typical communities. Unfortunately, exposure to commercial and/or state radio leaves many people with the impression that such professional standards are the norm, and they do not realize that good and effective radio broadcasting can be much less formalized. Nor do they realize that the usefulness and impact of any media production depends much more on its relevance to the audience than on its formal quality.

This is not to say that quality of programmes in terms of their structure and their technical level is unimportant. For example, improper use of recording equipment may result in programmes of such poor sound quality that they are difficult to understand. However, experience with community radio shows that, when people are motivated and enthusiastic, the minimum technical levels required for broadcasting can be mastered during only a few weeks of training. And as they gain hands-on production experience, their skills develop markedly. They quickly reach fully satisfactory levels of performance.

The Cost and Technology are not Prohibitive

The equipment required for community radio is robust and easy to maintain, and it does not need support from broadcasting engineers beyond some initial training. Its cost is constantly falling. For a typical community radio station, the normal cost of the equipment is little more than US$20,000. For minimal broadcasting, there is even a suitcase available, weighing 16 kg, which contains a five-watt transmitter, a six-channel audio mixer, two compact disc players, two cassette taperecorders/players, and an antenna. The total cost is about US$3,000.

There are also FM radio receivers with a solar strip that can either power the radio or charge a battery. At night, the radio can be powered by a dynamo; winding up the radio by hand for two minutes provides 30 minutes of listening time.

The tendency among those producing equipment for community radio has been to focus on simplicity of installation, use, and maintenance. And local people often show extraordinary capacity to adapt and build for themselves. For example, in Cape Verde, UNESCO helped local technicians to install a single

Photo: C.A. Arnaldo

Mang Vicente of Ibahay on Aklan Island in Southern Philippines plays traditional melodies on a flute made from PVC plumbing pipe!

transmitter on one island. However, the technicians were so eager and enterprising that afterwards they built two more transmitters so that they could have one on each of the three main islands. This was despite the fact that the components originally made available were scarcely enough for one station. Furthermore, they also linked the three stations over seemingly impossible distances to form a network that shares programmes in a complicated schedule every day.[5]

1 John Dewey, (1916), cited by Elizabeth Blanks Hindman, *"Community, Democracy, and Neighbourhood News"*, International Communication Association, (1998).

2 Frances J. Berrigan, *"Community Communications - the role of community media in development"*, Reports and Papers on Mass Communication, no. 90, UNESCO, (Paris, 1981).

3 Louie Tabing, *Neighbourhood Radio Production*, UNESCO/DANIDA Tambuli Project, Philippines.

4 Martin Allard,*"On the Air...The Development of Community Radio"*, UNESCO Sources, no. 21, (1990).

5 Louie Tabing, Manager of the UNESCO/DANIDA Tambuli Project, Philippines.

Chapter 1
Community Radio in the Broadcasting Scene

This chapter describes the place of community radio in the broadcasting scene and explains the essential difference in its approach compared to conventional public service or commercial broadcasting. A rationale is put forward for its importance in the scenario of increasing media globalization.

The evolution of community radio from its first experiences some 50 years ago is traced and set in the context of broadcast media ownership patterns, technical developments, and the recent trends towards democratization and decentralization.

The reader will acquire:

• An understanding of the special nature of community radio compared to other types of radio broadcasting;

• An understanding of its place and importance in the trend towards media globalization;

• Knowledge about its background, specific field experiences, and the factors that have determined its evolution.

This theoretical framework provides the long-term foundation for practical knowledge and skills to be gained in later chapters.

Broadcasting can be divided into three general categories:

• **Public-service broadcasting** is generally conducted by a statutory entity, which is usually - though not necessarily – a state-supported or a state-owned corporation. Its broadcasting policies and programming are often controlled by a public body, such as a council or a legally constituted authority. This body ensures that broadcasting operates to provide information, education and entertainment to the citizens and society in general, and independently of government, party politics or other interests. Much of the funding for the operation comes from licence fees that the listeners/viewers pay for the receivers they have in their homes.

• **Commercial or private broadcasting** provides programmes designed primarily for profit from advertising revenue and is owned and controlled by private individuals, or by commercial enterprises.

• **Community broadcasting** is a non-profit service that is owned and managed by a particular community, usually through a trust, foundation, or association. Its aim is to serve and benefit that community. It is, in effect, a form of public-service broadcasting, but it serves a community rather than the whole nation, as is the usual form of public broadcasting described above. Moreover, it relies and must rely mainly on the resources of the community. A community is considered to be a group of people who share

A Declaration of Principle

"Community radio responds to the needs of the community it serves, contributing to its development within progressive perspectives in favour of social change. Community radio strives to democratize communication through community participation in different forms in accordance with each specific social context."

World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC), 1988.

common characteristics and/or interests. The commonality of interests may be based on:

- The sharing of a single geographical location, that is to say those living in a specific town, village, or neighbourhood;

- The sharing of economic and social life through trade, marketing, exchange of goods and services.

Unfortunately, this tidy classification into three categories of broadcasting is less than tidy in practice, for there can be combinations and overlapping situations. For example, a local commercial radio station may also broadcast some community service programmes; a station owned and managed by an NGO, such as a religious institution, may fill most of its air time with such programmes; and state-owned public-service broadcasting has increasingly been decentralizing to the local level and providing programming for the communities around it.

Not surprisingly, there is still no single definition or description of community radio. And to complicate matters further, there have been various terms applied to small-scale radio broadcasting such as 'local', 'alternative', 'independent', or 'free' radio. All of these lack precision. For example, the term 'local radio'

could also cover the decentralized operation, through a local station, of a state-controlled broadcasting system, or even a small commercial station. Terms such as 'alternative' and 'free' are also imprecise, even if in the context of radio, they are normally taken to mean alternative to the mainstream mass media and free from government ownership and control. Logically, therefore, they include community radio, but they do not necessarily include it.

The various definitions of community radio that have been formulated share many common elements. The simple and catchy phrase, 'Radio by the people and for the people' is often used as a good summary. This phrase captures well the essential principle that must be in place for a broadcasting service to be considered true community radio. It must firstly, be managed by the community; secondly, be to serve that community.

Strict application of these two principles would mean that a radio station owned by a non-profit NGO and also managed by that NGO would not necessarily qualify as a true community radio, even if much of its programming were aimed at community development. This is the case for many broadcasting services run by religious organizations, and in practice the term

'community radio' is often used to cover this type of operation as well. One example is *Radio Maria*, which beginning from a single parish in Northern Italy in 1983 now covers all of Italy and also has stations in 21 other countries. It is essentially an evangelical operation, but it also does a great deal in social services and community development, using volunteers and supported by spontaneous contributions from listeners.

The somewhat confusing situation regarding what constitutes true community radio can perhaps best be understood by considering the following quotation; this sums up a philosophical approach that makes community radio different from commercial or public-service radio.

"Community radio emphasizes that it is not commercial and does not share what it would call the prescriptive and paternalistic attitude of public-service broadcasting… The key difference is that while the commercial and public-service models both treat listeners as objects, to be captured for advertisers or to be improved and informed, community radio aspires to treat its listeners as subjects and participants." [4]

UNESCO

This placing of both public and commercial broadcasting into a prescriptive category, treating listeners as objects, is significant, for even when they broadcast their so-called community service programmes, they usually remain in the same prescriptive mode. This is contrary to the participatory essence of community radio programming.

◄ COMMUNITY RADIO IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBALIZATION OF MEDIA

Recent years have seen a strong trend towards the globalization of media. Colossal media enterprises of a commercial nature have been formed and increasingly span the globe with their programmes. Certain countries have also become centres of highly successful media production, mainly of an entertainment character, and sell their output to TV channels worldwide. Obvious examples are soap operas from the USA. However, audience research has shown that people prefer to watch programmes with their own cultural orientations, rather than those imported from others. For this reason, media productions from developing countries, such as Brazil, China, Egypt, India, and Indonesia, are now gaining wider distribution in large-scale commercial media.

While some people argue that the globalization of the media disrupts local cultures, others state that global media intensifies the consciousness of the world as a whole and is therefore beneficial. They see global media and community media as complementary, each forming important functions that the other cannot. And this is certainly the case.

By definition, global media are commercial and need to attract large audiences for their advertising content. Thus, they broadcast programmes that attempt to satisfy a common thread of sensitivities among large numbers of people, using well-tried and rather standard if not banal entertainment formats. The lack of variety in programme orientation is, therefore, generally attributed to the 'self-censorship' of the market, which uses entertainment as the sole criterion for selection. However, it is also true that governments tend to be more comfortable with private broadcasters limiting themselves to entertainment, rather than becoming involved in the more problematic area of news and current affairs. For these reasons, themes reflecting socio-political interests are often insufficiently covered, or deliberately ignored, by private broadcasters.

Clearly, given their characteristics and orientation, commercial and global media can hardly meet socio-economic and development needs of the countries they cover. The excessive entertainment provided by commercial television has often provoked a call for a reappraisal of the potential of public broadcasting, stressing the need for quality programmes and demanding more possibilities of choice and access for audiences. A logical step in this direction is to expand the democratization of media to the community level, especially through community radio, in which accessibility is the norm.

Furthermore, community radio works in the cultural context of the community it serves; it deals with local issues in the local language or languages; it is relevant to local problems and concerns; and its aim is to help the community to develop socially, culturally, and economically. This is not only in contrast with global media operations, it is also in contrast with centralized, urban-based

Commercial Media Antagonism Towards Community Media

"Mainstream commercial media continue to harbour negative feelings about community media and are convinced that they are adequately able to serve community needs. They have not yet come around to accepting that the special character of community media is complementary rather than antagonistic and mutually exclusive." [5]

Global Communication?

"George Orwell in Nineteen Eighty-Four warned us of a society controlled by Big Brother. Is that what we are encountering today when we see so many people in poor communities tuning into western dominated ideals of the rich consumer society? Orwell was very concerned about the socialist drives of the industrial age. But perhaps he was also warning about the take over of society by a democratic political power driven to degradation by these very industrial drives and by the easy resort to globalization of media." [6]

The Power of the Local Approach

"An effective strategy for the community radio station is to present what cannot be offered by any other radio station; that is, local content with a local flavour... The local radio station must dwell on its strongest reason for existence - local events, issues, concerns, and personalities. If a local station can do an exhaustive reportage of what goes on in its community on a regular basis, there is no way a regional or national broadcast outfit could compete for listenership. The element of proximity is the most potent quality that the community radio should capitalize on. People will be enthusiastic to know on a daily or even hourly basis about the people and events unfolding next to their place of abode." [7]

national media, even of a public service nature, for they are often remote from the realities of rural communities and their needs.

◀ THE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNITY RADIO

The pioneering experiences from which today's community radio has evolved began some 50 years ago in Latin America. Poverty and social injustice were the stimulus for those first experiences, one beginning in Bolivia in 1947 and known as the Miners' radios and another in Colombia in the same year, known as Radio Sutatenza/AcciónCultural Popular. (See boxes 1 and 2 at the end of this Chapter for descriptions).

These experiences in Bolivia and Colombia set a trend, even if today's concept of community radio has evolved considerably. For example, the Miners' radios in Bolivia were working in the decades of ideological clash between Marxism and capitalism. Thus, their principal focus was to unite the community of miners to battle for better and fairer working conditions. They were generally considered to be trade union radios, even if the miners provided much of the finance for the purchase

of equipment and running costs.

Radio Sutatenza/ACPO in Colombia, although inspired by the aim of supporting the community of peasants, was not owned or directly managed by them. There was much feedback from peasants - some 50,000 letters a year – and these certainly ensured the integration of the peasants' desires and needs into the radio's programming. But it was not truly 'radio by the people for the people', which is today's aim.

Even so, this first systematic effort by Radio Sutatenza to educate by radio created a movement that "...spread and was later consolidated through ALER, the Latin American Educational Radio Broadcasting Association. This inter-linkage of radio and education is basic to the idea of public service and marked the birth of community media in Latin America." [8]

However, even if the groundbreaking work was in Latin America, it was in Europe that community radio first became a vital phenomenon, an alternative to – or a critique of – mainstream broadcast media. The first challenges to state public-service broadcasting were in the 1960s-70s when "swashbuckling entrepreneurs boarded the airwaves illegally and seized as much of the

audience as they could carry away from the treasure chest monopoly controlled by the state." [9] In the West, these pirate stations proved a catalyst in motivating governments and national broadcasting systems to introduce legitimate local radio.

In Africa, the establishment of community radio became, in a broad sense, a social movement after the demise of the apartheid regime in South Africa. This was followed by democratization, decentralization, and to some extent structural adjustment, elsewhere in that continent. [10]

The pressure groups that have instigated community radio in many parts of the world (e.g. miners, pirate radio operators, missionaries and democracy movements) have been less present in Asia. In their place, international agencies such as UNESCO and other external donors have often taken initiatives to help get community radio off the ground. And in some cases, it has been the national broadcasting organization that has itself started community radio services.

The Influence of Different Broadcasting Ownership Systems

Latin America adopted the North American system of mainly private and commercial broadcasting, with multiple stations of varied power and reach. In this context, it was relatively easy for new stations to start up. And several thousand have done so in Latin America, often initially as illegal or pirate stations.

In Western European countries, the public-service state broadcasting monopolies, which had been set up when radio, and later TV, were first introduced, usually had management mechanisms through statutory public bodies. These controlling bodies ensured that broadcasting policies and programmes were as independent as possible of government, party political, or other influences.

European countries that adopted this public-service broadcasting approach through state networks did so because, from the very first days of radio in the 1920s, and TV some 30 years later, the electronic media were considered by leading thinkers as marvellous instruments for expanding culture, education, and information, and for improving societies. According to that thinking, the mass media could not be allowed to function principally on a commercial basis and as a vehicle to be taken over by the advertising industry to market products.

Many countries in the developing world, especially in Africa and Asia where European countries had held influence as colonizers, adopted the European model, at least as far as the state monopoly on broadcasting was concerned. However, they did not always allow broadcasting policy to be controlled by a statutory and independent public body, preferring complete control by government of all aspects of their electronic media. Thus, many governments, especially those of centrally planned economies, used their broadcasting networks to further their political aims, and in particular to consolidate their power base.

In such circumstances and fully realizing that information is power, these governments with fully state-controlled broadcasting were extremely reluctant to allow any electronic media to operate independently. This made it difficult for community media initiatives to get started. Only in the early 1980s did some governments begin to relax their opposition to independent media, but even today, many governments still effectively oppose the idea of relinquishing their monopolistic control of the broadcasting media.

On the other hand, it has become clear in the last decade or so that attempts to control information in a society are doomed to fail. The fax machine on a desk, the computer connected to the Internet, electronic mail, and satellite television are undermining all the efforts of repressive regimes to control and condition the information that their people receive. This situation, coupled with the spread of democracy and freedom of expression in most parts of the world, is opening the door to community media initiatives, and particularly to community radio. And governments in countries that have already opened the door are able to see for themselves that community radio has great potential for promoting and supporting decentralized, endogenous development.

Technical Evolution

In addition to the political aspects of decentralizing broadcasting, there are technical factors that have played, and continue to play, a very important part in the evolution of community radio.

Alternative Media as Antibodies?

"Some fifteen years ago I described alternative media as antibodies produced as a protection against the neglect, insensitivity and insanity of the conventional media." [12]

Two important breakthroughs have allowed major progress: firstly, cheap transistor receivers; and secondly low-powered and cheap transmitters.

Until the invention of the transistor in the mid-1950s, radio receivers used valves and were expensive and cumbersome. Until that time, most of the world's radio receivers were manufactured in North America and Europe, but the arrival of the transistor paved the way to massive radio ownership in developing countries. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, India and China the number of radio receivers expanded from two million in 1956 to 90 million in 1975. And the number of radios has continued to expand dramatically worldwide to the two billion or more of today.

The availability of cheap receivers has played a key role in the evolution of community radio, with a push-pull effect in the sense that, once a community station starts to broadcast, there is often a significant rise in radio ownership. This is an indication that radio listening may be as much a function of people's interest in what is being broadcast as their ability to afford a radio receiver. For example, in a poor rural area of Mali where a community radio station began to function,

radio ownership rapidly rose by 140 percent. [13]

The second technical breakthrough was low-power transmitters using a broadcasting system known as Frequency Modulation (FM). These became increasingly available in the 1970s and 1980s. (See also Chapter 4). Small companies in several countries began to produce equipment that was designed specifically for community radio operations. Much of it was in kit form and so robust and simple that it was ideal for use in the often harsh conditions of developing countries.

◄ AN IMPORTANT INITIATIVE BY UNESCO

Among UNESCO's missions are "the free exchange of ideas and knowledge" and promoting "free flow of ideas by word and image". In this context, UNESCO launched an initiative to support community radio in 1980.

The initiative began with discussions in 1980 between UNESCO and the Economic Commission for Africa on local radio broadcasting. These highlighted the fact that very few African countries had a common language that enabled national broadcasting to effectively reach the rural people who made up as

much as 80 percent of the population. The best broadcasters could do was to select perhaps ten of the main local languages and broadcast daily programmes in them on a time-sharing basis. Thus, no single community could listen to a language it understood for more than a short period each day.

There were also problems of physical and mental distance: the central broadcasting facilities were often too far away from their rural audiences for their broadcast signals to be received intelligibly; and the urban-based programme producers were too far away mentally to know and understand their rural audiences properly.

The discussions in those early days, and for many years afterwards, assumed that the state broadcasting systems would be decentralized to local stations. These would mainly relay the signal from the capital but would also originate some programmes locally. This system would keep the local radio under the control of the national broadcasters, and as such it cannot be considered as an example of the community broadcasting model of today.

UNESCO

Equipment Factor: A first need was for cheap and simple equipment quite different from the kind of equipment used by state or commercial radio stations. So UNESCO organized a workshop at Brighton Polytechnic in 1980 that brought together British, Chinese, Cuban, French and Ghanaian engineers. The purpose was to identify priorities and outline design concepts. A first requirement was a 10-watt FM transmitter that could run off a 12-volt car battery or even solar panels; and the second, was for a simple and cheap audio mixer, similarly powered, for bringing together sounds (voices, music and sound effects) into a single programme for broadcasting. The other necessary items, such as tape recorders and record turntables, could be purchased at reasonable prices in the market.

The transmitter was designed and built by Mallard Concepts in Britain, and the six-channel audio mixer was designed and its production supervised by Jake Mills, a Ghanaian who was for many years the technical director of Ghana Broadcasting Corporation.

Based on integrated circuitry, the Mallard transmitter was only slightly larger than a home hi-fi amplifier. It could be delivered either in kit form or fully assembled. The largest component in the equipment was the transformer, the

device for converting power from 110- or 220-volt alternating current to 12-volt direct current.

The cost of the Mallard equipment package was around US$2,000, compared to about US$15,000 or more for commercial transmitters of similar power.

Tests with the Mallard transmitter showed that its signal could be heard on a normal radio at a range of up to 12-20 km. It was so light and robust that it could easily be taken out into the countryside in a car. Powered from the car's battery, and with an antenna hoisted into a tree, an outside broadcast station could be set up.

UNESCO also worked on solar-powered receivers and on problems such as the cheap conversion of existing AM receivers so that they could also pick up FM broadcasts. Despite some promising designs for solar-powered receivers, it proved impossible to find a manufacturer that could mass-produce them on the scale necessary to make them cheap enough for

Photo: C.A. Arnaldo

Soldering circuits for 20-watt FM transmitters in Brixham, UK.

An early model of the FM community radio transmitter designed by Mallard Concepts Ltd., UK for UNESCO.

Photo: W. Jayaweera

even the very poor to buy. Both solar and wind-up generator radio sets are manufactured today, but at prices still prohibitive to most rural folk.

Political Factors: Solving the technical problems was often less difficult than overcoming the political ones in promoting the spread of community radio. UNESCO's push in the area of community radio was essentially radical, based on concepts of human rights and freedom of expression. But the world of the early 1980's was still divided by ideological conflict between Left and Right, and state monopolies on broadcasting were the norm in many developing countries.

It is easy to think that governments simply wanted to repress all forms of self-expression that could pose a threat to their authority or to their stable hold on power. However, closer consideration shows that many governments, especially in countries with a multiplicity of ethnic groups and languages, felt that national identity and unity would be strengthened through having a single broadcasting voice from the centre and through promoting a national language. Whatever the reason for governments to defend their broadcasting

monopolies, UNESCO faced a noteworthy challenge in promoting community radio.

The First Community Radio Station in Africa

The government of Kenya was the first to open the door to UNESCO's proposal for setting up a community radio. In May 1982, a Mallard 10-watt transmitter, as well as an audio mixer designed by Jake Mills and related broadcasting equipment, of a total value of less than US$25,000, were supplied to the community of Homa Bay, on Lake Victoria. This is a poor area with many problems of underdevelopment. Local people were given basic training in how to use the equipment, and the station began broadcasting for two hours a day in Luo, one of Kenya's principle languages, but not that of the dominant ethnic and political group.

Homa Bay was successfully on air for only two-and-a-half years before the government closed it down, for it was said to be working contrary to the official policy of making Swahili and English the national languages. Furthermore, despite its very local coverage, it was said to be increasing tensions between different ethnic groups.

Building on Homa Bay

Despite this political setback, the Homa Bay experience proved that a small community radio operation could be effectively set up, with equipment costs of less than US$25,000, and that it could function in a low-technology environment without encountering technical problems.

UNESCO's initiative in community radio coincided with some world trends that favoured it. The most important of these was the growing awareness of the limitations of centrally planned economies, leading ultimately to the collapse of the ideology that had built them. But in non-Marxist countries too, democratization, decentralization and neo-liberal policies were on the march, and this was also leading to a greater willingness to decentralize national broadcasting systems.

In Sri Lanka, the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation had already regionalized its services, and the notion of starting community radio was a natural next step. Thus, in 1983, the second UNESCO community radio initiative was begun in the context of a large multi-purpose irrigation scheme, the Mahaweli Development Project. About a million people were being resettled on newly

irrigated land, and these families came from various parts of the country. Originally, no media element was included among the various rural development inputs for Mahaweli. However, it was later realized that a community radio service could help the settlers to integrate and to take initiatives to improve their living standards. In effect, they needed to develop a sense of community, as well as learn more about improved agricultural practices, health, and so on.

Community radio offered great potential for this, so with financial support from Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) and UNESCO, the Mahaweli Community Radio was set up. Its first station covered about 20,000 settlers in the major development region surrounding the town of Guirandurokotte, but it was later complemented by several other small FM stations in the area.

Although the Mahaweli Community Stations were all under the control of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, they used a true community radio style. This was quite different from the style used by the national broadcaster.

One of the main thrusts of Mahaweli Radio, in addition to providing settlers with information,

was to obtain feedback from them about development activities through recordings made in the communities, which were later included in programmes, or through having settlers come into the studios to talk on air. With such participation in the radio programming, and dealing as it did with local problems and issues, the radio became a vital and personalized link in the life of the community.

Community Radio Expanding at a Fast Pace

Riding on the flood tide of change that has been sweeping the world towards democratization and decentralization in the 1980's and 1990's, community radio has been expanding at a fast pace. UNESCO followed its Kenyan and Sri Lankan experience with support to other stations in a wide variety of countries, among them Ghana, Tonga, Haiti, Cape Verde, St Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Surinam, Jamaica, Guyana, the Philippines, and many others. However, UNESCO is now far from being alone in promoting community radio. A wide range of international development agencies and national and international NGOs are involved in many parts of the world.

The rapidity of the spread of community radio is remarkable, and Mali provides an interesting example. In 1991, after 23 years of military dictatorship, severe social disturbances finally overthrew the government and a multi-party democracy was formally established. A transition government came to power pending democratic elections.

Mali is a primarily rural society and the transitional government organized consultations with representatives of the rural people. It was found that, after more than two decades during which the national media had been the channel for issuing instructions and exhortations, and with government staff in rural areas equally distant, the peasantry was disaffected and alienated by the government's imposed development programmes. They preferred to ignore them. [17]

The transitional government and the elected one that took its place decided to install, with the help of UNDP and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), a policy of using communication systematically for Mali's development, the first country in the world to do so. Mali also took a lead in media liberalization in Africa, notably through organizing a crucial conference in Bamako in September 1993 called "Freedom for African Radios." [18] [19]

Mali had itself just liberalized its state TV and radio, which ever since they began had broadcast exclusively in French, a language only understood by the country's elite. And with illiteracy levels of about 70 percent, the majority of the people had had no access to media-based information.

In the five years after Mali liberalized its media, more than 60 independent radio stations began to operate, providing access in local languages to people for the first time since the dawn of radio broadcasting. And many other countries are becoming similarly involved with community radio. Much has happened to improve the situation for community broadcasting since the Homa Bay community transmitter was closed down by the government of Kenya some 15 years ago. And as an endnote, Kenya today is also discussing legislation that would recognize community radio as part of the countries broadcasting scene.

BOX 1: *The Miners' Radio in Bolivia*

The Bolivian experience began with a radio service called the 'Voice of the Miner' linked to the Siglo XX mine in the Department of Potosí. In subsequent years, 23 stations in the various mining areas of the country were set up and came to be known collectively as the Miners' Radios.

These radio stations were born as a trade union response to the appalling conditions of workers in the mines, most of which were owned and operated until 1952 by a few rapacious and fabulously rich families, the 'tin barons', such as the Patiños, who were known world-wide for their extravagant lifestyles. Meanwhile, the miners, who were the source of their wealth and of the main national export, were being inhumanely exploited. Living in primitive mining camps, often in the cold of very high altitudes, poorly paid and suffering from typical miners' afflictions, such as silicosis, they were already old men by the age of 40. Their life expectancy was further reduced by the lack of safety precautions in the mines and frequent accidents. In 1952, the mines were nationalized, but little changed for the miners because governments lacked social conscience.

Unfortunately, historical facts about the Miners' Radios remain somewhat vague, for the main source of information is the memory of the people involved. However, it is certain that the radios were a crucial element in helping to lead the struggle endemic in Bolivia for many years - a confrontation that saw massacres of miners and their families, civil war and revolution.

The radios helped to unite the miners in the struggle, and provided them with news and information that countered the negative propaganda against their interests that was being put out by most of the mainstream media. The importance of the Miners' Radios is evident from the number of times they were systematically destroyed, or their equipment confiscated, by the military sent in by one or other of the succession of governments that ruled the country.

It was, in fact, the miners that initiated the massive strike in 1981 that finally led to the end of dictatorship in Bolivia. As on all previous occasions of serious confrontation with the authorities, one of the principle demands made by the miners was the return of the equipment for their radio stations, or in cases where the equipment had been destroyed, the right to start them up again with new equipment. The miners usually contributed most of the cost, a further illustration of the importance of these radio stations in their lives.

Although the main role of the Miners' Radios was the defence and promotion of miners' rights, they were also central to a wide range of cultural and educational activities. They promoted and broadcast festivals of miners' poetry, discussions about the aesthetic value of popular songs and other art forms, and discussions about education issues, even including a discussion of whether miners' children should learn to play chess.

The miners themselves contributed to the costs of establishing and running their radio stations, but in most cases the management and programming policy was in the hands of their unions. And there was little participation by miners in the kind of radio programmes that would be promoted by community radio today. However the integration of the radio stations into the mining community was to a great extent ensured by their physical location close to the mine they served, and people could generally visit the studio and say their piece if they wanted.

Most Miners' Radios were set up in the second half of the 1950s, but their most flourishing years were between 1963 and 1983. After that, world tin prices began to drop and in 1985 a neo-liberal government passed a decree to 'relocate' miners, throwing about 20,000 of them out of mining work forever. This cut the ground from under the feet of their radios. Some were passed to peasant groups, but today, less than ten are still operating.

BOX 2: *Radio Sutatenza/Acción Cultural Popular in Colombia*

This initiative was launched in 1947 by a priest, Joaquín Salcedo, in an Andean village called Sutatenza. It began using a home-made transmitter with a range of two to three km, but from this, Radio Sutatenza grew into Colombia's most powerful broadcasting network.

Salcedo, an atypical priest, was more concerned about the social and economic status of Colombia's peasants than about conventional Church matters. Driven by his mission to bring education to peasants to help them develop, he realized that radio could reach even into the most isolated parts of mountainous Colombia. Thus, the idea of the Radio Schools of Sutatenza was born, and from that Acción Cultural Popular (ACPO).

The educational broadcasts by Radio Sutatenza expanded until they covered a wide range of topics, including literacy, numeracy, health, farm production, housing improvements, family and personal relationships, sport and leisure, and - crucially as it turned out - the responsibilities of parenthood and practising responsible procreation.

People listened to these programmes in informal Radio Schools - in effect, small groups who came together each evening. The groups were assisted by monitors, people with more knowledge and experience than the group. At any one time, there was usually an enrolment of some 200,000 peasants in about 20,000 Radio Schools.

To complement the radio programmes, ACPO produced a range of textbooks and a Peasant's Library of 100 books on topics for rural communities. And a weekly magazine, with an estimated readership of 600,000 people, was published. Furthermore, training of peasant leaders and technical training courses in communities were a part of the activities.

The Roman Catholic Church supported the operation from the beginning, mainly with funds from Catholic groups in Europe, but ACPO also attracted world-wide attention and many international agencies also became involved in financing it.

Ultimately, Radio Sutatenza was the victim of its own success. When it introduced its programmes on 'responsible procreation', the Church began systematically to undermine it. Salcedo declared that the problem was to convince the masses that it was not sinful to discuss these matters, and that it was difficult to educate people for human dignity and for responsible maternity in a country dominated by religious rules. ACPO held no position on chemical or physical methods of birth control. Its task was only to create the basis on which individuals could take their own, responsible decisions.

This position infuriated the Church hierarchy in Colombia, which held that the only purpose of human sexual intercourse was procreation of the species. So it convinced the European Catholic groups to withdraw their support. However, ACPO continued to function with other international funding passed through the government.

The operation struggled on, using mainly borrowed funds, until 1985 when its powerful and valuable radio infrastructure was sold to a commercial network. In 1987, after 40 years successfully dedicated to helping peasants develop their minds, knowledge and life skills, it finally folded completely. Its assets, which included a publishing house, a plant for pressing musical records, a 14-storey office block in the capital, as well as peasant training centres, were sold to meet its debts.

1 Independent Radio and Television Commission of Ireland, 1988.

2 Quote: Louie Tabing, Manager of the UNESCO/DANIDA Tambuli Project, Philippines.

3 Zane Ibrahim and Ms Adams. *Bush Radio 89.5 FM*. (See Case Study).

4 P. M. Lewis and J. Booth. *The Invisible Medium: Public, Commercial, and Community Radio*, MacMillan (London, 1989).

5 Jocelyn Josiah. Presentation on Media for *Community Building in the Caribbean* during Roundtable on Communication for Development, Brazil (Bahia, 1998).

6 Carlos A. Arnaldo. *Localism and the Displacement of Politics: Place based Communication*. Development (Globalism and the Politics of Place). Vol 41 No. 2, 1998. Sage Publications and SID (Rome, June 1998).

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9 T. McCain and F. Lowe. *Localism in Western European Broadcasting*, Journal of Communication, Vol. 40-1 (1990).

10 Moncef M. Bouhafa, *Child Survival and Broadcasting – Opportunities and Challenges*, paper presented at international conference on Broadcasting for Child Survival, Voice of America/USAID (Washington, April 1998).

11 Colin Fraser and Sonia Restrepo-Estrada. *Communicating for Development - Human Change for Survival*. I.B. Tauris (London/New York, 1998).

12 Peter Lewis in *Alternative Media: Linking Global and Local*. Reports and Papers on Mass Communication No. 107, UNESCO (Paris, 1993).

13 Mary Myers, *The Promotion of Democracy at the Grass-roots: The Example of Radio in Mali*. Frank Cass Journal, Vol. 5, No. 2 (London, 1998).

14 Jake Mills of Ghana, the designer of the cheap, 6-channel audio mixer (1990).

15 Martin Allard, designer of a simple and cheap FM transmitter.

16 Interview: Sunil Wijesinghe, broadcaster of Mahaweli Community Radio (1999).

17 Colin Fraser and Sonia Restrepo-Estrada, op cit.

18 Moncef M. Bouhafa, *Grassroots Media and Community Empowerment in West Africa*, paper presented to the International Conference on Media and Politics, Catholic University of Brussels, Belgium, 1997 (revised 1998).

19 Mary Myers, op. cit.

20 Ibid.

In Barbados, after running the experimental UNESCO community radio for the 1995 World Environmental Conference, students took over the radio station and continued programmes ever since from the Barbados Community College as Radio GED.

This chapter describes the special features and programming approach of community radio in terms of public access and participation, ownership, management, funding, editorial independence, and credibility, as well as its representation of different groups and interests in the community and its inclusion of marginalized and minority groups.

The section on functions covers the role of community radio in reflecting local identity and culture, in providing a diversity of voices, opinions, programmes and content on air, and in promoting democratic process, social change, development, civil society and good governance. Its function as a 'people's telephone' and its contribution to the training of human resources for the broadcasting industry are also touched on.

After absorbing the content, the reader will:

• Have a clear picture of the many features and functions of community radio;

• Be able to act as a resource person/leader during discussions in a community about the possibility of setting up a radio station, providing the necessary background information for decisions on ownership, management, programming policies, and the benefits that can be expected from a community radio.

◀ ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF COMMUNITY RADIO

The Audience as Protagonists

While community radio is a form of public-service broadcasting, it has an approach that is different from conventional broadcasting. Its specific focus is to make its audience the main protagonists, by their involvement in all aspects of its management and programme production, and by providing them with programming that will help them in the development and social advancement of their community.

Photo: C.A. Arnaldo

Special Sunday treat for Radio Ibahay - actress Chin Chin Gutierrez visits the station during the children's programme and sings a song in Aklanon.

A Special Slant on News, Entertainment and Education

News on a community station, unlike that on the mainstream media, is not an isolated story or event alone: rather, it aims to be part of an ongoing and future process which supports change and development in the community.

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Radio quickly and easily becomes he link in society between poor and rich, between rural and urban groups, between agricultural routine and city leisure. At Radyo Ibahay, one of the smallest Tambuli stations, film and TV actress Chin Chin Gutierrez share her ideas on development in an interview for the Sunday programme.

Entertainment is provided in a form that is a collective cultural expression, rather than a featuring of refined performers. It is more like singing Karaoke than listening to a professional artist.

Education is more the sharing of experiences and learning from others in the community than listening to an expert or teacher talking.

Principles of Public Access and Participation

Citizens have a democratic right to reliable, accurate, and timely information. Based on this right, it is a public interest of broadcasting that it should incorporate the principles of <u>access</u> and <u>participation</u>.

Access implies the availability of broadcasting services to all citizens; participation implies that the public is actively involved in planning and management, and also provides producers and performers.

In concrete terms, for community radio these concepts mean that:

- A community radio's broadcast pattern reaches all members of the community it aims to serve;

- The community participates in formulating plans and policies for the radio service and in defining its objectives, its principles of management, and its programming;

- The community participates in decisions concerning programme content, duration and schedules. People select the types of programmes they want, rather than having them prescribed by the producers;

- The community is free to comment and criticize;

- There is continuous interaction between producers and receivers of messages. The radio itself acts as a principal channel for this interaction, but there are also mechanisms that allow easy contact between the community, the programme producers, and the management of the radio station;

- There are unrestricted opportunities for members of the community, as individuals or groups, to produce programmes, and be helped by the radio station staff, using the technical production facilities available;

- The community participates in the establishment, management, administration and financing of the radio station.

Ownership

The facilities of community radio are almost invariably owned by the community through a trust, foundation, cooperative, or some similar vehicle. However, there could be cases where formal ownership was in the hands of a body external to the community, but which has passed the facility to the community for its independent and exclusive use.

Management

Irrespective of formal ownership, the station's policies, management, and programming <u>must</u> be the responsibility of the community in order for it to be considered a true community radio. There will usually be a representative community committee, or Board of Directors, to set overall policies, while day-to-day

administrative and operational decisions are left to a station manager selected by the community.

Funding

A community radio service is set up and run as a non-profit organization. It relies on financial support from a diversity of sources, which may include donations, grants, membership fees, sponsorship or advertising. A combination of these is the most desirable in order to ensure independence. Many community radios also organize fund-raising events among their audience. The overall aim is always to reach a state of financial self-sufficiency.

Editorial Independence and Credibility

Community radio is editorially independent of central and local government, of political parties, and of commercial and religious institutions in determining its policies and programming. Overall policy is set by the aforementioned representative community-level committee, but with day-to-day

operational decisions about programming taken by the station manager, his/her role as a credible and non-partisan person becoming crucial.

Representation of Different Groups and Interests in the Community

Communities are inevitably made up of different groups and interests. Community radio broadcasts programmes that cater to these and also encourages them to express themselves on air. Clearly, however, programme and time allocation are approximately proportional to the size of any particular group or interest in the community, taking into account any special circumstances or needs.

Inclusion of Minority and Marginalized Groups

Community radio includes minority and marginalized groups on equal terms, rather than giving them an

Carol Singing for a Tape Recorder

Community radio stations often organize community events such as community fairs, cultural evenings, and other fund-raising activities. One Tambuli community radio station in the Philippines organized door-to-door carol singing at Christmas to raise funds to buy a new tape recorder.

Even the smallest children have access to the radio on the Radio Ibahay Sunday children's programme.

Photo: C.A. Arnaldo

occasional voice, as in the case of many public broadcasters. Its programming ensures a wide diversity of voices and views from marginalized groups, such as women and youth, and it promotes and protects the interests, culture, and linguistic diversity of ethnic minorities in the community.

◀ **FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNITY RADIO**

Community radio aims to fulfil the following functions:

Reflect and Promote Local Identity, Character, and Culture

Community radio provides programming that is particular to its community's identity and character. Thus it relies principally on local content. It includes outside news and events that have a special interest or implications for its audience.

It also focuses on local culture. Culture is what a community says to itself, and what it says to others. It is how the people, the individual members of a community, express their dreams and hopes, and how they talk about their past and their future. It is what they care about. Like life itself, culture is infinitely variable and constantly evolving. It is the result of a process, not of

definitions. And that is why in democracies, governments are expected only to establish broad frameworks for cultural expression by the people. Governments must not get involved in content or style. [1]

Community culture is also, of course, artistic expression through local music, dance, poetry, theatre, story telling, and so on, and these are featured strongly by most community radios. Local performers are encouraged to go on air, uninhibited by considerations of the 'professional standards' they may have acquired from mainstream media. The value of content and 'localness' usually outweighs formal quality and 'professionalism', though this should not be used as an excuse for sub-standard technical production.

Culture is also Language: Local languages and expressions are the raw material that feeds community radios. They are the cement of cultural diversity, which is as important for the successful future of humanity as biological diversity. There are some 6,700 languages in the world, and 63 percent of these are in Africa and Asia. National broadcasting and media globalization, combined with other factors such as urban migration, threaten half of the world's languages with extinction during the next generation. And with them will go

their cultures. Community radio is a prime defence against this grave trend towards the impoverishment of cultural diversity. [2]

Create a Diversity of Voices and Opinions on the Air

Community radio, through its openness to participation to all sectors and people in a community, creates a diversity of voices and opinions on the air.

Some discord is present in all communities; they are not the peaceful, harmonious groupings that outsiders may idealistically imagine. Discord may be caused by differing interests, by differing ethnic, linguistic or religious backgrounds, or even by some ancient feud. The acknowledgement of conflict is necessary for democracy and for democratic communities. Through an understanding of why conflict exists, communities can understand themselves better and pave the way to resolve conflicts. A function of community radio is to try objectively to air all sides of a discussion, without itself taking sides.

UNESCO

Provide a Diversity of Programmes and Content

Community radio provides a diversity of programmes in a variety of formats and styles. For example, roundtable discussions, reportage, interviews, talks, call-in programmes, live broadcasts of meetings in the community, etc. Audience preferences are taken into account in deciding what formats are most suitable.

Content also covers a wide range of topics, again in accordance with the expressed desires and needs of the audience. Content is mainly determined by the lifestyles and livelihood of the community and by the problems it faces. In rural areas, themes such as health, farming, fishing, environment, credit, marketing of produce, small-scale enterprises, etc. usually feature prominently, but always set in the context of the community's actual situation.

News broadcasts may also focus on different types of content. They may cover only local events and issues, or they may include national items that have local relevance, or they may even broadcast national and international news *per se* in the case of a remote community with no access to other media channels.

Encourage Open Dialogue and Democratic Process

The ancient Greeks, who invented democracy, conducted their political debate in public. All those who wished could be present at the meetings to listen and voice their views. Sheer numbers of people make this impossible today, and for this reason, democratic process has become distant from ordinary citizens. Typically, once politicians are elected, their contact with their electorates is limited, and they go about their tasks without much further consultation or debate with them.

It is a function of community radio to provide an independent platform for interactive discussion about matters and decisions of importance to its community. This is in keeping with the decentralization processes now being implemented in many countries, a purpose of which is to bring democratic decision-making closer to the people concerned.

However, for social and economic progress to take place, democratic processes cannot start and finish in the community. They must reach into the government and private institutions operating in the community, as well as to policy makers and authorities at the local, regional, and even national level.

The public debates aired by the community radio will certainly be heard by locally-based staff of government and private institutions, and the radio's content should be relayed by them to their superiors. This lays the foundation for development initiatives that are responsive to the community's felt needs and possibilities. In addition, recordings by the community radio service can be used in meetings, or even broadcast by other stations, to make better known what is happening at the grassroots level.

In sum, the core of democratic process is the ability of people to hear and make themselves heard. Community radio provides the forum for that to happen.

Promote Development and Social Change

People in poor communities tend to be fatalistic about their situation. They will all have <u>individual</u> perceptions, but development cannot take place on the basis of these. What is needed is a <u>collective</u> perception of the local reality and of the options for improving it. This can only be achieved through internal discussions within the

While group listening is not the norm among radio audience, radio achieves a certain level of similarity among people living in rural areas. Problem-solving becomes easier when there is "commonness" in knowledge, perceptions, aspirations, goals, and processes.

Connections

"Local radio stations have the responsibility to connect people with people, people with people's organizations, and people with officials and government functionaries." [5]

community about its situation, the causes, and possible actions for improvement.

Community radio provides the perfect platform for these internal discussions and for reaching a collective perception of the situation. Specific problems can be analyzed, remedies discussed, and those most affected - or who can help with the solution - mobilized to collective action.

Anti-social behaviour by minorities in a community can also be modified by exerting pressure from the majority through community radio programmes.

Promote Civil Society

Civil society is that multiplicity of social institutions that allows a society to live in harmonious coexistence. It creates its own standards and values for individual and group behaviour, rather than having them imposed from above.

Especially in countries that have recently adopted democratic systems after decades of single-party or authoritarian rule, the younger generations have little idea about what democracy entails or about the civil society that makes democracies function.

Some community radios focus on explaining the implications of democracy and civil society, raising awareness about people's rights, but also about their obligations. They work to explain how a civic sense is needed if new-found freedoms are to result in harmony and social progress.

Promote Good Governance

In poor communities, local authorities and politicians can easily take advantage of citizens, either individually or as a group, in part because the marginalized and oppressed have no way to complain. Community radio helps people to obtain their just rights by giving them a platform to air their grievances. And through playing a community watchdog role, it makes local authorities and politicians more conscious of their public responsibilities.

Broadcasting of discussions, or questions and answers, between members of the community and local authorities about some issue that is exercising them is a technique that is often used. Another technique is to broadcast live the discussions of local government meetings.

This function of community radio is not always easy to fulfil. In very remote communities, and where power has been held by a few families for generations, the people may be reluctant to speak their mind because they all have a debt of one sort or another to those families. And, equally, the powerful families may be unwilling to take criticism.

Encourage Participation, Sharing of Information and Innovation

Participation is a key word in development circles, but it is not always appreciated that participation and communication are two sides of the same coin, for when people communicate about their situation and about options for improving it, they are in effect participating. And they are also laying the foundation for collective action in which they will participate. Community radio encourages participation by providing a platform for debate, analysis, and the exchange of ideas and opinions.

In addition, community radio allows for the sharing of information and innovation. For example, one family or group in a community may have solved some problem that is common to many other people, such as obtaining farm

credit from a new bank in the nearest city. A broadcast account by them explaining how they went about it and the procedures required would be the stimulus for other families to do the same. Another example might be providing information about a farmer in the area who had multiplied seed of an improved vegetable variety and was willing to sell it.

Give Voices to the Voiceless

In many traditional societies, women and youth and ethnic and linguistic minorities are virtually ignored in community affairs. But no community can change and develop equitably and satisfactorily without the active and informed participation of its women, youth, and minority groups. (See Box 3 at the end of this Chapter).

Therefore, community radio gives voice to the voiceless in the community. This, of course, is in addition to giving the community in general a voice after years of having been inert recipients of state or commercial broadcasts.

Provide a Social Service as a Replacement for the Telephone

In poor rural areas where telephones hardly exist, community radio replaces them to an important extent by broadcasting messages. For example, a family living in a remote part of the community can be informed that a relative living in the main agglomeration has been taken ill and would they please come to visit. Or a farmer with an animal he wants to sell can have the fact announced over the radio, replacing the series of calls he would make if telephones were available. Again, a person looking for temporary labour to help with some farm task could alert those people who were interested to offer their services through a broadcast announcement.

The efficiency of government services, say in health, is improved by broadcasting the schedule for field visits ahead of time so that people will be waiting for these on arrival.

Contribute to Diversity in Broadcasting Ownership

Community, commercial, and national or state broadcasting all have roles in society, though community broadcasting is the one that has generally lagged behind the others. Community radio helps to redress this, and provides the balance of broadcast information sources needed by democratic societies for their advancement.

Photo: UNESCO

In Benin children participate directly in literacy courses on the air.

Photo: C.A. Arnaldo

In October 1992, Bhutan Broadcasting Corporation was transformed from a state broadcaster to a public corporation with a much decreased subsidy. Above, at the new Punaka market, a broadcast trainee talks with the people about prices, travel along country roads, quality of the harvest and news of the village. This project was financed by DANIDA.

Difficulties in Achieving Transparency - a Case Study from the Philippines

The more remote the community, the more hesitant people are to speak out. People rely on their leaders for the smallest problems and they all owe a debt to the few political families. To criticise them would seem ungrateful.

The local council told the community radio to accept calls from listeners with queries or comments during live broadcasts of the weekly council sessions. But when the calls began to come in, the council told them to stop accepting them. The council also began to chose which portions of the sessions could be broadcast and told the radio team to leave the room when budget discussions were under way. [8]

Information as a Commodity for Decisions

"...The appropriate use of community broadcasting is to satisfy community and social needs. In the process of doing so, people are able to access the very important commodity called information on which they base their day-to-day decisions." [9]

'The People's Telephone' in Haiti

"When the bandits sped off on their motorcycle, leaving a cloud of dust, a dead body, and a distressed village in their wake, they thought they were on the road to freedom. They hadn't heard about the village's radio station, Radyo Flanbo. In Haiti, community radio stations such as Flanbo are known as 'the people's telephone', and as the bandits prepared to terrorize the next village, Flanbo's newsreader broadcast a warning of their imminent arrival. The bandits might as well have driven straight to the police station." [10]

1   Adapted from Pierre Juneau. *General Introduction, Public Service Broadcasting - the Challenge of the 21st Century*. Reports and Papers on Mass Communication, No. 111, UNESCO (Paris, 1997).

2   Sophie K. Ly, *El Recuerdo del Conocimiento Perdido*. InteRadio, Vol. 9, No. 2, AMARC (Montreal, 1997).

3   Triple Enquiry Report. Independent Broadcasting Authority. Republic of South Africa (1995).

4   *Ibid.*

5   B. S. S. Rao during the *Consultation on Media Policy and Community Radio*, Bangalore, India (1996).

6   Colin Fraser/Sonia Restrepo-Estrada, *Communicating for Development - Human Change for Survival*. I.B. Tauris (London/New York), 1998.

7   Mary Myers, *The Promotion of Democracy at the Grass-roots: The Example of Radio in Mali*, Frank Cass Journal, Vol. 5, No. 2 (London, Summer 1998).

8   Adapted from Cecile Balgos. *The Sounds of Silence*, UNESCO Sources No. 89. UNESCO (Paris, 1997).

9   Felix Librero in *Communication for People Power*. Ed. Maslog, Navarro, Tabing, Teodoro. UNESCO/Tambuli Project, Institute of Development Communication, College of Mass Communication, UNESCO National Commission, Philippines (Manila, 1997).

10 David Shanks. *Voices for the Voiceless*. A feature prepared by World Association for Christian Communication (WACC). (London, March 1999).

Contribute to the Development of Human Resources for the Broadcasting Industry

Community radio arguably demystifies the broadcaster's profession by taking community members as message producers. It is also a school for fledgling broadcasters, where they, of course, acquire valuable technical skills.

But there is another factor that makes people trained in community radio particularly valuable. They are broadcasters who live among their listeners, share many of the same problems, and get constant feedback – positive and negative - on the formats of their programmes and on their interest and usefulness. This gives them unique insights into the broadcaster /audience relationship and into radio as a tool for change and development. It is not uncommon, therefore, for community broadcasters go on to join the staff of mainstream broadcasting.

Photo: UNESCO Kingston

Radio Muye, the first community radio run by women in the Caribbean, under the UNESCO special project 'Women Speaking to Women'.

Photo: L. Tabing

One of the youngest women recruits of the community radio station in Cuyo, Palawan, DYMC Radio.

BOX 3: *Involvement of Women*

Filipino women - particularly those in the countryside where socialization has been limited by poverty and inadequate educational attainment - are often shy, reserved and timid. In addition, rural families are often resistant to changing the traditional position of women as housekeepers, and women would generally prefer that their husbands participate in community projects.

It is very evident that the issue of collectively pursuing women's rights and empowerment has been relegated to the lowest priority among rural people. So it often takes cajoling and reassurances before women will come out of their shells.

However, increased readiness to participate in community projects can be seen among those who have been exposed to mass media culture, and our initial talks in communities regarding special radio programmes for, about, and by women were met with much eagerness. I attribute this to the fact that some family and social institutions that had been trying to promote women's activities in the community felt threatened and

welcomed the support that radio could provide.

Once involved, women are highly dependable. They adhere to rules. Compared to men, they are more meticulous, They are less subject to anomalous behaviour and malfeasance. They are consistently enthusiastic. And where the women are mixed with men, the men also become more enthusiastic, if not to say better, performers.

Meriam Aranas, the president of the Olutanga Islanders Media Development Foundation, was a strong-willed leader of an active women's group promoting livelihood and conservation projects. She registered the association and led the drive to erect a building for the radio station.

A schoolteacher, Rosario Gozos was appointed as station manager in Partido Camarines Sur. She is single-handedly running a family because her husband works abroad. She spearheaded the successful drive against illegal gambling in the district. Among other things, she has initiated an all-women Saturday programme.

Her infectious dedication has inspired all the other volunteers in her radio station. In less than three years, the station became an institutional power in the community. It has contributed greatly to the progress and well being of Partido.

Lyn Villasis, a soft-spoken beautician, has been running a story-telling program for children for years and has become one of the most popular personalities in the station in Banga, Aklan.

Malou Angolluan, is a youthful college graduate who has taken voluntary activity as a vocation. Her exemplary work and dedication to service have earned her profuse admiration from her listeners. She has turned down several offers to work in bigger commercial radio stations.

In Ibahay, Aklan province, Philippines, Ate Meds rushes from Sunday mass to the Studio for her weekly children's programme.

In Pastapur, Hyderabad, India, women discuss local problems for airing on a regional radio station of All India Radio. They are also advocating for new legislation to enable them to broadcast on their own antenna

Chapter 3
Legal Aspects

This chapter gives an overview of the legislation governing community radio in a variety of countries world-wide. Special attention is given to South Africa, where broadcasting legislation is in many ways exemplary and could be used as a model by other countries. The main common factors and the main differences that exist in national community radio legislation are described, as are typical requirements for obtaining a licence.

The reader will gain:

• An awareness of the wide variations in legislation and of the obstacles that community radio may face in some parts of the world;

• An understanding of the need to examine closely the existing legislation before embarking on a community radio project;

• Knowledge of the likely information and conditions that the authorities will require before issuing a community radio licence.

◀ *UNEVEN AND HAPHAZARD LEGISLATION*

The airwaves, or the frequencies for broadcasting, are a public asset. It is therefore incumbent upon national administrations, in line with the decisions of the administrative planning conferences organized by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), to regulate and allocate their use with the public interest in mind, as well as with fairness and transparency. And general national media policies should meet the same criteria.

Unfortunately, this does not always happen, and the legislation governing community radio is very uneven. In several regions of the world, community radio suffers because current legislation is either non-existent, inconsistent, or basically hostile. This handbook is not the place for an exhaustive description of the legislation country-by-country, but a brief overview of the situation in a few countries world-wide will give a feel for the situation.

◀ *MOST PROGRESS IN AFRICA*

Many countries in Africa have made good progress in legislating for community radio. This is particularly interesting because, at first sight, it would appear to be a paradox: on the one hand, community radio certainly has a natural role to play in catering to the information needs and interests of the wide ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity present in most African countries; but on the other hand, governments fear that freedom of ethnic and linguistic expression might undermine national unity. It will be remembered that this was partly what brought the Homa Bay community radio experience in Kenya to a premature end in 1984.

However, it seems that the lesson has now been learned about authoritarian suppression of diverse linguistic and cultural expression within a country. This ultimately produces strong resentment and tensions in society. Indeed, even in industrialized countries, the last two decades have seen a change of heart by governments that now try to preserve the traditional linguistic and cultural identity of their minority groups. They have realized that a pluralistic society can also achieve national identity and unity.

This is the case in many parts of Africa too. Since the early 1990s, countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Namibia, and South Africa have all embarked on a course of freeing their airwaves and promoting community radio as part of the national broadcasting spectrum, backing the policy with appropriate legislation in most cases.

South Africa's progress towards new broadcasting policies and community radio legislation is considered exemplary. Some countries have already copied it, and many others could also find it a useful model. It is therefore outlined in the next section.

THE INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY

The IBA was created by the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 153 of 1993, which enabled the IBA to take over those broadcasting tasks that were previously performed by the Minister of Home Affairs and the Postmaster General. The IBA is charged with the promotion of a diverse range of sound and television broadcasting services on a national, regional and local lever which, when viewed collectively, caters for all languages and cultural groups and provides entertainment, education and information.

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) is an independent statutory body responsible for the regulation of the South African broadcasting industry.

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The work of the IBA includes:
- licensing broadcasters
- monitoring licence and programme conditions
- receiving, hearing and adjudicating complaints
- formulating broadcast policy
- planning the broadcast frequency spectrum
- regulating the broadcasting industry as a whole

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Broadcasting Legislation in South Africa – an Exemplary Case

The government of post-apartheid South Africa realized that the country's media could help to resolve many socio-economic development needs, and at the same time help to build a democratic and pluralistic society. But new broadcasting policies and operations would be needed.

An Independent Broadcasting Authority

The first step, taken in 1993, was the creation of an Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), a juridical body to formulate broadcasting policy, plan the use of the frequency spectrum, issue licences, adjudicate in the case of complaints, and in general regulate the broadcasting industry. It functions independently of the State and of governmental and political party influences. It is a non-profit entity that is financed partly by the State and partly from fees that it receives.

The IBA is run by a Council made up of seven people appointed by the State President. They are people with expertise in fields that include broadcasting policy, media law, marketing, journalism, entertainment and education. They are also selected on the basis of their commitment to fairness, freedom of expression, the right of the public to be informed, openness and accountability.

Overall Objectives of the Broadcasting Legislation

Among the main objectives of South Africa's broadcasting legislation are the following:

- Promote the provision of a diverse range of broadcasting services on a national, regional and local level which cater for all language and cultural groups and provide entertainment, education, and information;

- Promote the development of public, private, and community broadcasting services which are responsive to the needs of the public;

- Develop and protect a national and regional identity, culture, and character;

- Encourage ownership and control of broadcasting services by persons from historically disadvantaged groups;

- Ensure that private and community broadcasting licences are

controlled by persons or groups from a diverse range of communities in the Republic;

- Ensure equitable treatment of political parties by all broadcasting licencees during any election period;

- Ensure that broadcasting licencees adhere to a code of conduct acceptable to the IBA.

Categories of Radio Broadcasting

The legislation foresees three categories of radio service:

- **A public service** – A service provided by the South African Broadcasting Corporation, or by any other statutory body or person that receives revenue from licence fees paid by listeners for their receivers.

- **A private service** - Operated for profit and controlled by a person who is not a public broadcasting licencee.

- **A community service** - A broadcasting service which:

   * Is fully controlled by a non-profit entity and carried on for non- profitable purposes;

   * Serves a particular community;

* Encourages members of the community served by it, or persons associated with or promoting the interest of such community, to participate in the selection and provision of programmes to be broadcast.

* May be funded by donations, grants, sponsorship, advertising or membership fees, or by any combination of these.

The term 'community' includes a geographically founded community or any group of persons or sector of the public having a specific and ascertainable common interest.

South African Licencing Arrangements

In keeping with the general and community radio policies outlined above, the legislation provides detailed requirements that must be met by applicants for community radio licences. It also lays down the procedures to be followed. These are complex and demanding in terms of the detailed information that is called for. Community radio licences are awarded for four-year periods, although shorter, temporary licences can also be issued.

Licences are not granted to any party, movement, organization, body or alliance which is of a political nature.

Readers may wish to browse the IBA's website (http://iba.org.za) for more details on South African community radio policy, legislation, and licencing.

◄ ASIA AND INDIA'S LENGTHY DEBATE ON COMMUNITY RADIO

The situation in Asia is far less favourable than in Africa, and **India** provides a good illustration of the problems. Nepal and Sri Lanka show ways of solving problems.

All India Radio (AIR) was established as a state broadcasting monopoly in 1935 in line with the British model, the BBC. The debate about breaking that monopoly began more than 30 years ago with the Chanda Committee report. Subsequent committees have specifically recommended decentralizing broadcasting to institutionalize the process of participation and to meet people's fundamental right to information. The Supreme Court passed a landmark judgement in 1995 declaring that the airwaves were a 'public good' and stressing the importance of main-

Western Media Models: a Disservice to Development

"Broadcasting media have developed into a one-way model in Third World countries, with information, news, and massive doses of entertainment flowing from large urban centres... The uniform prescription designed by the affluent minority at decision-making level does not address the issues of development, which require a local perspective for each county and each community. The concepts and use of the media, as developed in industrialized societies have not proved conducive to the development needs of our country." [1]

taining a balance in broadcasting between market (commercial) forces, government monopoly, and meeting the people's needs and rights to receive and impart information. This judgement opened the door to the granting of licences to local stations for public participation and territorial/sectoral broadcasts, but the legislation necessary to allow this to happen has still not been passed. It seems, however, that it is under preparation at the time of writing.

The main results so far of the decades of debate on the subject has been some decentralization by AIR to 'local' stations, and a recent and rapid expansion of commercial stations using FM frequencies belonging to AIR that have been leased to private operators. Some of the AIR 'local' stations try to get closer to the community and use community radio styles. But for the most part, these 'local' stations merely relay urban-oriented programmes from the national or from regional capitals, rather than producing locally relevant materials.

Commercial broadcasting is only allowed to provide entertainment. News and current affairs, and even sex education, are banned. Thus, the private FM stations, which have been expanding in response to mar-

ket forces, have created a profile as 'electronic discos' for urban youth. [1]

A consultation session attended by more than 60 broadcasters, legal specialists, university staff, and development communicators met in Bangalore, India, in September 1996 and signed the *Bangalore Declaration* urging the government to take steps to legitimatize and promote community radio. So pressure has been building, and there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel.

In **Nepal**, the Government-owned radio service was the only one broadcasting until May 1997, when Radio Sagarmatha came on air. (See Case Study 2.) Present government policy on broadcasting, which goes back to legislation passed in 1993, favours a mix of government, commercial, and community broadcasting, but even so, it took from 1994 to 1997 before the first community radio licence was awarded to Radio Sagarmatha. Its success has been such that community radio is now set to expand in the country.

In **Sri Lanka**, another country with a government-owned broadcasting service, it was this service itself that began community broadcasting in 1983 with Mahaweli Radio, as described in Chapter 1. It later expanded community radio to

cover other parts of Sri Lanka, mainly in support of rural development. However, in mid-1997, a Supreme Court ruling put an end to the government monopoly of the airwaves, and a parliamentary committee was established to prepare a new broadcasting bill. This will certainly recognize and promote community radio, for it is a branch of broadcasting that has become well entrenched in Sri Lanka, based on the long experience of Mahaweli Community Radio.

In Asian countries that have essentially followed the North American pattern of commercial broadcasting, such as the **Philippines**, community radio stations often function without licences.

◀ *LEGISLATION IN SOME LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES*

Despite Latin America's pioneering role in community radio, today's legislation leaves much to be desired. There are about 6,000 registered radio stations on the Continent. About 85 per cent of these are private/commercial, about 7 percent are governmental, and the remainder are in the hands of the Church. Some of the latter consider them-

selves to be community radios. In addition, there are very large numbers of unregistered stations that have been in existence for years, many of them community radios, which are in formal sense illegal.

It was only in the mid-1990s that some Latin American countries began to pass legislation on community radio, and that legislation is often unfavourable.

For example, **Brazil's** very recent legislation limits the power of community stations to five watts, seldom enough to cover a typical poor peri-urban settlement of 10-20,000 people. It also makes community radio impossible in scattered rural communities, of which there are many in Brazil's vast interior. Nor is any advertising permitted, which makes sustaining a community radio even more difficult than it is usually.

In **Ecuador**, community radio was not legally acknowledged until 1996. Most community radios are licenced as commercial or cultural stations. The law in 1996 finally recognized community radio as a distinct part of the broadcasting scene, but the legislation imposed restrictions on the power of transmitters that could be used - 500 watts at the antenna - and prior approval from the army was

required. Any commercial activity was prohibited, as in Brazil.

The national organization representing community radio in Ecuador brought a constitutional challenge to the law and managed to remove the clause requiring the prior approval of the army, but the limits on transmitter power and commercial activities remain in force. As late as early 1999, there were still no community radio stations operating under the new legislation; they all had commercial or cultural licences.

After its leadership role in community radio, there is now a paradoxical situation in **Bolivia**. In 1995, a law was passed under which licences would be granted in future only to radio and television stations of a commercial nature that were public or private limited companies in accordance with the country's commercial code. Among the more than 500 radio stations in Bolivia, there are a number of well-established educational radio services that will be allowed to continue operating for 20 years under the new law, but scores of community and peasant radios became illegal in 1996. If closed down, their frequencies are sold to the highest bidder.

The contradictory aspect of all of this is that it occurred shortly after the passing of another law, that on

Popular Participation. This, in effect, is part of a decentralization process which delegates decisions to the local level and provides funds to implement them. Community radio could evidently have enormous potential for assisting the decentralization process by arousing interest and participation in local policy and development decisions. However, this will not be possible under the new legislation, which discriminates against community radio.

In **Argentina**, a situation somewhat similar to that in Bolivia exists. *De facto*, there have been numerous community, popular, cultural, and university radios stations in existence for many years. But in 1998, a government decree on broadcasting frequencies was issued and a National Frequency Plan approved. An article in the decree stipulated the immediate closure of radio stations that were not officially recognized. Furthermore, the National Frequency Plan did not take into account the frequencies already being used by many small

Radio Sagarmatha in Kathmandu, Nepal led a five year legal battle to obtain its authorisation to broadcast. It began in 1990 with a communication policy 'white paper' wich eventually led in 1994 to a new broadcasting act which opened the airwaves to non-governmental organisations or private individuals and organisations for the purposes of education and culture.

radios that had been working for years throughout the country.

Most serious of all, however, was the fact that the overall broadcasting legislation, the context for frequency applications, remained unchanged; and this is legislation that goes back to the days of the dictatorships that used to rule the country. The legislation excludes any form of social organization from having a broadcasting frequency, and specifies that only commercial organizations can apply for them.

In 1996, a decree modified that older legislation, for it was recognized as unconstitutional and discriminatory. But this corrective decree of 1996 was cancelled within days of its publication. Thus, by default, the old legislation from the days of the dictatorships was left in force.

This situation threatens the whole sector of community and popular radios in the country. At the time of writing, the community and not-for-profit broadcasting sector is fighting tooth and nail for new legislation that recognizes its right to exist and its role in democratic society.

◀ *SOME EXAMPLES FROM WESTERN EUROPE*

For the purposes of comparison, the situation in Europe is worth examining. Western European countries were all models of national public-service broadcasting until some of them began to allow independent and commercial radio and television channels to operate in the 1960s. However, even then, governments applied regulations to the operations of those channels. Then, in the early 1980s, there was a general deregulation of broadcasting in most of Western Europe, which resulted in a free-for-all in many countries. Privately owned commercial radio expanded like wildfire, but so did community radio in many countries.

The Scandinavian countries, particularly **Sweden**, were among the last in Europe to bow to pressure from the commercial media, firm in their belief that their national public broadcasting systems were best for their societies - societies that are world famous for their democracy and strong civic sense. But even if it proved impossible to resist the commercialization and privatization of the electronic media in Scandinavia, the door was opened at the same time to a vast expansion of community radio.

There are more than 2,000 community radios in Sweden, the majority catering to special-interest communities.

In **Denmark**, the 300 or so community radios provide access to 96 percent of the population. Many of these community radios, even if they have been allowed to broadcast commercials and receive sponsorship since the late 1980s, work in financially difficult circumstances. Most also receive support from various sources such as membership fees, bingo, listener donations, and contributions from organizations, such as trade unions, religious groups, or the local municipality. Community radio is seen as a cultural activity that is comparable with other cultural activities. It has even been suggested that a government fund be created to subsidize community radio like other cultural areas.

In **Ireland**, the 1988 Radio and Television Act included licencing procedures for community radio, but the Act did not go into any great detail on the subject. In the early 1990s, the issue of broadcasting policy attracted much attention, and in 1995, a Government Policy Paper on Broadcasting was published.

As part of the general concern about achieving suitable broadcasting policies for Ireland, the Independent Radio and Television Commission launched an 18-month community radio pilot project. It began operating in 1995, and it was designed to explore and evaluate the potential of community radio in the country. An important element favouring the project was the surge in community and voluntary activity in Ireland that had resulted from increasing national and international concern about issues such as poverty and unemployment.

Eleven community stations were established under the project to operate until the end of 1996. This experience showed that community radio stations could develop into a viable and distinct strand in Irish broadcasting. Certain difficulties were encountered during the project, and realizing the potential of community radio will call for a substantial level of ongoing commitment from support agencies and from the communities served. However, there can be little doubt that community radio will develop and assume its appropriate role in the Irish broadcasting scene in the future. [4]

◀ *CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE IN LEGISLATION*

National community radio legislation, where it exists, usually shares some common factors, but there are also significant differences between countries.

Main Common Factors

- Community radio must be owned and controlled by a non-profit entity.

- It must be run as a non-profit operation.

- It must serve the interests of a particular community, which may be a geographical community or a community of people with common interests.

- It should provide programming that promotes socio-economic and cultural development for the different sectors in the community, at the same time fostering civic integration and solidarity.

Factors that Vary in Community Radio Legislation

Power of the Transmitter: Some countries place an upper limit on the power of the transmitter that may be used by a community radio, usually in the range of five to 500 watts. Such limitations could be unrealistic in mountainous areas, where transmission over difficult terrain can require higher power.

Creation of Networks: Some countries specifically forbid the creation of networks between community radios, even if they allow occasional link-ups for special events of interest to the communities involved.

Advertising and/or Sponsorship: Regulations about this vary considerably. Some countries forbid all commercial advertising on or sponsorship of community radios, while others allow it but put a limit on the minutes in an hour that can be devoted to it. This usually ranges from six minutes to up to 15 minutes per hour.

In some cases there are restrictions on the type of advertising that may be broadcast. When this is case, the usual tendency is to limit the scope to matters directly linked to the community served by the radio, for example, local work opportunities, events that are to take place, and business and services that are carried out in that area. Even when legislation does not specify such restrictions about

the type of advertising, some community radios impose it themselves. They may, for example, refuse to advertise items that are damaging to health, such as alcohol and tobacco.

Some legislation specifies a ceiling on the proportion of total station revenue that can be derived from advertising, usually setting it at 50 percent.

Other Sources of Funding: Membership fees from listeners, contributions from individuals, organizations, or local authorities, and charges for personal announcements are other sources of funding, but in keeping with the Charter of the World Association of Community Radio (AMARC), some legislation specifies that no single source should provide more than 50 percent of a station's revenue. Funding from political parties or from other special interest groups is forbidden in some legislation.

Political Broadcasts: These are forbidden at all times in some legislation, while in others they are allowed in designated pre-election periods. When they are allowed, the principle of 'equal time and equal opportunity' for all parties is usually stipulated. In some cases, community radios have to report

to the nation's independent broadcasting authority any political speech that lasts for more than three minutes, providing the actual duration, date and time of broadcast, and the name of the political party concerned.

◀ APPLYING FOR A LICENCE

Anyone, anywhere, who has serious intentions of starting a community radio should ascertain what existing legislation is in force, beginning with licence requirements. Some countries apply quite severe sanctions to punish illegal broadcasters; heavy fines and/or confiscation of the equipment are the commonest.

The procedures for applying for a licence vary between countries, but in any event, entities that apply will usually be expected to provide information about the following, with supporting documentation as appropriate:

- The juridical and non-profit status of the entity making the application;

- The probity of the individuals managing the entity;

- The community to be served and the size of the potential audience;

- An explanation of how the community could benefit from a radio service;

- The demand in the community for such a service;

- The technical features of the proposed radio station and the height and location of its antenna;

- The community management structures and the personnel that will be put in place to run the service;

- The type of programming that will be featured, the production arrangements foreseen, and how community participation will be ensured.

Some countries that have recently introduced legislation that covers community radio have drawn up lists of available FM frequencies in each of the smallest administrative areas of the country, such as municipalities, or counties. In some countries, especially in Latin America, periodic announcements of the frequencies that are available for community radio are made by the broadcasting authorities and requests for their use are solicited. If there is an excess of requests for the available frequencies, the winners are adjudicated on the basis of the quality of their proposals, the experience of the applicant in

community development work, the radio programming planned, and the size of the community.

Licensees normally pay a one-off fee for the frequency they are allocated and a much smaller annual fee thereafter. For example, in Colombia, which introduced its community broadcasting legislation in 1995, the typical one-off fee for the frequency ranges from the equivalent of about US$900 to US$2,000 depending on the size of the potential audience. The annual fee averages about US$150.

1 Report of *Consultation on Media Policy and Community Radio* organized by VOICES (Bangalore, India, 1996).

2 *Ibid* .(Intervention by Hasmukh Baradi).

3 From statement issued by the not-for-profit broadcasting sector in Argentina demanding new legislation (1999).

4 Independent Radio and Television Commission. *IRTC Policy on Community Radio Broadcasting*, IRTC (Dublin, 1998).

5 Personal communication from Alida Becerra, Director of the Social Development Department, Ministry of Communications (Colombia, 1999).

Chapter 4
Technical Aspects

This chapter opens with a brief explanation of the scientific principles underlying radio broadcasting, including the differences between AM and FM propagation. It then describes the range of equipment required for FM broadcasting under four categories: transmitters, antennas, studio programme production equipment, and field programme production equipment. It explains the role of each. The practical implications of the 'line-of-sight' characteristics of FM broadcasting are discussed.

A section covers issues of reliability, maintenance and precautions to reduce the risk of damage.

The requirements for a community radio studio (size, layout, soundproofing, acoustical balance, etc.), and suitable spatial arrangements for the various components of the radio station are described.

A section on future possibilities discusses the role of computers in programme production, merging community radio with the Internet, and new technologies.

A box provides a basic list of equipment required for a community radio service and its cost.

In the main, the reader will:

- Learn about the basic technicalities of broadcasting, and the equipment needed for an FM service;

- Be able to make an initial assessment of the technical suitability of a specific area for setting up a community radio service;

- Know about the technical requirements for the siting of the components of the broadcasting system, and be able to consider how best to meet them in given circumstances;

- Know the approximate investment required for equipment.

Nevertheless, the knowledge gained will not necessarily eliminate the need for early advice from a technical specialist, nor hands-on or formal training.

◀ TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

Radio broadcasting creates electro-magnetic waves that travel in an approximately straight line and at the speed of light, about 300,000 km per second.

A radio wave that is being propagated oscillates each side of the straight line. How far these oscillations go before returning to the centre line and moving out to the other side of it is known as the amplitude of the wave. The distance from the crest of one wave to the crest of the next is known as the wavelength.

How long the cycle of each oscillation takes is known as the frequency. It is expressed in Hertz, named after Heinrich Hertz, a German radio pioneer. A cycle time of one second is one Hertz (1Hz); a thousand cycles in a second is a kiloHertz (kHz), and a million cycles in a second is a megaHertz (mHz).

Radio waves are propagated from the transmitter's antenna system like the ripples in a pond when a stone is dropped into it. Waves from a broadcasting station are known as carrier waves because they are carrying information

wavelength

amplitude

Frequency modulation (FM)

Amplitude modulation (AM)

that has been attached to them. The process of attaching information to the wave is achieved by modulating, or varying, one of its characteristics, either its amplitude or its frequency. Hence the terms Amplitude Modulation (AM) and Frequency Modulation (FM) for the two methods of wave transmission.

Radio broadcasting uses four frequency bands. Their names derive from whether their wavelengths are measured in kilometres, hundreds of metres, tens of metres, or metres.

- The kilometric band – long waves (Frequency 150-280 kHz);
- The hectometric band – medium waves (Frequency 525-1,600 kHz);
- The decametric band – short waves. (High Frequency 6-25 MHz);
- The metric band (Very High Frequency 87.5 – 108 MHz).

AM Broadcasting

For the first three bands, the signal is attached to the wave by amplitude modification (AM). AM signals travel great distances. For example, long waves can be propagated for up to about 1,000 km before fading out, and medium waves travel several hundred kilometres.

Short waves, even if limited by the curvature of the earth, can travel enormous distances because they bounce off the ionosphere, an invisible layer of electrically charged particles at the outer edge of our atmosphere, from where they return to earth, far from the transmitter.

The main layer of the ionosphere responsible for long distance communications is the "F layer". After dark, this layer is a single dense one about 250 km above the earth, and it reflects short wave signals very effectively. But during the day, the "F layer" splits into two thin layers, "F1", about 200 km above the earth, and "F2", about 350 km above the earth. These two layers are less effective in reflecting radio signals, and that is why reception of short wave broadcasts is better after dark. Worldwide radio services like Radio France Internationale, the British Broadcasting Corporation, or the Voice of America use short wave to obtain the geographic coverage they require. It can also be particularly useful in mountainous countries.

AM broadcasting is subject to much atmospheric interference and distortion, and it is therefore unsuitable for stereo services. It

also requires a considerable input of electrical power and other investments. For example, the whole mast of the antenna of an AM medium wave station is charged with current, and therefore it has to be insulated from the ground.

FM Broadcasting

The fourth frequency band, the metric band, uses Frequency Modulation (FM) to attach the signal to the carrier wave. This system varies the frequency - speed of oscillations of the waves - but keeps their amplitude or breadth constant.

FM was invented in 1933 in the USA, and the first station to use it was built in 1939. It has advantages over AM, especially in its freedom from distortion and interference. It required different broadcasting transmitters and radio receivers to the ones in general use in the 1930s and 1940s, and so it was slow to expand. Indeed, it really only began to take off in the 1950s and 1960s in industrialized countries, and in the 1970s and 1980s in developing countries – and even as late as the 1990s in some of these.

FM broadcasting requires much less electrical power than AM and uses a very simple antenna. The

A low power FM transmitter.

quality of the signal is excellent, and it can be mono or stereo.

However, FM signals reach much shorter distances than AM signals because FM follows the line of sight. In other words, the antenna and the radio receiver must be able to 'see' each other, with no obstructions in the path - such as hills or high buildings - which interrupt the signal in the same way as they interrupt sight. But even with the transmitter and receiver in line of sight, the distance between them is important because with radio signals each time the distance is doubled the signal strength is reduced to a quarter of what it was. Put another way, in order to reach twice the distance, four times the power is needed.

◀ BROADCASTING EQUIPMENT [1]

In general terms, the equipment required for broadcasting falls into four categories:

- The transmitter that generates the signal to be broadcast;
- The antenna through which the transmitter's signal is radiated;
- The studio equipment used to produce the programmes;
- The equipment required for programme production in the field and for linking outside locations to the studio, e.g. for field reporting.

A complete list of equipment, with costs, for a typical UNESCO-supported community radio project is provided in Box 4 at the end of this chapter. Reading the following section in conjunction with that equipment list and with diagrams should provide an appreciation of the role and function of each part of the system.

Transmission Equipment

The power output of a transmitter is measured in watts. Community radio relies mainly on low-power FM transmitters with, typically, an output of between 20 and 500 watts, usually in the range of 20-100 watts. However, a distinction must be made between the power of the transmitter itself and the power that actually leaves the antenna, which is known as the Effective Radiated Power (ERP). The design of the antenna affects the ERP. So-called 'high-gain' antennas can result in considerably more watts of ERP than the output watts of the transmitter itself.

The Inventor of Frequency Modulation

Edwin Armstrong, an American scientist responsible for much of the earliest technical development of radio broadcasting in the first two decades of the 20th century, made the FM breakthrough in 1933. Born in 1890, he was enthused as a boy by the exploits of Guglielmo Marconi, who in 1901 had managed to send the first radio signal across the Atlantic. At the age of 14, Armstrong decided to become an inventor.

In 1939 he financed the first ever FM station from his own pocket, at a cost of $300,000, to prove its worth. Sadly, Armstrong was forced to spend much of his life in litigation to protect his inventions, and in fighting the established radio industry which did not want to embark on his new FM system. Finally, in 1954, with most of his wealth gone in the battle for FM, he took his own life.

The four radio frequency

Frequency modulation	Amplitude modulation

Metric waves — Decametric band (short waves) — Hectometric band (medium waves) — Kilometric band (long waves)

100 MHz — 87,5 MHz — 25 MHz — 6 MHz — 1600 kHz — 525 kHz — 280 kHz — 150 kHz

Several companies around the world now produce cheap FM transmitters for community radio using frequencies between 87.5 and 108 mHz, the usual band for FM broadcasting. They range in price from a little over US$ 500 to some $ 2,000, and they are about the size of a thick paperback novel. Not all of the models available, especially those from the US, are built with the possible harsh conditions of developing countries in mind.

The technology of FM transmitters is now so simple and well known that it is not beyond the capacity of competent engineers in developing countries to build them. Using locally available materials, the DANIDA/UNESCO Tambuli community radio project in the Philippines locally produced its first transmitter and successfully put it to work in 1998, though most of Tambuli's stations still use British or Chinese transmitters. The experience of Cape Verde, where local technicians built their own transmitters, was mentioned in the Introduction.

Low-power transmitters may also have an amplifier or booster attached to them to increase their power output. Many of the UNESCO-supported community radios have 20-watt transmitters with a 100-watt booster. This transmission equipment, especially the booster, generates considerable heat, and so it is always accompanied by a cooling fan, and it needs to be installed in a well-ventilated place.

Nearly all FM transmitters built for community radio require a 12-volt DC power supply. Thus, they can be run either off an electrical main source with a transformer that converts this into a 12-volt DC output, or a vehicle battery or solar panels.

It is important to keep the audio signal from an FM transmitter at the right level. If the signal is over modulated, distortion will result and possible interference with nearby stations. A device called a limiter/compressor is therefore included in the audio chain to keep the signal at its pre-set level.

In a few cases, community radios use AM broadcasting. Setting up and running costs are generally much higher than they are for FM. However, the ability of AM to extend over a wider broadcast area, even if one of lower sound quality, may make it desirable in certain circumstances. In some cases, particularly in large towns where the competition for FM frequencies is very high, obtaining one at reasonable cost may be impossible, and therefore some community radios have found it easier to rent or buy an existing AM frequency. This will probably have a commercial licence, but the community radio management can lay down its own policy in respect of advertising.

The Antenna

The height, position and adjustment of the antenna play a primordial role in achieving high quality and the furthest possible reach of an FM broadcast signal. This is because, as already noted, FM signals travel in a more or less straight line and follow the line of sight. The antenna that propagates the signal must therefore be as high as possible, and there should be few obstructions that will block the signal. The higher the antenna is, the further its signal will reach around the natural curvature of the earth.

FM Problems in Hilly Areas: FM has limitations in hilly areas because even if the antenna is placed on top of a peak, there may be areas of signal shadow in the valleys. The only solution for using FM in hilly areas may be to install one or more relay transmitters to cover the areas in shadow.

The height of the antenna will depend on the terrain and, on any obstacles that the signal must pass. However, it is usually at least 20-30 metres above the ground, even in flat terrain. The antenna may be placed on a building or hilltop to gain the necessary height, or a mast may be constructed for it.

Constructing the Mast: Antenna masts can be built locally using steel uprights and lathes to create a lattice construction. However, a simpler and cheaper version can be built using galvanized steel water pipes. Steps are welded to them so that the broadcasting antenna itself, fitted high on the mast, can be reached for adjustments and repairs.

Both types of mast must be firmly anchored in a concrete block in the ground, and they must be held vertical by guy wires, also anchored in concrete.

The Two Categories of Antenna: There are two broad categories of antenna: *omnidirectional*, which as its name implies radiates the signal in all directions, through 360 degrees around itself; and *directional*, which radiates the signal towards one segment of the circle around it. Almost all community radio stations use an omnidirectional antenna, but there are

Typical Antenna Mast Made from Water Pipes

situations where a directional antenna is better. One example is where an antenna is placed on the side of a mountain overlooking the community to be reached. A directional antenna beaming the signal only over the community would give added power compared to using an omnidirectional antenna that wasted part of its signal against the mountainside behind it.

Antenna Design, Manufacture, and Tuning: FM antennas come in a variety of designs, and the choice and tuning of the antenna to get the best signal is the work of a specialist. Antennas can be bought ready made, but for most community radios they are fabricated on the spot by a metal worker, using materials that can usually be bought in a local hardware shop, such as copper piping

and aluminium or PVC piping, all held together by hose-clamps and solder.

Fine-tuning of the antenna to get the best signal is done with an instrument called a power metre which measures the Standing Wave Ratio (SWR) . It costs less than US$ 100. This costs less than US$ 1,00. It is connected between the transmitter and the antenna to

measure the ratio between the power coming from the transmitter and the power being reflected back from the antenna. If a lot of power is being reflected back by the antenna, it is not properly tuned and broadcast power is being lost. The specialist adjusts the length and position of the moveable radiating elements on the antenna until the SWR meter shows that there is little, or almost no power being reflected back from the antenna. Many modern transmitters incorporate an SWR power metre.

Studio Equipment

Recording and Playback: Most of the equipment used in a radio studio would be familiar to any one who had ever used home musical equipment. It consists in the main of cassette recorders/players and other tape recorders, record turntables, and compact disc players. However, the quality of this equipment in a radio studio is higher than that of the common range of home equipment. This is because, firstly, high-quality sound is needed so that, even after the inevitable degradation of the sound between the studio and the listener's ear, the quality will still be of an acceptable level. Secondly,

studio equipment must withstand much heavier and more constant use than its equivalent in the home.

Some small community radios in industrialized countries prefer to buy cheap consumer electronic items, such as CD players, and simply replace them when they wear out. This is seldom a suitable approach in developing countries, where it is usually easier to obtain funding for initial costs than it is for recurrent costs. Furthermore, such cheap consumer electronic items may be less available here than they are in industrialized countries.

Control Console/Mixer: The main unfamiliar item to most people entering a radio studio for the first time is the control console and mixer unit. This allows the programme producer or his technician to select the sound sources wanted during the programme, for example a cassette or compact disk player, or one or more of the microphones in the studio. It also allows him to raise and lower the volume of each source gradually, and to superimpose one or more over another, as in the case of a voice with background music or sound effects. This is called 'mixing' the sound channels. The console/mixer has sockets for headphones through which the producer

can listen to the various channels he has available or to the final mixed version for broadcast. An output line from the console/mixer goes to the transmitter.

All the studio equipment is powered from a local electricity source, which should pass through an automatic voltage regulator. This reduces power fluctuations that change the speed of voices or music

Programme Production and News Gathering/Editing in the Field

Remote Microphone Mixer: In the simplest operations in the field, a single tape recorder can be used to gather material, or a microphone can be connected by a long line to the studio console for nearby outside coverage. But any more elaborate programme production outside the studio, when several microphones and sound inputs are required, needs a remote microphone mixer, sometimes also known as an auxiliary microphone mixer. This functions in much the same way as the studio mixer but it is smaller and usually runs off batteries. In the field, it is used to select and/or mix the various sound inputs required for the programme that is being recorded.

Linking Reporters and Others to the Studio: A second aspect of outside broadcasting is linking the field reporter to the studio for lively and interesting eyewitness reports on events and for news in outlying parts of the community.

In industrialized countries and in major towns in developing countries, the telephone is the most common way of making this link. All that is required is a device called a telephone adaptor to patch the incoming phone call into the studio console from where it can be broadcast or recorded for later use.

However, in rural areas of the developing world, where telephones are scarce, other means must be used to connect an outside reporter to the studio. Very High Frequency (VHF) or Ultra High Frequency (UHF) transceivers ('walkie-talkies') are one method. Some countries set aside certain frequencies in the 200 mHz range - where the quality of the sound is good - especially for connections between outside reporters and their studios. This requires a base station in the studio and handsets for the reporters in the field.

Cellular mobile phones for outside reporters are another solution when there are no fixed telephone lines.

Telephone Call-Ins: Some community radios, especially in towns where telephones are available, install a special telephone mixer system which allows them to receive multiple and simultaneous calls, put them on hold in the order in which the calls came in, and then pass them in turn to the console mixer to go on air at the command of the programme producer. This system, which of course can also be used by outside reporters phoning in, is relatively expensive and may not be justifiable in a typical rural area of a developing country. In some developing countries, local technicians have designed their own telephone patch system. The cheapest way of putting a telephone call on air is to have a telephone with a speaker in the studio and put a microphone next to it, but the quality of the resulting signal is not very good.

◄ *RELIABILITY AND MAINTENANCE*

Most of the equipment outlined above is inherently robust and reliable and is generally quite simple to maintain by someone with appropriate knowledge and training. However, certain simple precautions need to be taken to prevent accidental damage.

Block Diagram of Studio Equipment

MIC # 1
MIC # 2
TURNTABLE
AUDIO CASSETTE DECK # 1
AUDIO CASSETTE DECK # 2
AUDIO MIXER
LINE OUTPUT
MON.OUT
HEADPHONE
AUDIO AMPLIFIER
IN — 20 WATT FM XTR — OUT
IN — 100 WATT POWER AMP. — OUT
12 VDC 5 AMPS
12 VDC 20 AMPS
SPEAKER
SPEAKER
TO EQUIPMENT
OUTPUT
AUTOMATIC VOLTAGE REGULATOR
INPUT
LOCAL POWER SOURCE

Precautions against Lightning: Experience has shown that lightning striking the antenna during thunderstorms is a common cause of damage to transmitters. It is therefore vital to weld a lightning conductor to the top of the antenna mast. And if the antenna is fixed on a roof, an earthing wire of braided copper should be welded to it, run down the side of the building, and fixed to an iron bar driven deep enough into the ground to find moist soil.

Handling Precautions: Other precautions concern handling of the equipment. Any radio transmitter that is switched on without being connected to its antenna or to an equivalent load will be permanently damaged. Thus, when a transmitter has been disconnected from the antenna, say for testing or repair, a dummy load of the same resistance as the antenna must be attached to it. Load resistors, as they are called, can be purchased ready-made and come with a variety of resistances, or they can be rigged up by using a normal electrical light bulb of the appropriate watts.

Another handling issue of obvious importance is always to take particular care to respect the polarity - the positive and negative terminals - when connecting equipment. A mistake here can burn it out.

In Kothmale, Sri Lanka, the national government provided land, tower and antennas. These made it possible to set up microwave transception, telephone, twenty-four hour link to Internet and FM transmission.

Photo: M. Senanayaka

A commercialy available load resistor.

Typical studio layout

◄ *STUDIO PREMISES*

Size: A simple radio studio can be set up in any existing house or room having a minimum of nine sq.m. available. This is needed to install the equipment and to give space for the operators to use it. However, it is much more practical to aim for premises of at least 25 sq.m., with 50 sq.m. or more as the ideal.

The minimum practical size for an announcer's booth is about 12 sq.m. If one can count on a total of some 50 sq.m., about half of this can be devoted to the announcer's booth which will then be big enough for roundtable discussions, small groups of performing musicians, and the like. The remaining floor space in the building can be taken up by a technician's cubicle, and receiving and working areas.

Announcer's Booth and Technicians Cubicle: The announcer's booth is often separated from the technician's cubicle by a window with carefully fitted double glass panes to prevent outside noise reaching the microphones in the booth. This arrangement means that the announcer only has to worry about the microphone in front of him or her, while the technician works the console and the sound channels, such as tape recorders and record players.

However, not all community radios separate the announcer's booth from the technician, and sometimes the announcer likes to do his/her own production, handling the equipment and talking into the microphone as a 'one-person show'. So there can be flexibility in designing the studio layout.

Soundproofing and Acoustical Balance: The announcer's booth must be soundproof because the microphones in it will pick up any external noise that reaches them. Partitions made of light board, such as plywood, usually need to be doubled, with a space in between that can be filled with sound-deadening material, and spaces around doors need to be sealed with rubber strips.

The acoustical balance in the announcer's booth must be carefully adjusted. Sound bounces and reverberates off hard walls and produces an echo or 'cathedral effect' when picked up by the microphone. To avoid this, parts of the walls should be covered with soft materials. While acoustic tiles are available commercially for this purpose, the same effects can be achieved with simpler and cheaper materials such as egg trays, curtains, mats or cardboard. However, if too much of the wall space is covered with these sound-absorbing materials, the lack of resonance will make all programmes sound as if they are coming from an open field.

Air Conditioning: If air conditioning is to be installed, it should be of the silent, split type, with the compressor in a place apart from the recording studio and where its hum will not be picked up by the microphones in the announcer's booth. Cold air should be blown into the announcer's booth through a duct, and a silent extractor fan should also be fitted in the booth.

◄ *SPATIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPONENTS OF THE RADIO STATION*

The transmitter is connected to the antenna by a coaxial cable. This cable absorbs a considerable amount of the power coming from the transmitter, and therefore the length of the cable should be as short as possible. With the relatively cheap types of coaxial cable normally used for community radio, the distance between the transmitter and its antenna should not exceed about 30 metres.

Ideally, the transmitter and studio will be in the same building, with the antenna close to it or on the roof. However, the transmitter is best put in a room separate from the studio equipment because if it is too close, radio frequency emissions from the transmitter can affect the studio equipment and cause noise and hum.

There will be occasions, however, when the site chosen for the antenna will be unsuitable for the studio because of height considerations, it is possible in the circumstances to place the antenna on a hilltop with the transmitter next to it and have the studio some distance away in a more favourable location. All that is required is a power line up to the transmitter, and a second line that carries the output from the studio to the transmitter. This programme line, as it is called, should not be longer than 1,000 metres. The ideal material for this line is telephone cable which is designed to carry voice communication and to resist exposure to weather. But even household electrical wire can be used, though this is not designed for outdoor use, and will need to be checked regularly.

◄ FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

A Studio in a Computer

Computers have long been used in radio studios for simple tasks, such as word processing of scripts and indexing and cataloguing recordings. Radio studios accumulate large numbers of recordings over time, and it becomes difficult to find specific items, say parts of past coverage of a certain subject

required for a new programme, if relying on human memory alone. Computerized index and catalogue on the other hand can provide a list and short description of all the material on that subject, with the numbers of the tapes and the location of each.

Computerized Programme Production: In recent years, digital technology has opened up new vistas for radio production. It is now possible to store all of the material for radio programmes - talks, music, sound effects, jingles, etc. - on the hard disk of a computer, whereas before these had to be stored on tape.

Computer software now exists that allows programme producers - as many as 15 at a time working at separate terminals simultaneously - to select the material they want from the hard disk and mix and edit it into a programme. With the completed programme recorded on its hard disk, the computer can then be instructed

to put the programme, or even a series of programmes, on air at predetermined times, without further intervention from studio staff.

This type of computerized production can replace the function of much of the equipment in a traditional studio, and it is certainly highly efficient for programme production. In practice, however, not all of the traditional equipment is likely to disappear in the near future; for example, audio equipment for recording material and transferring it to the hard disk of the computer later will certainly continue. And for outside programme production, the remote microphone mixer described earlier is cheap and convenient, even if final production in the studio is computerized.

In addition, it should be remembered that good community radio also relies on participation from the audience in live on-air sessions in the studio, rather than on

The Pastapur community in India built their own radio studio using locally fired clay bricks. The tower is a professionally fitted self-standing mast with an omni-directional antenna crafted under the guidance of a profesional broadcasting technician. Adjacent are five school rooms for 'learning without frontiers' also built from the same kind of bricks.

pre-recorded productions only. For live programmes in the studio, such traditional equipment is still the most practical.

Community Radio and the Internet

The Internet holds enormous potential for development, especially in rural areas. For example, information about health, agriculture, or

STUDIO BUILDING

POWER LINE

PROGRAM LINE

TRANSMISSION CABLE

TRANSMITTER HOUSE

Maximum Distance from the Studio to the Transmitter is 1000 M.

Bringing the Internet to Rural People in Sri Lanka

Kothmale is a constituency covering a cluster of rural communities with a total population of about 150,000. Its community radio station is the basis for an innovative experiment to use radio as an effective interface between local people and the Internet.

Each day, the radio station airs a programme called 'Radiobrowsing the Internet' during which community broadcasters discuss and interpret the information on selected Internet sites. The local language is used, making the information easily accessible to people who understand no English and would be unable to use the Internet directly.

Listeners can request information on specific topics. Of particular benefit is information on market trends, agriculture, life skills for poverty alleviation, formal and informal educational materials, health, and medicine.

This UNESCO/Government of Sri Lanka pilot project is also providing free Internet access through in an Internet Café and two terminals in community libraries for people who wish to browse in person.

In addition, the radio station is developing a community database of the information frequently requested by listeners. Much of this is in the local language and is particularly suited to local development interests and needs. This is important because packaged information on the Internet is seldom suitable.

the environment can be downloaded from it; it can be used to connect health workers, agricultural extensionists or ordinary villagers with technical experts to discuss some particular problem; and it can be used to put communities in contact with each other for on-line discussions and debates about issues that affect them, or about problems and their solutions.

The Village Trail and the Information Superhighway:

Unfortunately, in most developing countries up to now, Internet access and the valuable information it can provide have been available only to a relatively small and privileged minority. For example, in Africa less than 1.5 percent of the population had Internet access at the end of 1998. And nowhere are the rural poor a part of that privileged Internet-using minority. The problem can be summed up in the question: How can poor rural people living along the village trail be connected to the information superhighway?

Integrating community radio programming with the Internet is one way to reach out to villagers. If the radio station has a computer with Internet access, programme producers can call on an enormous spectrum of information on sub-

Kothmale 'radio browsing': the on-air announcer browses the Internet in English and simultaneously reports her findings in Singhala. She can also respond to questions in the studio or from live phone calls.

Photo: M. Senanayaka

jects of general concern to their audience, as well as being able to look for replies to specific queries raised by members of the community. Broadcasting such information can effectively bring the Internet into any home, even into those where the family could never aspire to having a telephone, without mentioning the computer to go with it.

The Internet and Programme Production:

The Internet can be very useful for programme production. A station can **obtain** a vast quantity and range of information from it. For example, material from major news agencies is available on the Internet, as is information from development agencies, non-governmental and governmental organizations, universities, and the like. In addition, more and more

audio programmes can be downloaded from the Internet for re-broadcast. The themes of these productions often cover issues of great importance to community radios, such as health, education, women's rights, and so on.

The Internet is also a forum for the **exchange** of programmes. Services such as OneWorld, GlobalRadioService and A-Infos allow producers to deposit programmes for other producers to pick up and broadcast and vice-versa.

A community radio may also want to **offer** information about itself to other Internet users. It can open a site on the World Wide Web to describe its organization, programming, staff, etc., in as much detail as it wants. [3]

UNESCO

Rural Multi-Purpose Telecentres

Speculation about the use of microchips and satellite communication as tools in rural development goes back to the early 1980s. One of the ideas that has been maturing since then is that of rural multipurpose telecentres, which have also been called 'rural information shops'.

The basic principle is to create a place where villagers can go for information - either free or for a fee - on agriculture, health, family planning, and other developmental or social topics. In its fullest and most logical form, a community radio station would form the nucleus for a rural telecentre, providing a variety of services.

This telecentre would, of course, have an Internet connection to provide the services outlined in the previous section related to accessing databanks and sources of expertise, and connecting communities to each other. In addition, it could offer other functions, such as public telephone and fax, as well as building libraries of videos, audio-visual materials, books and publications. In one of the forms proposed for India under a World Bank programme, the centres would sell records and cassettes, hire out videos and audio-visual equipment, and provide services such as desktop publishing and photocopying. These services would aim to help the centres become self-sufficient.

In Bangladesh, it is highly significant that the Grameen Bank, famous for its imaginative micro-credit programmes for the rural poor, especially women, started Grameen Telecom in 1996. This provides loans for women to buy cellular phones and set up a public service, and it also provides Internet connections in major cities. It plans to put telephone services into all of Bangladesh's 50,000 villages and also to expand its Internet-access services. This is a first step along the path towards rural multi-purpose telecentres. However, it is sad that broadcasting in Bangladesh is still a government monopoly, and there is no sign that community radio will be allowed to begin any time soon.

Digital Technology

Digital technology has steadily transformed the way in which programmes are made and distributed in recent years. Many broadcasters have already invested in digital systems for contribution and production. Now the switch from analogue to digital is moving along the broadcasting chain into transmission. At the same time, the digital developments are drawing together the broadcasting,

In Kothmale, Sri Lanka, Buddhist monks surf the net for religious texts at the Kothmale Community Radio on the Internet and on the air.

telecommunications and computer industries in a process of convergence. For all broadcasters, this is leading to a new and challenging business environment in which they are searching for a clear 'multimedia' role. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) is editing a publication on this subject.

◀ SPECIALIST ADVICE

This chapter has provided an overall guide to the technical aspects of setting up a community radio service. Nevertheless, anyone embarking on such a project should seek specialist advice on the technical aspects of the particular circumstances before going ahead with the investment. Such advice can usually be obtained from the technical staff in a nearby state or commercial radio station and it need not be costly.

1 Much of the material in these sections is based on *Community Radio Station - A Technical Manual* by staff of the UNESCO/DANIDA supported Tambuli Community Media Project, Philippines. That manual provides more technical detail than can be included in this more general handbook.

2 Martin Allard in a personal communication (1999).

3 Philippe Béchamp. *The ABCs of ICTs*. InteRadio, Vol.10/No. 2 (Montreal, December 1998).

4 Colin Fraser and Sonia Restrepo-Estrada. *Communicating for Development - Human Change for Survival*. 1B. Tauris (London/New York, 1998).

5 Laurie Hallett provided the following information on DAB in a personal communication (1999).

Photo: W. Jayaweera

BOX 4: *Basic Equipment for a UNESCO-supported Community Radio Station* (Prices in US Dollars)

Item	No.	Description	Unit price	Total
		TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT		
1.	2	FM Stereo Transmitters, 100 Watt		
		Note: one as a standby transmitter	800	1,600
2.	1	Wide-band Omni-directional Antenna (four layer with splitter, set for the allotted FM Frequency of the station)	1,200	1,200
3.	1	Heliax antenna cable (50 Meter) and connectors	550	550
4.	1	A1000 Two channel compressor and limiter	545	545
5.	1	Locally fabricated antenna mast and anchors	1,200	1,200
		Transmission equipment total US$		**5,095**

Item	No.	Description	Unit price	Total
		STUDIO AND FIELD EQUIPMENT		
6.	1	Professional Studio Console with built in telephone hybrid, 10+10 watt amplifier for studio monitors, stereo monitor output for cue, talkback microphone, VCA feeders with a total of 7 mono inputs/ 9 stereo inputs, 3 mono outputs/8 stereo outputs	2,000	2,000
7.	2	PMC Studio Monitor Speakers (Power ouput 150 watts)	515	1,030
8.	2	Dual Auto Reverse Cassette Deck	570	1,140
9.	1	CD Changer	900	900
10.	4	Headphones	100	400
11.	5	Dynamic Microphones with Windshields	390	1950
12.	2	Utility Mixer with XLR input	400	800
13.	3	Microphone stand with swinging arm	55	165
14.	2	Microphone desk stand (flexible)	115	230
15.	5	Portable cassette recorders with XLR mic inputs and carrying case	515	2575
16.	5	Dynamic Microphones for portable casette recorders	170	850
17.	2	Quartz Clock, Diameter 25 cm hours/mins/seconds	25	50
18.	40	XLRMF Canon connectors (20 Male and 20 Female)	10	400
19.	20	Phono connectors Male	3	60
20.	20	Phono connectors Female	3	60
21.	25	RCA connectors	1	25

Item	No.	Description	Unit price	Total
22.	1	MIC cable (100 m role)	2.60	260
23.	1	Audio cable (100 m role)	1.50	150
24.	4	Automatic voltage regulators	50	200
25.	1	Multi-tester + assorted repair equipment set	50	50
		Total Studio and Field Equipment US$		**13,295**

		COMMUNITY RADIO BASIC EQUIPMENT TOTAL US$		**18,390**

Additional Costs: Support to community fo building remuneration and studio fabrication - US$ 2,500;
(Consumables and costs for energy source not included:)

Item	No.	Description	Unit price	Total
		OPTIONAL (Computer based Audio and news processing)		
1	2	Digital Audio Computer Workstation PIII-700 with 20 GB HDD,CD-R Drive (SCSI), USB port, Speakers and a Sound Card (Sound Blaster) with Windows 98/2000	1,500	3,000
2.	2	USB Interface controller, with two XLR inputs, two balanced 1/4" TRS inputs, two unbalanced 1/4" inputs and S/PDIF I/O. Four channels of audio in and two out simultaneously via USB.	600	1,200
3.	1	Editing software package	400	400
4.	100	CD-R Media (CD re-writeble)	3	300
5.	1	Internet ready Computer withWindows 98 + MS-WORD	1,100	1,100
6.	1	Laser Printer	750	750
		Total Optional Computer Equipment US$		**6,750**

Chapter 5
Getting Started

This chapter sets out the various practical steps involved in setting up a community radio service, beginning with ascertaining the legislative context and conducting a proper consultation and analysis process in the community. A qualitative research method based on Focus Group Discussions is outlined for this process.

The value of drawing up a Mission Statement for the radio station is explained, and the involvement of religious authorities, local educational institutions, and politicians is discussed.

The technical and social criteria for choosing the site in the community for the studio and the transmitter and antenna are outlined. Alternative models, including loudspeaker systems, are described, as are the main factors governing the choice of power of the transmitter.

Later sections deal with ownership and management, staff, sustainability, and looking for outside funding. The issue of advertising, and its implications where permitted, are discussed in some detail.

Box 6 at the end of the Chapter provides a checklist of questions to which answers are required for the successful setting up of a community radio.

Reading this Chapter will enable the reader to:

- Obtain a good grasp of the various steps involved in setting up a community radio service;

- Appreciate the need for the careful consideration of social factors and relationships in the community, as well as for a full analysis and consultation in the community of its needs and expectations in respect of a community radio;

- Assume a leadership role or participate in ensuring that all of the necessary preparations are properly conducted and that informed decisions are taken by the community.

Proper research and planning are essential for starting a community radio service. The process should begin with the gathering of information from various sources, but in particular from the community itself.

A series of questions that need answers is provided in Box 6 at the end of the Chapter. The sections that follow here expand on those questions and are intended as guidance for in-country people, groups, or organizations that are planning a community radio.

◀ LEGAL CONTEXT

A first step for setting up a community radio is to find out what the national broadcasting legislation sets out for the licencing of independent radio stations. If there is no mention of non-profit community broadcasting, there may be other avenues to explore. For example, the provisions for commercial radio may also apply to a community service, and in some countries many community radios have commercial licenses. This should not, however, lead to a situation where profit is the main or sole motiva-

tion of the station. There may also be licences for cultural radio. In some cases, people simply proceed without a licence. However, care is needed because this can have penal consequences. (See Chapter 3 for this and for more information about applying for licences). Where community radio is still forbidden, there may be other options that do not involve radio transmission. (See the section below on models).

◀ *PREPARATORY WORK IN THE COMMUNITY*

Answering the questions laid out in Box 6 will call for much groundwork in the community. This groundwork consists of consultation processes within the community to analyze its situation, existing media access, how a community radio might usefully serve the interests of the community, in what ways, and so on.

Clearly, the leaders of the community - which include the elected and the religious authorities, as well the informal but also influential opinion leaders - must be part of the consultation process.

But equally, if not more important is a consultation process that involves the community at large. Group discussions with the various

Photo: M. Allard

Before doing the technical work of setting up radio in Western Nepal, it is essential to encourage the community to discuss their idea of radio and their aspirations in focus group discussions.

sectors in the community are essential. These could include, for example, farmers, fishermen, shop owners, teachers, artisans, etc. It is also crucial to consult women and youth, who are traditionally marginalized in many rural societies. Nor should any minority, cultural and linguistic groups be left out. People's attitudes towards the existing situation, towards the desirability and possibility of change and development, and towards the possible role of a community radio service must be ascertained and hopefully confirmed. This is the real basis of community radio: social will, not technical equipment.

Experience has shown that in some

cases merely holding participatory workshops to discuss the situation of the community and explore ways of improving access to basic services may lead spontaneously to the idea that better communication within the community could be a first prerequisite for change and development. A community radio may then emerge naturally as the most appropriate communication medium.

Preliminary Results: The initial consultation process should indicate:

• The level of enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the notion of having a community radio service;

- What its overall objectives should be, especially in terms of change and development;

- How in general terms it should operate.

If no broad consensus on these issues can be reached, the future of the idea may be compromised, or there could be a need for more and broader discussion.

As the consultation processes continue, answers to the more detailed issues laid out in Box 6 should be sought.

Contacts will also need to be made with people and institutions outside the community who could have a bearing on the project. These will include, among others, any state or commercial radio channels that also reach into the community, development institutions, NGOs concerned with community development, and local officials of government services in health, agriculture, education, and the like.

A Method for Conducting the Consultations

Among the most powerful methods for researching people's opinions and ideas are Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and this technique can be successfully used for the community consultations being described here. Originally used for market research, FGDs have more recently been applied with outstanding results in development work when qualitative information about people's opinions, perceptions, ideas, and aspirations is required. [2]

What is an FGD? An FGD brings together from six to 12 people who are homogeneous in terms of their education, life-style, and economic status, and who therefore share similar problems. They need to be homogeneous to reduce the chance that one or more persons of a level that the rest perceive as being superior dominate the discussion. There should not be less than six people in the group, or it will be difficult to get a dynamic discussion going and to gain a meaningful consensus; and there should not be more than twelve so that everyone will have a chance to speak, but also to avoid the formation of sub-groups and sub-discussions.

These community consultations could also include groups of, say, unemployed youths, or mothers with small children, or small farmers.

The Facilitator: The group discussion is run by a facilitator whose principal task is to get members of the group talking among themselves about the subject in question. This might, for example, be what types of radio programmes would be useful to help young mothers safeguard and improve their infants' health.

The facilitator adopts a low profile and a very informal stance so that the group feels relaxed. He/she also uses special techniques to encourage members of the group to talk among themselves and not to respond to him/her directly. The facilitator guides the discussions with prepared open-ended questions that begin with words such as, 'What do you think about...?' or 'How would you suggest that we...?' i.e. questions that cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

Stimulating In-depth Analysis: A further key function of the facilitator is to stimulate the group into deeper analysis of the issues being discussed. For example, he/she must never let a statement of opinion by a member of the group pass without probing it to find out

The participation of local institutions, whether government or nongovernment, contributes to making the station's programming relevant and dynamic.

what lies behind that statement. A group member might say something like, 'I really like that programme and I never miss it'. Or a group member might say the exact opposite, to the effect that he/she thoroughly disliked the programme. In either case, the facilitator should immediately say - but in a mild manner – something like, 'That's an interesting opinion. Tell us why you think that?' In fact, questions using 'Why?' are the key for provoking deeper analysis and reaching a fuller understanding of the issues at stake, as the group sees them.

The Observer: While the FGD is in progress, an observer is sitting

In Senegal, women are very active in disussing issues of the day;they make for a natural forum face-to-face or on the air.

On the Mission Statement

"The mission [statement] of a radio station defines its aims; it is the map that provides direction towards the achievements of its objectives; it is the instrument to measure its success; it is the foundation on which everything else is built; it is the star that guides us...

The entire programming must be based on the principles established by the mission." [3]

quietly taking notes of the main points that are being made. When the discussion is finished, it is a good idea for the observer to take over the proceedings and to read the main points back to the group. It is very important that he/she seeks their confirmation of each point in order to ensure that it has been correctly noted. This leads more easily to a broad consensus.

Effectiveness of FGDs: Especially with people of low educational status, FGDs are remarkably effective. The group feels at ease because they are talking with their peers and because the facilitator deliberately creates a totally informal atmosphere. Once the members of the group start discussing among themselves, they spark reactions, ideas, and opinions off each other in a way that provides true insights into what is in their minds and hearts. FGDs are generally far more effective for gaining these insights than are one-on-one interviews, for all too often the interviewee here will say what he or she thinks the interviewer wants to hear. At the other extreme, general and mixed group discussions can easily be dominated by a few people - not to mention that women and youth hardly ever speak out freely at such gatherings. The facilitator should be aware of this, guard against it, and encourage the less outspoken to air their feelings without embarrassing them.

Some FGDs with different sectors of the community, backed up with key informant interviews with opinion leaders, local authorities and the like, will normally provide the desired information with which to plan a community radio service. But whatever methods are used for the consultation within the community and with other interested parties, the process should never be rushed. Mistakes or misunderstandings that are not put right or clarified in the early stages may come back to haunt the community radio operation later on.

Furthermore, during the planning phases, and indeed at all stages, one must be very alert to the possibility that special interest groups might have hidden agendas that, in the end, could result in their highjacking the radio service for their own interests.

◀ *IMPORTANCE OF A MISSION STATEMENT*

It is important to begin drafting a short and concise **mission statement** about the objectives of the planned community radio service at an early stage. This provides a basis for discussion, and it can be modified and refined during the consultation phase.

Once a final version of the mission statement is agreed by the various stakeholders, this constitutes a basis for common understanding and a platform on which to build. This is not to say that the mission statement is carved in stone; it may need modification in the light of experience, but any changes should always be the result of a community consultation process.

What the station does once operating to adhere to its mission statement will depend largely on the individuals chosen to direct and manage it. There must be regular assessments, perhaps by a special committee within the community, of how the operations are fulfilling the station's mission.

ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT

Special consideration should be given to the role of the religious authorities in the community. In numerous communities, they have been crucial in helping to start and run a radio service. Their commitment to genuine community participation and to ensuring that the radio is run in the best interests of the people is often outstanding.

However, it should not necessarily be assumed that all religious authorities are free from influence peddling or political interests. So even if the religious establishment can often be of pivotal importance in starting and running a community radio service, detailed discussions are necessary to establish its position and its perceptions before automatically seeking a partnership with it.

ROLE OF LOCAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The staff of local schools may have a particular interest in community radio and help to get it started. For example, they may see it as a way of increasing the involvement of parents in the education of their children.

In addition, schoolteachers can play a major role as volunteer broadcasters. They often broadcast a daily programme to remind children about their homework and assist them with it. And in some communities, the operation of the radio station is handed over to schoolchildren once a week.

INVOLVEMENT OF POLITICIANS

There are varying points of view about the role of politicians in community radio, or whether they should have one at all. (See Box 5 for the opinion of an experienced community radio broadcaster.)

CHOOSING A LOCATION IN THE COMMUNITY

Technical and social considerations determine the appropriate location of the radio infrastructure in a community.

Technical Criteria

Position of the antenna and transmitter

- Given the line of sight characteristics of FM radio waves, the antenna should be as high as possible, on an elevated site or on a mast not less than 30 metres high, and not obstructed by tall buildings.

- The transmitter and antenna should not be close to high-tension power lines.

- There should be an available power source.

- The transmitter and antenna should be as close as possible to each other, and not more than 30 metres apart.

Position of the antenna and transmitter relative to the studio

- The studio may be up to 1,000 m. from the antenna and transmitter, but it must be connected to them by a cable – the programme line. Alternatively, the programme could be fed from the studio to the transmitter site via a small power link VHF transmitter.

Position of the studio

- The studio must have an available power source.

- It should be away from uncontrollable sources of noise.

Social Criteria

- The studio should be as close as possible to the centre of population.

- It should be in a site easily accessible to members of the community.

- It should have low or no rental charges.

- It should be in a site that is free of vested interests.

- It should be secure from vandals and pilferers.

BOX 5: *Involvement of Politicians in Community Radio*

"After 22 years as a broadcast journalist, I have a generally sceptical attitude towards politicians. Whenever I listen to a politician speaking, I try to figure out what is at the back of his mind, but often in vain.

The question in the project was whether we should deal with politicians or leave them out totally. After numerous discussions in our team as well as consultations with professional sociologists, the conclusion was that politicians needed to participate in operating the radio station. After all, politicians are inescapable elements of community life. They could be influential cogs in the development of the community.

The project cannot totally do away with politicians, even if the opportunist ones are quick to see the potential of a community-wide medium to get them votes and public admiration. Our approach is to place the politicians' role in logical perspective. If, for instance, partisan politicians agree to be involved in the Community Media Council, all the important political parties must be represented.

Certain politicians may publicly manifest a desire to keep their hands off the project, while some may volunteer resources and heavy personal involvement. However, even among those who ostentatiously adopt a hands-off policy, they could have lackeys in key positions in the station - perhaps either as a generous benefactor, an intellectual, or a domineering station manager. Thus, the extension of his personality and interests could creep into sensitive station decision-making.

Some politicians' pronouncements may indicate unconditional concern for the masses, and they may well include a candid pledge of non-interference in the station's affairs. However, few make good their promises. Some will ostensibly adhere to their public commitment, particularly when the project management makes its presence felt. But the shrewd politician may intervene surreptitiously.

Quite often, the saying, 'He who has honey in his mouth, has a sting in his tail' is confirmed. This may apply not only to the typical impassioned politician, but also to certain other eloquent members of the community.

However, I grant that these are general observations, and there are certainly exceptions to them.

The way programmers and broadcasters respond to political manoeuvres will be determined by their ethical foundation and training."

Louie Tabing, Manager of the UNESCO/DANIDA Tambuli Project, Philippines.

◀ *CHOOSING A MODEL*

Most community radios aspire to having their own broadcasting facilities and frequency, but this is not always possible due to the prevailing legislation or to a lack of economic resources. The alternatives, at least initially, are:

• To obtain airtime for community programmes from an existing government or commercial station that covers the area;

• Rent an existing frequency, but this solution is normally confined to urban areas;

• To install a 'community radio' system that uses loudspeakers connected to the studio and situated to cover the community, rather than broadcasting by a transmitter.

Whatever model is used, it is generally a good idea to start with only a limited number of hours a week of broadcasting and then to build up slowly. In this way, there will be time to plan and prepare the broadcasts properly. As experience is gained, and as the programme producers and other staff become accustomed to their roles, the hours of broadcasting can be expanded.

One good strategy for the start-up period is to broadcast at weekends only. This will make it easier to find volunteers who have weekend time available. However, the audience must be informed and reminded that the station will be on air only each weekend. This should be done through weekly publicity efforts using means such as a mobile loudspeaker, announcements by the religious establishment, posters, etc.

◄ POWER OF THE TRANSMITTER

A broadcast pattern that covers too wide a physical area complicates the operations of a community radio and may make it difficult to concentrate on the immediate community that is to be served. Given that community radio depends to a large extent on volunteer participation, a large target area may result in work loads that are difficult to maintain. 'Small is beautiful' in community radio too, and it is often better to have more small transmitters covering specific communities than one more powerful one that spreads its signal widely.

In rural areas, a 20-watt transmitter should normally provide suffi-cient power, but there may be justification for an amplifier to boost the output to 100 watts. In a city, where there is competition from other stations, transmitters may go up to 300-500 watts.

It is important to ensure that the broadcast pattern covers a community having between 5,000 and 25,000 potential listeners. To be successful, a community radio must be able to rely on various forms of support from its listeners: less than 5,000 may not provide the critical mass that will allow the radio to sustain itself; and much more than 25,000 means that the radio begins to become impersonal and difficult to manage, with a resultant loss in the community character of the service.

◄ OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

These are crucial issues that need careful thought. Even if the overall concept is that the community owns the radio, there usually needs to be some body, such as a foundation or association, which represents the community's interests and also provides the juridical entity to apply for the licence and to hold it. In some cases, it may be possible to plan for a community media cooperative. This could allow each member of the community to buy a share.

With regard to management, the concept of community radio is that the community itself should be in overall control. Obviously, however the whole community cannot be involved all the time, and therefore some sort of management body needs to be formed that represents the different sectors in the community. In many cases, a community media committee is created to assume the management role. Whatever the body is called, its members must realize that they are accountable to the community at large and to the particular sector they represent. Their decisions regarding the running of the station and its programming must be democratic and transparent.

◄ PROGRAMMING

Programming policies are covered in the next chapter. However, anyone planning a community radio should give early thought to programming issues, especially with regard to mechanisms that will ensure the maximum possible community access and participation.

Loudspeaker Systems

Community radios often begin by using loudspeakers, and some even remain with that system because of unfavourable legislation. Loudspeaker systems have two drawbacks: firstly the sound quality is not good, and secondly, people are compelled to listen whether they want to or not. This can produce tensions in the community.

Part-Time Broadcasting

"It is usually thought that radio must operate on a daily basis, but this is purely a presumption derived from mainstream media. Given the usual staffing and resource problems of daily operations in a rural community, it could be more effective for its radio service to operate on a limited but regular basis. Historically, the socio-political programming of alternative media has not been continuous. Regular intervals between programming increase audience loyalty and attention. They also give broadcasters the time they need to plan and produce more relevant programmes." [5]

Reach of the Station

"How far the station reaches is less important than where the station reaches. A station with a transmitter that has a long reach may be situated in a sparsely populated region, whereas a station situated in a densely populated region may have a transmitter that doesn't reach very far." [6]

As a tactic for starting community radio programming, it is useful to find out what people enjoy and appreciate about other radio programmes they listen to, and why they like them. Focus Group Discussions would be an ideal method for obtaining this qualitative information.

◄ STAFF

Few if any community radio stations can afford to pay staff, beyond perhaps the station manager if they are lucky. Thus, most community radios rely extensively on volunteers as programme producers, reporters, and studio technicians. However, the use of volunteers is not simply to get cheap labour for a poorly funded operation. On the contrary, volunteers give a special and positive character to community radio, creating an image of goodwill, commitment, and service for the common good. Those same characteristics are required in the community at large for it to change and develop along democratic lines.

◄ SUSTAINABILITY

Generating Income

While many community radios in developing countries are launched with support from some outside donor - national or international - anyone planning and promoting a community radio should bear in mind, from the very beginning, how to sustain the service once it is up and running.

There are several options for raising revenue to cover running costs, as follows:

- Commercial advertising, when this is allowed under existing national legislation;

- Sponsorship, which may also be debarred by national legislation;

- Donations;

- Fees for private announcements made over the radio as 'the people's telephone';

- Membership fees paid by listeners.

The Advertising Issue: In many countries that have recently introduced legislation for non-profit community radio, the commercial media are so strong and influential that they have succeeded in ensuring that community radio is prohibited from accepting advertising, thus preventing it from infringing

The carabo, or water buffalo as it is known in most parts of Southeat Asia, is a precious animal. It ploughs the field, it transports goods, it provides music and community programmes through the radio strapped to its horns. Some people call this 'car-abao stereo!'

on their lucrative domain. But despite the revenue problem that this may present, it may have some advantages for the image and credibility of community radio; for community radio is essentially public-service broadcasting, and it should be seen to be free from commercial interests and influences.

Thus, even where advertising is allowed, careful thought should be given to the type of advertisers that would be acceptable within the character of a community radio service. These would normally only be local providers of goods and services: the multinational soft drinks industry and goods that are damaging to health, such as tobacco and alcohol, should be avoided.

Conflicts of Interest: Sponsorship can also be plagued by problems related to conflicts of interests, especially when the sponsors are commercial organizations.

On the other hand, sponsorship from community-based associations, say of women, farmers, or fishermen, can be extremely important, and so can sponsorship from development organizations and NGOs. The same applies to donations from similar associations or organizations.

In the long term, however, reliance on outsiders will always put sustainability at risk. Thus, sustainability should be seen as the ultimate responsibility of the community itself, and the challenge to the manager of the station and to his team of producers, reporters, and technicians is to make the service so enjoyable, useful and valuable to its listeners that they will be willing to support it through subscription fees, voluntary donations in cash or kind, and the like.

Keeping Staff

Sustainability is not only related to funding; the sustainability of staff is equally important. Most personnel working with a community radio are volunteers, and the men

volunteers are usually unemployed and looking for a paid job. Thus, high staff turnover is a constant concern. Training, which gives people job satisfaction and career prospects, is one inducement. (For volunteer work on a community radio, see Chapter 7 on training.) Having women on staff may also help reduce turnover because they are less likely to be looking for jobs outside the community.

The radio station is excepted to address, with integrity and fairness, the main issues and problems in the community. Sponsors and donors, with vested interests, may potentially draw away the station from its avowed directions or unduly sway its programming decisions.

An innovative idea used in the UNESCO/DANIDA-supported Tambuli project in the Philippines was to include livelihood-generating activities for the staff of the radio stations. The principle was to

provide small credits that would allow staff to start some commercial activity to support themselves while they continued to work as volunteers with the radio. In some stations, this idea has worked well, but in others it has been more difficult to put into practice.

On Keeping Staff - the Case of Crispin Zarate, a Liability Turned to an Asset in the Philippines

"Crispin was a farmer's son, an unemployed school dropout. Pinny, as he was familiarly called, could usually be seen hanging around in his neighbourhood bar. He would invariably go home drunk. His lifestyle and drinking habits hardly made him an eligible bachelor. Nor could anyone consider him handsome. The only talent that Pinny exhibited was playing the guitar well.

When the training for volunteers for the radio station was announced, Pinny was among those to sign up. Since he was jobless, he fitted the criterion that trainees should be available for a three-week crash course.

Pinny was an ardent trainee and became a dedicated volunteer broadcaster. People expressed admiration for his voice. Indeed he had a knack for radio, and his innate good nature came to the surface.

His friends would tease him, alluding to his looks. 'You sound like a real human being when you go on the air, Pinny' He would take the teasing with a proud smile.

Everybody was struck dumb when they heard that Pinny was getting married, and even more so when they learned that it was to one of the most amiable teachers on the island.

I was delighted about Pinny. Radio work had turned a derelict into one of the most appreciated and loved persons in the community.

Then I received the bad news: he had left the non-paying job in the station to find work in a construction project on the mainland. His wife was expecting a child, so he could not afford to be jobless.

But perhaps the loss to the station was a gain to the community. We had converted a liability into a useful family man." [9]

Community radios often manage to obtain funding from outside donors - such as national or international NGOs, or bilateral or multilateral development agencies - for the investment required for the initial purchase of equipment and to train staff. The mission statement of the proposed community radio is an essential element in any request for external funding. It is also useful to put together a brief dossier that details all the important points about the proposed station in order to encourage a donor to invest in it. Care is needed, however, not to produce an over-glossy presentation that could give the wrong impression.

Donors do not part easily with their funds, and they will scrutinize the proposed community radio project with care. They will want to see how the points raised in Box 6 have been answered, and they will certainly conduct their own on-site enquiries.

It should by now be clear that starting a community radio station, though not particularly complicated, does require a considerable amount of preparation and hard work. For the initiative to succeed, it is vital not to skimp any of it.

BOX 6: *Main Factors to Consider When Planning a Community Radio*

1. Legislation

• What is the current legal situation for non-profit community radio?

• If it is provided for in the legislation, what are the terms for obtaining a licence and the necessary qualifications of the applicant?

• Is the cost of the licence affordable, how long will it take to obtain, and what will be the terms for renewal?

• Can the transmitter be purchased and installed without a licence, or will prior approval of the telecommunication authorities be needed?

• If community radio is not allowed for in the legislation, what other avenues exist? For example, are the same conditions for private commercial radio stations applicable to non-profit community stations? Are there provisions for cultural/educational channels?

• If it is not possible to set up a proper radio station, could a community loudspeaker system be used instead?

2. Location Criteria

• Does the area planned for the broadcast pattern - 10-15 km in radius - have a large enough population to sustain a community radio, say from 5,000 to 25,000 people?

• Is the terrain suitable for low-power, line-of-sight FM broadcasting or is it too hilly?

• What mainstream commercial or state radios reach the community? If many do, it may be difficult to sustain a community radio service. Alternatively, are there any mainstream media that could support or be linked into the proposed community radio service?

• What cooperation and support can be mobilized from local institutions and organizations, e.g. local councils, governmental and non-governmental organizations?

• Is the site selected for the station centrally placed and easily accessible to the community?

3. Characteristics and Capabilities of Promoters of Community Radio

• What is the credibility level and the previous experience of the people promoting the project?

• Are they generally acceptable to the stakeholders in the project?

• What is their capacity to mobilize human and financial resources to sustain the operations of a community radio?

• What is the level of democracy in their decision-making processes?

• Have they been accepted as credible and non-partisan activists in the community with a reputation for integrity and transparency in their dealings?

• What are the constraints and opportunities for organizing a representative community radio council (Board of Directors), or a cooperative society for community communication?

4. Context for Setting the Objectives and Drafting a Mission Statement

• How does the community perceive its situation and the need for change and development? Are people unhappy with the present circumstances, and if so, to what extent do they see change as good, and also as possible?

• What are the principle obstacles to those changes in attitude and behaviour that could help to promote development?

• What are the traditional decision-making processes in the community and how might these be affected by opening a democratic forum for discussion in the shape of a community radio?

• Who are the formal and informal opinion-leaders in the community, and are there any that hold explicit or implicit leadership roles in relation to the proposed community radio?

- What points of resistance - either from individuals or groups - might the community radio be expected to encounter in pursuing its declared objectives?

- Why and how could a community radio service help to bring about change and development? In particular, what impact could it have in mobilizing local resources for development and in increasing community participation for good governance?

5. Technical Aspects

- What is the situation regarding an electricity source for the studio and for the transmitter?

- What transmission power is likely to be needed to cover the community ?

- Can the antenna be installed at least 30 m above the ground, firmly anchored to prevent wind damage, and with a lightning conductor?

- Can the antenna and transmitter be installed next to each other - not more than 30 m apart?

- Can the studio and transmitter be installed far enough apart to prevent radio frequency emissions from getting into the studio equipment?

- Is the place selected for the studio - as well as being centrally located and easily accessible to the population - free of uncontrollable noise, and free of vested interests?

6. Ownership and Management

- What type of ownership structure can be envisaged?

- How is the community to be involved in management and programming?

- To what extent do the plans for the community radio integrate the traditionally vulnerable and marginalized groups - i.e. women, youth, and ethnic/linguistic minorities - in the management and operations of the proposed community radio?

7. Programming for the Community Radio Service

- As an initial guide, what programmes do people listen to now, which do they like most, and why?

- What mechanisms can be set up to ensure regular consultation and feedback with the community to ensure that programmes meet their likes and needs?

- What special measures will be necessary to ensure that programme producers respect the desires of their audience?

- Are there any particular programme formats that are likely to be especially favourable or unfavourable in helping to meet the objectives of the radio service?

- What mechanisms can be set up to identify individuals or groups that could produce their own programmes for broadcast, and how will they need to be encouraged and helped?

8. Staffing and other Resources

- Is there enough interest and enthusiasm to be able to mobilize human and material resources to start and run the station?

- Who can assume the task of the day-to-day management of the radio station?

- Is the proposed manager of the station acceptable to all segments of the community, and does he/she have the necessary managerial and interpersonal communication skills?

- What will the role of volunteers be in running the operation?

- What resources can be mobilized to ensure the start up of the community radio?

- What resources can be mobilized to sustain the community radio over time?

1 Quote: Zane Ibrahim and Ms Adams. *Bush Radio 89.5 FM* (See Case Study 4).

2 Colin Fraser/Sonia Restrepo-Estrada. *Focus Group Discussions in Development Work: Some Field Experiences and Lessons Learned.* Journal of Development Communication, Number One; Volume Nine (Kuala Lumpur, June 1998). This article provides details of this subject and technique for which there is only space for an outline here.

3 Quote: Bill Siemering. US public radio activist (1997).

4 Quote: Louie Tabing, Manager of the UNESCO/DANIDA Tambuli Project, Philippines (1999).

5 Based on a written statement by W. Jayaweera, UNESCO Project Officer. (1999)

6 *Comment:* Zane Ibrahim and Ms Adams. *Radio by Bush Radio, South Africa* (See Case Study 4).

7 Personal communication: Cilia Mosquera, Manager of Radio Canalete, Istmina, Colombia (1999).

8 Comment: community broadcaster in Ecuador (See Case Study 5).

9 Quote: Louie Tabing. Manager of UNESCO/DANIDA Tambuli Project, Philippines (1999).

Photo: C.A. Arnaldo

The church as a major institution of society has a major role to play.

Photo: C.A. Arnaldo

Moneky Bay Radio Station.

Chapter 6
Programme Policies

*T*his chapter stresses the need for participation of the audience in establishing programming needs and preferences, in programme production (as presenters and performers) and in evaluation.

It describes the crucial role of community news as part of an ongoing process of change and development, discusses the ethical standards required by journalists, and goes on to emphasize the importance of balancing views in all programming.

Later sections deal with policies for coverage of religious/cultural events, local election broadcasts, and educational broadcasts.

The final section is on the importance of audience surveys and outlines how to conduct them.

After absorbing the Chapter, the reader will:

- Be able to establish programming policies and operations that will achieve maximum participation of the community and its various sectors at all stages;

- Be able to set up mechanisms to ensure that programming meets audience needs and wishes;

- Know the ethical principles for news gathering and reporting and for maintaining a balance of views in a programme;

- Be aware of the possible legal conditions surrounding coverage of local elections and know how to handle coverage fairly and objectively;

- Gain insights into the use of radio as an educational medium and know the requirements to make it effective.

◀ *PARTICIPATORY PROGRAMMES*

Any successful radio station must appeal to the interests, tastes, and desires of its audience. What makes programmes for a community radio different is that, in addition to pleasing, entertaining, and perhaps providing some general enlightenment for its audience, they also seek to facilitate change, social progress, and better living conditions in the community that the radio serves.

It needs high numbers of listeners and audience loyalty to achieve this, but the unique advantage that community radio has over any other type of broadcasting in winning audience is its ability to be specifically relevant to the particular needs, interests, and desires of its relatively small audience. However, it can only reach this level of relevance through the constant involvement and participation of that audience in the planning, operation, and evaluation of its programming.

Time Availability Chart

LEGEND :
- ⚫ ═ HOUSEWIVES
- ⚫ ━ FARMERS
- ⚫ ////// STUDENTS
- ⚫ ∿ WORKERS
- ⚫ — FISHERMEN

PROSPECTIVE LISTENERS

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
A.M.   P.M.

BROADCAST TIME

This graph shows the time avilability of various target groups for radio listening. Different localities may show slightly varying trends from this hypothetical illustration. To determine the time slots of programmes designed for specific groups, the programmers must at least figure out, if not make a formal research, on the habits of their target listeners.

Participation in Ascertaining Needs and Preferences

A consultation process is required to establish certain things about each of the main audience sectors (e.g. women, men, youth, farmers, cooperative members, etc.). The main points to be ascertained are:

• Listeners' needs;

• Listeners' preferences;

• Listening habits (i.e. times of day when people mainly tune in).

This information is the basis for deciding on programme content, format, and the scheduling of programmes at times that best suit the various segments of the audience.

Participation in Producing Programmes

Everything possible should be done to encourage individuals and groups to participate in programme production. In this context, groups might also be NGOs working in the community, or staff of government services. The principle role of the station staff, apart from encouragement, should be to provide technical support and facilities to the producers.

In the Philippines, an interesting programme format called *Baranggayan sa Himpapawid*, roughly 'Village on the Air', has been developed by the UNESCO-DANIDA supported Tambuli Project. The programme is produced in a different village each week in the area covered by the community radio's broadcast pattern.

In essence, it is a variety show in which the villagers take the lead as singers, musicians, humorists, poets, interviewers and interviewees, panel members, and so on. Although most of the programme consists of local culture and entertainment, it also contains a section that gives the community the chance to discuss relevant issues and village concerns in public, with local leaders called on to respond and make their opinions and position clear. This often gives rise to a debate on the subject.

A karaoke system - the recorder/playback 'sing-along' machine which is very well known even in Philippine villages - usually serves as the outside recording studio. Its familiarity to the villagers helps to reduce possible inhibitions.

The programme is normally broadcast the day after it is recorded, and it is enormously popular, even if the villagers who produced it had no previous experience of talking or singing in front of a microphone.

Participation of Individuals and Groups as Presenters or Performers

Obviously, programme formats like 'Village on the Air' in the Philippines provide occasions for ordinary people to present and perform in front of a microphone. But even without such a programme format, it is important to solicit and support performances that involve ordinary people. These can take a variety of forms, including for example, musical presentations, readings of poetry, comic skits, or quite simply interviews, round-tables, or discussions in which people present their ideas and opinions about any issue that is of interest to the community. Programme formats that invite participation from people in the community should be a regular feature of the station's broadcasts.

Every effort should also be made to have the radio station seen as a focal point in the community where people are free to come and talk to the staff and discuss ideas for programmes in which they could be involved.

Participation in Evaluation of Programming

Community radio stations normally receive considerable numbers of letters and/or telephone calls from listeners. These often provide feedback from the audience about the station's programmes. This process is very useful to the station personnel, and the audience should therefore be encouraged by the announcers and presenters to write or call with their comments or suggestions.

However, in addition to this routine feedback, a community radio should conduct periodic evaluations of its programming with the participation of members of its various audience sectors. The Focus Group Discussion technique outlined earlier is an excellent method for eliciting people's opinions about existing programmes, their effects on community life, and their ideas as to how programmes could be improved.

Individual programmes may also be evaluated in conjunction with the audience. Programmes are normally analyzed from two basic viewpoints:

• The formal structure of the programme, including its technical quality (the sound effects used, performance of the announcers and other participants, control of extraneous noise, etc.).

• The content of the programme with specific relation to:

* Information sources - were they well selected, credible, and sufficient in number?

* Context - were the themes of the programme pertinent to the specific situation and needs of the audience ?

* Timeliness - were the themes of the programme pertinent in the sense of covering an actual or ongoing situation?

* Actors and roles - did the physical actors (persons) and the non-physical actors (institutions) each play their appropriate role in the programme?

* Communication approach – was the programme one-way or participatory? Did it lead to any critical analysis by the audience?

• Message formulation - did the central message come out clearly? Was there a good balance between rational, emotional, and affective elements? Was the format suitably matched with the content?

It is vital that a community radio manager and his or her staff realize from the beginning that programming decisions must be part of a dynamic process. Feedback and evaluations should be constantly driving the process of improving and adapting the programming to meet the needs and preferences of the listeners. And it must be remembered that these are not necessarily constant. To fall into a programming routine and to assume that listeners are satisfied with what is on offer is the short road to listeners deserting the frequency. And that in turn is the short road to the death of the community radio.

People's views and opinions are important for strengthening democratic practice and for arriving at a cooperative approach to community development. Hence in Olutanga, a small island in the southern part of Zamboanga, Philippines, the Village on the Air programme is the most popular of all. It exemplifies the key theme of community radio- participation of the people.

◀ *COMMUNITY NEWS*

Community news is a unique feature, and a prime strength, that gives a community radio station the inside track in competing against larger commercial or government stations. However, it must be remembered that the news provided by community radio, in contrast to that of the mainstream media, is not an isolated story or event alone: rather, it should be part of an ongoing and future process that is supporting progress and development in the community. Regular local news broadcasts in the context of a process are therefore the lifeblood of a community radio. Programming policies and operations need to give them maximum importance.

Gathering local news is not always easy, especially when limited resources make transportation and mobility for station personnel difficult. The idea of 'popular reporters' - essentially a few volunteers scattered in the community - who report in to the studio by telephone, cellular phone, or VHF radio is always worth pursuing.

However, journalistic ethics are just as important in community news gathering and reporting as they are for any major news organization.

Indeed, these ethics can be even more important in a community radio. For given the more intimate relationship that exists between the radio and its audience, and the fact that the audience is also inter-related because it is part of a community, incorrect or tendentious reporting, or misrepresentation of an event or issue, can have more immediate and damaging effects than they would in a larger and less involved audience.

Thus, a community radio's programming policy with regard to community news needs to be based on having personnel and outside reporters who have been properly initiated into the ethics of journalism. These cover such aspects as honesty, fairness and objectivity, and verification of sources before issuing a news item. It is difficult not to make the occasional mistake, but if it does happen, an immediate acknowledgement and correction should be broadcast. (See also the Code of Conduct in the next chapter.)

Many community radios also present news bulletins that include regional, national, and international items. The source for these is usually the mainstream media – newspapers, radio and TV. It is sometimes possible to arrange a link up with a state or commercial radio station and re-broadcast its news bulletin to the community. Some community radios make a point of having news items discussed on air by listeners, either through telephone calls or by 2-3 member panels in the studio.

Whatever approach is used for outside news, the overall policy should be to present or comment on it in a way that makes it accessible and meaningful to the community audience.

◀ *BALANCING VIEWS*

The main thrust of a community radio should be to try to promote fair discussion and debate that can lead to resolution of conflicting viewpoints and to democratic consensus. The personnel of the station and the way they work are fundamental in achieving this. (The term 'personnel' of course includes volunteers.)

The staff of the radio station must of course appear to be neutral. This is not to say that they will not have their own personal points of view, but they must on no account let their opinions influence the way they stimulate and conduct any discussions or make presentations on air. A station manager should be watchful for any manifestations of

bias by his staff while on air, as well as in his/her normal social contacts; for if any staff are known to have a strong position on some subject, and express it openly in social conversations, it will be more difficult for them to present a position of neutrality while on air. Furthermore, station managers should take seriously, and look into, any complaints from listeners about bias or manipulation of information in the work of the station's personnel.

The balancing of views also calls for equal opportunity and time to allow different viewpoints to be expressed on air. The management should have a rigid policy that ensures this.

It must always be remembered that the credibility and integrity of the service and of the personnel who run it are crucial to its success and sustainability.

◀ COVERAGE OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

Religious functions in a community are often cultural events as well. Adequate coverage of these occasions has to be included in the radio station's programme. In a multi-religious community, the radio station should take the necessary steps to ensure reasonable access to all the different religious institutions and denominations. To achieve this, it is often good to have a committee of different religious leaders to agree on and advise the station on airtime allocation for different religious programmes. The basic thrust of religious programming should be towards promoting religious harmony in the community; denigration of other people's religious beliefs must be avoided at all costs.

◀ LOCAL ELECTION BROADCASTS

Some countries' legislation specifically forbids community radio to become involved in any way with political campaigning. Others allow campaigning under strictly controlled conditions only during specified election periods. The management of a community radio should examine carefully the particular legal situation with regard to electioneering.

If a community radio is involved in political campaigns, it is essential that no party or candidate derives undue advantage or suffers undue disadvantage. A transparent system of providing equal opportunity and equal time to duly registered political parties and candidates must be established. The concept of equality in opportunity and time must take into account the length of the broadcast, the quality of presentation, and any advantages that might accrue from the time and day of the broadcast. If no agreement can be reached between those concerned, drawing of lots or some similar system may be used.

Any programme of a political nature which is sponsored or paid for with the intention of influencing voters in a certain direction must be properly identified as such at the beginning, at regular intervals during the programme, and again at the end. (See also the section on political broadcasts in the Code of Conduct in Chapter 7.)

Community radio can effectively monitor and ensure good conduct of elections and thus support this vital democratic process.

◀ EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTS
(School on the Air)

In the 1960s and 1970s, when rural broadcasting was being widely promoted by development agencies, there was much emphasis given to the educational possibilities offered by radio, a strategy

Everywhere religion plays a major role in the lives of people. Community radio broadcasters must also learn to appreciate this role while keeping radio free from undue religious influences.

School on the Air – Girandurukotte Community Radio, Sri Lanka

"The School on the Air was an action-oriented programme whose primary objective was to provide instructional education in a manner that would lead to action. It also attempted to develop a coordinated approach in which all those concerned with the development of the area could work together. We believed that such an approach would pave the way for our listeners to put into practice the instructions they received through radio and other channels of communication.

The radio producer in charge of agricultural programmes worked with the agricultural extension officers in the area, and with the committee that advised on the farming programme of the School on the Air, to develop an agricultural calendar and to identify on-farm activities and their technical content for the coming season.

The calendar with the relevant technical information was produced and circulated among 115 farmers who enrolled in the agricultural programme of the School on the Air. These farmers were asked to listen to the radio programme and to make notes in the blank space provided in the calendar itself.

A question was asked at the end of each programme, to which the farmers sent in their reply, either by mail or during a visit to the radio station. The programme received an average of 200-250 replies, many of which were from farmers not enrolled in the programme.

The correct answers were discussed in the follow- up programme and those who had provided correct answers received marks.

A seasonal course usually lasted 2-3 months and at the end of the course, farmers who had collected an aggregate of pass marks were awarded a School on the Air certificate." [3]

Some stations like Radio Voice of Manduyog in Banga, Aklan Province are fortunate to be linked to an educational institution. In this instance, the Aklan State College of Agriculture serves its community with agricultural and technical programmes as well as public service, women's programmes, children stories, good behaviour. Students volunteer for station duty as researchers or announcers.

In Laurel, Batangas, a police officer runs the 'Traffic and Good Behaviour' programme. The studio is an abandoned classroom at the local high school.

pioneered by Radio Sutatenza in Colombia. However, experience shows that as an education medium, radio alone is weak; it needs to be supported by other media, such as printed materials, as well as by inter-personal contacts to form a complete educational package.

A community radio may well decide that part of its programming should consist of educational broadcasts, for example for farmers on agricultural techniques or for mothers on childcare and nutrition. If such a policy decision is taken, the best results will be achieved when it is based on proper adult education methodology. This begins with careful structuring of the educational content of the broadcasts in accordance with the trainees' circumstances, needs, and capacities. It should also involve some sort of enrolment and recognition award for successful completion of a course in order to enhance people's sense of commitment. And the radio programmes should be supported by other materials, group discussions and inter-personal follow-up.

Setting up a programme of educational broadcasts can be a very worthwhile objective for a community radio, but it needs to be carefully thought out, planned, and work in conjunction with the appropriate services in, say, health or agriculture. Advice and support from an adult education specialist can help to ensure successful programmes.

Whether or not a community radio decides to broadcast educational programmes *per se*, its policy should take into account that education in the broad sense of the word, and in the context of helping people to improve their lives, is one of the fundamental objectives of community radio. Thus, educational content will always be present, though it may be built into a variety of formats, including reportage, interviews, panel question/answer sessions or discussions, entertaining drama, etc.

◂ AUDIENCE SURVEYS

A community radio that has good feedback from its audience through letters, telephone calls, and visits to the studio, and which regularly conducts participatory evaluations of its work as described earlier, will have access to much qualitative information. However, this may not be enough to provide a full picture of a radio station's performance and standing. The independence of an outside survey team is required to obtain reliable answers to questions such as:

- Does the station have credibility among its listeners?
- Is the station seen as a reliable source of information?
- What image and status do the staff have in the eyes of the community?
- To what extent does the community depend on the station for information and development materials?
- What do listeners do with the information they gain? Do they use it, store it, pass it on to others, or look for additional information?
- What impact is the radio having in the community? What changes can be essentially attributed to the radio?

In addition, some quantitative data may be needed about how many people listen to the station and when, compared to other stations, and how many listen to particular programmes. This information provides a picture of how the community radio stands in relation to other media channels available to the audience.

The type of information mentioned above is often difficult to obtain. There are specialized companies that conduct audience research, usually for large commercial stations. They have a natural tendency to inflate the listening figures so that the radio station that contracted the survey can use high ratings as a basis for charging more for advertising time. In addition, the experience of these companies is mainly urban.

Unfortunately, the gadgetry used by mainstream media to electronically record the number of receivers tuned into a programme, and even when the channel is changed, is beyond the reach of community radio stations. So other methods need to be used to obtain the quantitative data.

The commonest method is to take a sample of the audience - special sampling techniques exist for the selection - and have them answer a questionnaire either by mail or during an interview. The results are extrapolated to give a picture for the whole community.

The radio station itself can use certain techniques to try to determine listening patterns. One of these is to invite the audience to send in entries to a contest or to make contributions to a community campaign. The announcement is systematically repeated throughout the day's programming and the respondents are asked to say at what time, or times, they heard the announcement.

In most countries one can discard the use of commercial media research organizations for community radio. It is better to enlist the help of NGOs, university students, or volunteers who are unknown in the community to conduct surveys and interviews. (If interviewers are known in the community, respondents may feel conditioned in the way they answer.) What is ideal is to get help from the staff of another community radio station for such an outsider view. They also learn from the experience.

However difficult it may be to arrange, surveys by outsiders from time to time are important to be able to gauge the way a community radio is functioning and the standing it enjoys among its audience.

Bus stops provide unique opportunities to gain feedback from audience and conduct interesting interviews. In Punka, the Chief of Programmes of Bhutan Radio interviews an expectant passenger. While waiting for the bus, his handy radio helps pass the time.

Interviewing for Agricultural School on the Air, Sri Lanka. Recording traditional songs for transplanting rice.

1 Louie Tabing. *Programming Tips for a Community Radio Station.* UNESCO-DANIDA Tambuli Project (Manila, 1998).

2 Louie Tabing et al. *Neighbourhood Radio Production*. UNESCO-DANIDA Tambuli Project, Manila, undated.

3 Based on M.J.R David, *Mahaweli Community Radio: A Field Producer's Notebook,* Institute of Development Communication, Laguna (Philippines, 1993).

Homa Bay Radio Station.

Chapter 7
The Community Broadcaster

This chapter provides a prototype code of conduct for community broadcasters. A community radio service could use it as it stands, or it could modify it according to any special local needs or conditions. It includes sections on programme production and on ethics, conduct and teamwork during operations and in the studio, on the care of equipment, and on the general conduct of broadcasters in their normal life in the community.

Other sections deal with conduct related to financial matters and provide details of how these can be handled. Appropriate policies and conduct for political broadcasts and for advertising and sponsorship are also covered.

Sections on the selection and training of community broadcasters give advice on selection criteria, on the content and categories of training required, and describe various types of training modalities. There is a discussion of the pros and cons of on-site, in-country, and overseas training and a final section on the financing of training.

The reader can expect to:

- Gain an understanding of the need for, and content of, a code of conduct for community broadcasters;

- Have a model code of conduct to apply as it stands or to modify to suit local circumstances;

- Learn about the different types and content of training needed by community broadcasters and have guidelines for the general planning and organizing of training activities.

◀ CODE OF CONDUCT

The conduct of the personnel who work with a community radio is central to achieving the levels of efficiency, integrity and positive image required for its success. Some national broadcasting legislations that include community radio also provide a code of conduct for broadcasters. In addition, the UNESCO/DANIDA supported Tambuli Project in the Philippines has drawn up a code of its own. [1]

Although most codes of conduct are almost identical in their general approach, there may also be a need for special points to cover aspects that are specific to a certain country. For example, where community radios are allowed to accept advertising, or become involved in political campaigns, the proper ethical conduct of these will need to be included in the code.

It is a useful idea, therefore, for community broadcasters in a country to form associations and agree on a common code of conduct appropriate to their circumstances. In essence, the

code of conduct should be a professional instrument for self-regulation, and not a law or regulation enforced by government. The community being served by the station should also be informed of the code being applied.

The code of conduct which follows below brings together elements from several sources, but it is based on the structure of the Tambuli document. It is provided as a prototype which community radios may use or modify as they wish.

◄ A PROTOTYPE CODE OF CONDUCT

Preparing and Conducting Broadcasts

General

- Programmes should be well prepared in order to present new ideas, new information, and new points of view.

- Broadcasters should obtain information from reliable sources and organize their programmes properly before going on air.

- A good balance should be maintained between news, entertainment, and public-service programmes.

- Programming should maintain a balance that properly reflects the differing interests of the various majority and minority sectors in the community.

Research

- Broadcasters should actively and constantly be researching new, interesting, and comprehensive information. The most persistent researchers and enquirers will ultimately be the most reliable sources of information for other people.

Decency and Good Taste

- Programmes should exclude material that is indecent, obscene, or offensive to public morals or to the religious convictions of any sector of the community.

- Programmes should promote good relationships between different sectors of the community and should most certainly avoid prejudicing them.

- Justifiable material that relates to brutality, violence, atrocities, drug abuse and obscenity should be presented with due care and sensitivity and always in context, not gratuitously. Special care is necessary when children are likely to hear the programme.

- Broadcasters should remember that listeners, especially children and youth, may make radio announcers and presenters their role model, and therefore they should behave accordingly.

Respect for Privacy

- Broadcasters should use care and consideration in matters involving the private lives and concerns of individuals. The interest, and even the right to know, of a community is not a licence to invade a person's privacy. But there can be cases of exceptional, overriding and legitimate public interest that waive the right to privacy.

- Information provided by an interviewee as off-the-record should be treated as such by a reporter.

Preference for a Positive and Constructive Approach

- Broadcasters should strongly avoid the temptation to include rumours, gossip, slurs, criticisms, conflicts, and indirect propaganda in their programmes.

- Where the public interest is at stake and a controversy must be discussed on air, the broadcasters should do everything in their power to present all sides of the story.

- Broadcasters should emphasize interesting and useful information rather than dwell on unsavoury conflicts.

- When dealing with a problem, rather than bemoaning it, the stress should be placed on discussing it in the positive light of what possible actions could be taken, and by whom, to solve it.

Conduct During Operations

Teamwork

- The personnel of a community radio are all part of a team and should act and work as such. This means, among other things, being willing to help a colleague who is in difficulty for any reason and co-operating by providing information, contacts, and materials to colleagues who may need them.

- Individuals should participate in evaluations and discussions and encourage their colleagues to assess and criticize their work.

- Individuals should be willing to accept and act upon evaluation critiques.

- Broadcasters should be willing to make announcements that promote other programmes in the station's schedule.

- In live programmes, it should be normal practice for a broadcaster to stand in for the programme following his/hers if the next broadcaster should be delayed. The broadcast should never be left unattended.

Respect for Management

- Personnel should respect the management and comply fully with the administrative and operational procedures it has put in place.

- Any disagreements between staff member(s) and the management should be first discussed with the station manager. If the problem cannot be resolved at that level, the matter should be referred to the management body of the community radio, whose decision should be final. Respect from both sides and a democratic process should be observed in these discussions, with the interests of the radio station and the community it serves as the dominating criterion.

Punctuality and Reliability

- Personnel who are to go on air must be punctual, leaving sufficient lead-time to prepare themselves and their materials and to confer with the station manager, or with guests or interviewees as necessary. An absolute minimum of ten minutes before broadcast time should be observed, though considerably longer lead-time is usually advisable.

- If an individual anticipates not being able to fulfil a broadcast commitment, he/she should inform the station manager at least one day before so that a replacement can be appointed and have time to prepare properly.

Conduct in the Studio Premises

- No personnel should be allowed to bring firearms into the studio, even if they are members of the police or military.

- Drinking or taking of illicit drugs in the studio premises should be treated as a violation of the station's standing and integrity. So should coming to the station intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.

- Broadcasters should not invite guests and relatives to the studio premises without briefing them on proper behaviour, especially with regard to orderliness and silence.

Broadcasters must become a reliable source of information for people.

In no case should the announcer come to the sudio less than 10 minutes before broadcast time

A Real Emergency is the Only Valid Excuse

"It is only in emergency cases that an announcer may be allowed to absent himself without previous notice. This would need to be on the level of a death of a member of his household or the need to bring to the hospital a member of the family who is running a fever of 40 degrees." [3]

- Guests should not be allowed to distract broadcasters, disrupt activities, or tamper with or pilfer station equipment and property.

- Children visiting the station should always be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult.

Care of Studio Equipment

- Every member of the station's staff should participate in preserving its equipment and property.

- The operation of studio equipment should only be by people who have been trained, qualified, and authorized to use it.

- All equipment not in use should be switched off. All personnel should be obliged to clean, recap, cover, and store equipment they have used in their proper place.

- No piece of equipment should be taken out of the studio premises without the prior approval of the station manager or the person to whom he/she has delegated control of such matters. Ideally, this approval should be in writing.

- Any equipment taken out of the studio premises should be returned promptly after use.

- Systems of usage and borrowing should be set up. A user's log and a borrower's log should be kept.

- Broadcasters should immediately report to the station manager or others in authority any malfunction, loss, or damage to equipment they were using, noting the time and circumstances in which it happened.

- Based on the points outlined above, the station manager, in conjunction with the rest of the management body of the community radio, should establish regulations for the use of its equipment and ensure that all personnel are aware of them.

Conduct of Personnel Outside the Radio Station

- Community broadcasters are reformers and agents of positive change and development. Their comportment in their social and family life, and in their life in general in the community, should match the image they project as staff of the community radio.

- Any member of the staff should be automatically dismissed if found guilty of any criminal or illicit activity. The management of a community radio should have the constitutional right to suspend or dismiss any such person, especially when it is deemed that keeping him/her

would prejudice the image and standing of the station.

- No member of the staff should divulge classified information.

Solicitation of Funds, Advertising, or Sponsorship

- Only personnel who have been specifically designated to do so by the management should be allowed to solicit or receive donations, grants, sponsorship or any other form of financial support for the community radio or for specific programmes. The authorization to solicit or collect funds should be in writing.

- No radio station should accept funds from any illegal source or from any source whose activities have a negative effect on the community, society, or the country e.g. gambling rings, smugglers, drug traffickers, producers or purveyors of tobacco and alcohol, concerns that are damaging or polluting the environment, etc.

- No funds should be accepted from political parties or other interest groups that could later compromise the station's editorial independence.

Management of Financial Resources

- The community radio should designate a treasurer who should open a bank account for the safekeeping and disbursement of its financial resources. The choice of bank should be made in conjunction with the management body of the radio.

- Two signatures should be required for withdrawal of funds from the bank account.

- All funds, grants, earnings, collections, and other income should be remitted to the designated treasurer as soon as possible and never later than 24 hours after being received. Any personnel who keep funds for longer should be considered to have misappropriated them and be disciplined accordingly.

- The treasurer should keep a record of all receipts and payments. This should be available for inspection at any time by any member of the management or by the authorities.

- Only after income has been given to the treasurer, and its receipt duly recorded, should it become expendable. No staff should be permitted to use unrecorded income, even to reimburse legitimate expenses they may have incurred.

- The station manager should have access to a petty cash fund. This should be replenished by the treasurer whenever it falls below a predetermined amount. Full records of the petty cash expenditures and replenishments should be kept.

- The community should be kept informed, at regular intervals, of the financial state of their radio station, and also have the right to ask for related information at any time.

Political Broadcasts *(where allowed)*

- The community radio management should ascertain in detail any provisions in the national broadcasting legislation concerning radio coverage during political campaigns and abide by them scrupulously.

- Broadcasters should not give undue advantage, or disadvantage, to any political party or candidate.

- Equal opportunity and equal time should be accorded to duly registered political parties and candidates. Equality in this context takes into account the length of the broadcast, the quality of presentation, and any possible advantages from the time and day of the broadcast.

- If no agreement on such equality can be reached between those concerned, drawing of lots or some similar system may be used.

- News and other information programmes should be edited

for strictly factual information and should avoid bias in favour or against any political party or candidate.

• Any personnel of a community radio, including the management body, should resign their post and refrain from any regular activity as a broadcaster before or at the time of declaring their intention of becoming involved in any political or partisan activity.

Advertising and Sponsorship
(where allowed)

• The management body should decide whether advertising, when allowed under the existing legislation, is compatible with the aims and objectives of the community radio.

• If it is decided to accept advertising, the management body should establish criteria for the types of commercial interests whose publicity will be broadcast.

• Preference should be given to events, goods, and services being organized or offered by commercial concerns within the area in which the community radio is situated.

• Advertising should not be accepted

from concerns offering goods that are harmful to individuals, to the community, or to society, especially in terms of health or behaviour (e.g. tobacco and alcohol). Nor should advertising be accepted for items that are generally detrimental to the socio-economic welfare of the poor (e.g. junk food, carbonated drinks and other items that are low in nutritional value and relatively high in cost).

• In respect of sponsorship - where allowed - and advertising, care should be taken to ensure that there is no potential conflict of interest between the sponsor or advertiser and the change and development objectives of the radio station.

Advertisements by Political Parties and Candidates

Advertising by political interests during election campaigns - as distinct from party political broadcasts - presents a special problem. The community radio management body should take one of three possible decisions:

• Apply the principle of equal time and opportunity to political advertisements, as in the case of party political broadcasts;

• Allow each party the freedom to buy as much air time as it wants and can afford;

• Not accept advertisements from political parties or candidates.

Some community radios charge higher rates for political advertisements than they do for commercial ones, and it is tempting to solve many of the sustainability problems that afflict all community radios by selling air time willy-nilly to all the political interests that want it and can pay for it. Nevertheless, it is dubious whether a community radio should help the already strong parties to get stronger against the weaker alternative parties that might bring greater social progress. From an ethical viewpoint, it is probably better to apply

the equality principle, or not to accept any political advertising, even if this means loss of revenue.

SELECTION OF COMMUNITY BROADCASTERS

Some community radios are staffed by people chosen mainly for their commitment to the welfare and improvement of their own community and for their interest in radio as an instrument for social progress. Other community radios are able to draw on people who have some experience or training in the area of communication or journalism, but who may be outsiders to the community. Although they may have a better education and more skills than ordinary members of a community, they may well be at an initial disadvantage until they have gained full insight into how the community functions.

When selecting people from the community, it is usual to apply certain other criteria, besides these people's sense of commitment. They should be residents of the community, with no immediate intention of migrating away from it; they should have good oral communication skills; they should be of good moral standing and

have leadership potential; they should be representative of any ethnic and religious groupings and of political affiliations in the community; and they should have time available for the initial training and for a volunteer job.

The balance between women and men is particularly important. In many countries, it is usually mainly men who come forward when training is being offered, but it is essential that women be integrated into the operation in balance with men. Quite apart from fundamental issues of gender equity, most community radios have high numbers of listeners among women, who need information that is best supplied by other women. Women on the air will also help others to assume an equitable and respected role in the affairs of the community and its development. Staff sustainability will usually be improved by having women because they are less likely to leave the community in search of work.

In one community radio in South Africa, which provides training for broadcasters, no training course is allowed to go ahead unless at least half of the participants are women. (See Case Study 4.) In some countries it may be difficult for cultural reasons to insist on this

condition immediately, but it should certainly be a target everywhere.

TRAINING OF COMMUNITY BROADCASTERS

Community radio stations very often begin with people who have never been inside a radio studio, never held a microphone, and never had any involvement with the world of media or journalism. Training such people presents a noteworthy challenge, but experience has shown that it is not as difficult as one might expect.

Content of Training

Many skills are involved in broadcasting. The principal ones that staff collectively of a station need to have fall into three main types:

Technical - use of equipment and simple repairs.

Programme production - covering elements such as radio talk; voice performance; script writing; interview techniques; news gathering, writing and delivery; magazine programme production; production of radio spots, jingles and public-service announcements; production of participatory programmes in the community; basic

Training Experience at Radio Sagarmatha, Nepal

Two types of training have been conducted: the first, focusing on broad concepts and techniques has successfully upgraded general skills and brought people into the fold; the second has been integrated into the station's specific needs and context, working with producers and developing new programmes.

The first type has been done with foreign resources, generally the training centres of international broadcasters. This training was important for identifying and developing human resources. While Nepal has excellent media resources of its own, the expertise of these international broadcasters has been extremely beneficial.

The second type has used local resources and integrated the needs of the station and of the trainees into the planning and conducting of training courses using a more hands-on, on-the-job approach. This has proved appropriate to the overall development of the station and to existing and available technologies. This training has been conducted by station personnel and international technical advisers working locally. It has concentrated on existing station staff rather than new recruits.

Listening is all important, listening to feedback, listening to opinions, listening to good music and to one's own singing! At the Children's Center in Olongapo, Philippines, Shirley listens to a recording for the morning show.

communication theory and practice.

Management and Operations – including management skills, overall programming for a community radio, marketing the station, audience research methods, radio laws and ethics.

In addition, everyone working with a community radio must be well versed in the Code of Conduct being applied.

Categories and Phases of Training

The training required for broadcasters falls into two broad categories:

• Introductory training needed for them to able to function at the minimum level of competence required;

• Refinement of their skills until they become fully competent in one or more broadcasting role e.g. programme producer, announcer, reporter, studio technician, etc. In many small community radio stations, people have to learn to function in any or all of these roles.

Introductory Training

This should cover three basic types of content:

• The philosophy of community radio and its role in news, entertainment, and education, and particularly in change and development;

• The principle factors in the code of conduct for community broadcasters;

• The use of broadcasting equipment and basic programme production.

Some community radios manage to provide this basic training in an intensive introductory course lasting about three weeks and held in the community. The course should include a large amount of hands-on training, as indeed should all types of broadcaster training.

The introductory training provided when starting a community radio service will, of course, need outside support both in terms of trainers and funding. The trainers can come from other well-established community or public-service broadcasting stations in the country.

The introductory training can be used to help the selection process for staff. It is useful to include more trainees than the staff actually needed and to select the best of them at the end of the course.

Once a community station is up and running, new personnel can often be given their basic training by working with the already competent staff, learning by doing, supplemented with sessions to cover aspects such as the philosophy, code of conduct, and other conceptual issues of community radio.

Refinement of Skills

Community broadcasters need to take part in a continuous process of learning. Even veterans often learn something new from others, from reading, or from some reaction in the community to a programme they have produced. In addition, new technology is being introduced all the time.

Refinement of skills to a certain extent comes naturally through learning-by-doing, but this is not enough. There are several ways that broadcasters can be helped to improve their performance.

Formal Training Courses Either On-site or In-country: Using national or international trainers, short training workshops can be organized on specific aspects of broadcasting and programme production.

This type of training is most effective and economical if trainees from several different community radio stations can be brought together. This has the additional benefit of opening doors for future contacts, cooperation and interchange between various stations. For example, it is very useful to have staff from one community radio help to evaluate the programming and work of another. Their outsider perceptions can be invaluable, and at the same time they learn from the experience.

Training Attachments to Other Radio Stations: It is often possible to come to an arrangement with another, more experienced, community radio or public-service station to send trainees for a period of work with them. In some countries, notably South Africa, the station that pioneered community radio has become a training centre for other stations with less experience. This has several advantages, particularly in

terms of low costs and sharing of experience. If the attachment is to another community radio, and to a successful one, the trainees may also learn how certain problems have been solved and how innovative and creative ideas are being applied in programming.

Care should be taken about attachments to commercial stations. Their philosophy is so different from that of community radio, that even if a trainee learns some technical aspects of programme production, he/she will learn nothing about using radio as part of social development.

Overseas Fellowships: Many of the world's major broadcasting organizations run training courses in their home country. Among these are Radio Netherlands, the BBC, and Deutsche Welle. Governments and development agencies are sometimes willing to provide fellowships for community broadcasters to follow a course at one of these training centres. This will certainly give the trainees a valuable learning experience in all aspects of radio production, but there may be certain disadvantages as explained in the next section.

On-Site, In-Country, or Overseas Training?

There are pros and cons to each of the above.

On-site training in the community where the radio station operates provides the most realistic possible training venue: the group of trainees work with the equipment, with the people, and in the circumstances of their future activities. It also saves the cost of travel and subsistence for the trainees.

The main disadvantage of on-site training is that the trainees, part of whose motivation may well be career prospects, may feel that this is "second-class" training compared to going, say, to the capital city for a course, or to a course in another country. Thus, they may feel less motivated.

In-country training in a course run in a location other than their own community has more prestige value to the trainees, as does a training attachment with another radio station. Other advantages are the contacts and interchange that can develop for the future from a period of working with other professionals in the same field.

"Most people think of radio as a 'one-to-one' medium, reaching out to a single anonymous mass public. This concept is reflected in early communication research on air-dropping leaflets, 'injecting' information into what is considered a population basically characterized by its sameness.
And yet, at the other end of radio transmission, at each listening set, there are usually only two or three individual people, real persons. And sometimes our ears are captured by the natural talent of interpersonal communication, voices addressing each individual in a large audience – politicians, religious leaders, a person-oriented disc-jockey, or even an outstanding news announcer. They speak with natural charm, a built-in capacity to hold an audience, a charisma to catch even non-believers in their spell. They speak from a inner core of conviction and draw others to them by appealing to their inner core of questioning, of doubt, and of hesitation. One might say that theses broadcasters are successful because they defy the conventional rules of media. They do not read scripts, they read meaning, the script acting only as a prompt to the deeper significance of their messages. The microphone is only an electronic intermediary between them and the persons in the mass audience.
They speak not to the microphone, but through the microphone to people, with people. They use media, despite media, to reach people. This is a very particular sense of interpersonal media that seems to have been lost today."

Carlos A. Arnaldo

Overseas Training is the most prestigious and expensive of all, and, it will almost certainly open career opportunities beyond the radio station of the trainee's community. This is precisely one of the disadvantages of overseas training in terms of staff stability. But there are other disadvantages too, notably that the technical and working conditions of an overseas situation may cause the trainee to become dissatisfied when he/she returns to the simpler community

Homa Bay UNESCO project fixing the transmitter.

station at home, increasing the probability that he/she will accept an offer from a mainstream station. Finally, overseas training, however technically rewarding, is outside the trainee's normal cultural context, and this may reduce its applied value.

Financing of Training

There are a variety of sources of funding for training of community broadcasters. When international development agencies or NGOs help to finance the initial equipment for a station, they usually include a training component in the project. This will normally cover at the very least the introductory training for the start-up phase, but it may also include refinement of skills over a longer period of time.

Development agencies and NGOs may also grant fellowships to community broadcasters. Some of these may be for overseas training, but many are also for in-country training courses or for assignments that are part of a training experience.

Specific development projects within a country may be another source. For example, when a project - say one for environmental protection or health - wants support from radio programmes, the funding agency may well finance the training of broadcasters so they will make the best possible programmes on that project.

Whatever the sources and types of training in a given country, the management of a community radio

should be constantly alert to the training needs of the staff. On the one hand, increased competence leads to increased job satisfaction and tends to enhance staff stability. On the other hand, there will almost inevitably be high staff turnover in a situation where most of the staff are unemployed volunteers. The management must therefore be ready to arrange for the fairly constant training of replacements.

1 Tambuli Project Management. *Community Broadcasters - Code of Conduct.* UNESCO-DANIDA Tambuli Project (Manila, 1998).

2 *Op. cit.*

3 *Op. cit.*

4 Quote: Zane Ibrahim and Ms Adams, *Bush Radio 98.5 FM, South Africa* (See Case Study 4).

5 Quote: Bruce Girard. *Radio Chaguarurco.* (See Case Study 5).

6 Martin Allard. *Tecnología Adaptada*, InteRadio, Volume 9, No.1, 1997, AMARC (Montreal, 1997).

7 See the Case Study 4, *Bush Radio 89.5 FM*

Chapter 8
Case Studies

The following section contains five case studies of community radio stations in Asia (Philippines and Nepal), Africa, (Ghana and South Africa) and Latin America (Ecuador). Their authors are all intimately connected with the stations and provide interesting insights into how they set up their operations, how they handled the problems they encountered, and what the results have been. For this reason, they are important to anyone involved - or who wants to become involved - in community radio.

The case studies were edited by the authors of the main body of the handbook. They were forced to reduce their length considerably, while maintaining their original structure. They hope to have left the essential information intact. Certain parts, especially of an anecdotal nature, were taken out of the original case studies and put into the main body of the handbook.

RADIO IN, FOR, ABOUT, AND BY THE COMMUNITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

by Louie N. Tabing

Olutanga, an Unlikely Community for a Radio Station?

In the 1970s, the island of Olutanga, in Mindanao Province, was the scene of frequent, heavy fighting between warring Muslims and Christians. Town centres were razed to the ground following one such encounter.

However, two decades after the bloody conflicts, Muslims and Christians now live peacefully together on the island. The minority Muslims are concentrated in the north-east and southern sections. The island has a sparse population of approximately 35,000 people, mainly concentrated in three towns.

Despite today's relative calm, however, a heritage of past instability and danger still shows: most houses are built of light materials as if no one is really happy to settle permanently on the island. The 18-kilometre dusty or muddy road, depending on the season of the year, stretches the length of the island and is used only by a few four-wheel vehicles. Carabao-drawn sleds, tricycles, horses and travellers on-foot share the thoroughfare.

Most of the residents of Olutanga eke out a living from non-irrigated agriculture and marginal fish capture in the over-exploited marine grounds.

A few traders have established businesses by catering to what the majority of poor people can produce or buy.

There are two high schools, both run by religious missionaries. The one that serves the northern towns of Mabuhay and Talusan is attended by less than 300 students. Another high school in the town of Suba-Nipa at the southern end of the island also has limited enrolment. There are no tertiary or vocational schools. Very few parents can afford the high cost of sending their children for tertiary to metropolitan centres on the larger surrounding islands.

Government services in education, health, law enforcement, etc. are minimal. No bank operates on the island, and there are very poor communication facilities, except for numerous hand-held very high frequency (VHF) transceivers.

Visitors to the island are therefore astonished to find that this island, eight hours away by boat from the city of Zamboanga, operates a radio station. The islanders themselves were incredulous when the facility was proposed to them in 1993 by the Tambuli Project. They became even more doubtful when full control of the station were also offered to them.

Olutanga - a Perfect Location for a Tambuli Radio Station

The first community radio station in Mindanao was initially recommended by some local Catholic leaders to be in Ipil, not in Olutanga. But Ipil did not meet Tambuli's criteria; it was too prosperous, and it was already a centre of economic growth.

Tambuli was looking for communities that were information-poor, economically depressed, conducive to FM signal propagation, with good prospective cooperators, and where a community radio station would make the most impact. Olutanga, 40 kilometres out to sea, met those criteria perfectly. It was certainly impoverished and isolated. It was also relatively flat, so signal propagation for a low-power FM transmitter would not be a problem. One thing, however, would be missing - a local cooperating institution. One would have to be developed.

Initial Visit and First Meetings

A first consultative conference, held at the Catholic convent, was a hurriedly arranged by VHF radio. Less than ten leaders attended. Several of them were municipal officials, including the vice-mayor of the town, the parish priest and others who expressed their suspicions of the project. They were quick to point out that only a month before somebody from Manila had collected money from people, allegedly for theatre training. The stranger had then left with the money and was never heard of again. I had to assure them that no person, equipment or money would leave Olutanga during the proposed radio project.

What is really your objective then? They asked. Are you selling the equipment? Will you be selling radio sets? If you are really from UNESCO, why don't you build schools for us? Where is the catch?

Such questions were freely aired after we told the locals that Tambuli would like to help them set up a community radio station. Nevertheless, the prospect of having the facility and operating it was inviting to community leaders. The municipality could use it for dissemination of information. The station could be a convenient vehicle for public service. The young people could use it for "requests and dedications."

During the one-and-a-half-hour meeting, some copies of our *Tambuli Primer*, an illustrated comic-like publication explaining the project, were passed around, and the radio idea was discussed further. We managed to arouse the interest of the locals, and at the same time we heard some salient information on the political and social dynamics of the area. I was not worried by the people who questioned the genuineness of our intentions. It is understandable for an impoverished community to be wary and suspicious when something is offered for nothing.

It was agreed that before the next meeting, each of the sectors represented at the first would consult with a wider number of people. And they might submit a resolution reflecting the views and feelings of their sectors. The interim period would give them time to consult with their constituencies. It would give them time to check on our true identity and objectives as well.

Some 25 key sectoral leaders attended the second meeting a few weeks later. Educators, farmers, fishermen, women, people from different religious groups, tricycle operators and motorcycle drivers came. Contending political parties were also present. Surprisingly, the early doubts about the project had disappeared. Many leaders brought resolutions welcoming the setting up of the radio station.

Succeeding meetings established a core group of leaders who would handle the affairs of the project.

An interim body was constituted from among those present. The leaders elected a set of officers, and these were eventually registered as the Olutanga Islanders Media Development Foundation (OIMDF). A dynamic municipal councilwoman, Meriam Aranas headed it.

One of the first decisions to be made by the Foundation was the location of the station. Following the recommendation that a community radio station should be free from the control of political parties and religious groups, the local leaders decided that the station should not be housed in the convent. Nor should it be located in the municipal building, which was perceived as a political place. The offer by municipal officials to accommodate the station would only be accepted if a building or a lot were donated without strings attached. In order to accept donations, enter into agreements, employ personnel and administer the station, the organization needed to be a juridical entity. It was therefore decided that OIMDF would need to be registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Soon a new group emerged from among the Foundation members. It was pointed out that the Tambuli Primer states that there can be a Community Media Council (CMC) - separate from the formally registered organization - to make decisions about the radio and its operations. They contended that the Foundation members were permanent, whether they were performing well or not, whereas the Council members could be replaced yearly if they did not perform well. Hence, a CMC of about 11 members was also formed. It was headed by Napoleon Aboc, a businessman, who was also a retired policeman.

It soon became evident that the CMC and the Foundation were contending factions polarized towards either Aboc or Aranas, who were each identified with a distinct political grouping. Tambuli Project

Management recognized that, instead of working harmoniously together, frictions would divide the leaders as a result. Re-uniting the leadership thus became a long and delicate process.

Locating and Setting up the Technical Facility

During the initial stage of the project, there was some obvious lobbying from certain leaders of Suba-Nipa to have the station placed in that southern town. They contended that Suba-Nipa had the biggest population of the three towns.

The Tambuli Project Management provided criteria for the selection of the studio site including: accessibility to participants and community members; security of the equipment; low rental or expenses e.g. for renovation; technical factors related to signal propagation; availability of power; proximity to an elevated site for the antenna; and neutrality, such that no particular groups could monopolize or dominate, nor deter the participation of other groups.

Long and agitated discussions took place on where the station should be located. Since the majority of the participants were from Mabuhay and Talusan, these prevailed. The station would be in the northern part of the island. A 20-watt transmitter in Mabuhay would provide the best coverage of the island. An auxiliary station might later be considered for Suba-Nipa.

With the leaders of the Catholic Church as the project's initial contacts, our main host in the island became the parish priest of Mabuhay. He consented to our using the convent as a temporary project site. The parish priest, and later his successor, both took an active role in the project, while at the same time adopting an unassuming stance. The involvement of the clergy added status and dignity to the project and

helped to dissipate speculations that it was politically motivated.

The station became operational in June 1993, its provisional studio being located in the convent. Some of the leaders close to the Catholic Church hoped that the convent would become the permanent studio site. Others, contending that there were certain public issues on which the Church held manifest positions, expressed reservations on using the convent permanently. Religious leaders of other denominations, they said, would have second thoughts about participating in broadcasts.

After drawn-out discussions, it was decided that the station would temporarily be operated at the premises of the Catholic Church. However, it would eventually relocate to a "neutral", permanent site.

Installation of Equipment

The Project engineer, Romy Carballo, personally installed the equipment. About five local technicians, to whom he gave orientation and training, assisted him. The equipment was basically the same as that listed in Box 4 in Chapter 4.

The radio station was operating on a test-broadcast basis in time for a training course on community radio programming and production to be held. It covered approximately a 10-kilometre radius, reaching all corners of the island, although the signal reaching the town of Suba-Nipa was rather weak. The engineer assured the residents that the signal would reach further when the station was transferred to a new building where the antenna could be raised to about 100 feet.

Training Islanders to be Broadcasters

It was agreed that some 15 broadcast volunteers would be trained for three weeks. A set of criteria for the selection of trainees was agreed between the CMC, the Foundation and Tambuli. The local leaders - the Foundation and the CMC - would screen the applicants. If possible, there would a be reasonable balance between women and men, ethnic groupings, religious denominations, and political affiliations.

Of the 35 people who applied for the training course, only 15 were selected. Three of those not chosen offered to attend the course as observers. Farmers, fishermen, women, Muslims and young people were represented. Two elementary school teachers, a para-military soldier and the election registrar were also in the group.

Two of the participants had to walk seven kilometres daily to the training site and sometimes they had to be at the radio station at five a.m. in order to start the programme of test-broadcasts. Most of the other trainees walked at least a few kilometres.

The training team was led by an instructor from the University of the Philippines' Institute of Development Communication who works with radio DZLB of Los Baños, Laguna. He was supported by the Project staff. The course consisted of lectures, practical work, evaluation and actual broadcasts. The training subjects included: radio talks; voice performance; scriptwriting; news gathering, writing and delivery; magazine programme production; production of radio spots, jingles; public-service announcements; participatory productions in the community; radio laws and ethics; basic

communication theories and practices; and programming for a community radio station. A one-day exposure visit was made to existing radio stations in Pagadian City.

The trainees were given the chance to recommend programming formats and broadcast hours for the radio station, as well as to choose their leader. Val Toto Samonte, who was elected station manager, was a seemingly unlikely choice as a member of the paramilitary unit in the area. We in the Tambuli Management could not see that a soldier would be suitable to run a community radio station. But it turned out that Toto was the right choice, for he had leadership qualities, with a balanced social outlook. He proved dedicated volunteer.

Building the Studio

Recognizing the potential importance of the station in the community, the local government of Mabuhay donated a 400 sq. m. plot to the Foundation for a proper studio to be built.

A drive to raise money for the construction of the studio building was launched. The fact that the radio station was already going on air helped to convince community members to contribute. Initially, a "Piso-piso" (one peso per person) campaign was conducted. Many were happy to give not one but five or ten pesos each.

A raffle was also organized. Tickets were distributed to local residents and visitors as well as to the nearby towns. Each ticket, in booklets of twenty tickets, was sold for 100 pesos (US$ 3.50). Among the prizes were a cow, sacks of rice, and home appliances. In spite of hopes for bigger proceeds, the draw netted only around P50,000 (US$ 1,500) for the Foundation.

With contributions from the provincial government and from the Tambuli Project, a 25-square meter studio building and 100-foot antenna tower were erected in May 1994. Carpenters, as well as volunteer staff and other residents, helped construct the bungalow-type concrete building.

This was partitioned into an announcer's booth, technician's post and receiving-working area. Without adequate ventilation, the announcer's booth became too hot during the day and particularly in the summer months. So a local politician pledged an air-conditioning unit. It took more than two years, however, for the promise to materialize.

As well as providing a new home for the studio, the building accorded the radio station an independent status. It also served as testimony to the community's enthusiastic participation in the project . Moreover, it gave every Olutangan a rightful claim to ownership of the station.

Eventually, a 20-watt relay station had to be installed to cover the portion of Suba-Nipa that was not receiving the Mabuhay transmissions properly. But there were also occasions when the second station generated its own programmes, using a karaoke player-recorder to cater to the people of Suba-Nipa. The transmitter was installed in the house of the local youth leader.

An Island that Survives on Radio

One astonishing discovery was that despite the poverty of the island many people owned portable VHF amateur transceivers. In the coverage area of the Olutanga station, there were about 100 of these transceivers, known generically as Icoms, the commonest brand name. Some had been distributed by the government to Barangay leaders but, amazingly,

many were privately owned. Many of them were not properly licenced, and is not clear where they all came from. Some may have been illegally smuggled in, while others may belong to informers for rebel or Muslim secessionist groups in the region.

Regardless of whether or not they were covered by government permit, the VHF receivers were soon put to a good purpose, Toto Samonte seizing the opportunity to organize a radio club among VHF radio owners. More than 50 people attended the first call for an organizational meeting where officers were elected. In 1995, I conducted a two-day workshop on how the radio club members could participate in the broadcasts.

Today, the Icom owners make up a wide network of news gatherers, information feeders and regular participants in the programmes of the station (Tambuli supplied the radio station with a VHF base unit).

These VHF radio owners have multiplied the capacity of ordinary citizens to access the station, by making their equipment available to everybody in the neighbourhood either for serious information or for simple socializing purposes, such as song dedications and greetings. The radio station has served as the nerve centre for this regular and dynamic interaction.

By incorporating the VHF transceivers, the station has stimulated the participation of hundreds of people on the island, in a similar way to using the telephone in the big cities. The portable transceivers allow a variety of people from all corners of the community to discuss individual and community problems on air, covering everything from romance to politics or the economy.

Programming the Voice of Olutanga

Tingog sa Olutanga (The Voice of Olutanga) goes on the air daily, on broken schedule: from 05.00 to 07.00 h; 11.00 to a 13.00; and 18.00 to 20.00 hours.

The station runs mainly news and public-affairs programmes anchored by a main personality. Other producers and reporters join in with features, news, tips and regular programme segments.

Field reports coming from residents who own VHF transceivers make up most of the news and public-affairs programmes. The volunteer reporters have been instrumental in bringing more timely information, news, and public service to the islanders. Credited to the radio reporters are: news of delays and cancellations of ferry services; information on the availability of fruit tree seedlings, piglets, or other farm inputs for farmers; information about agricultural meetings; details on lost items, and help for the sick. On one occasion, a jail escapee was quickly recaptured thanks to the radio.

A popular programme is the weekly *Baranggayan sa Kahanginan*. This features items produced in the villages using the karaoke or song playback/recording machine. Thus, ordinary people with absolutely no training in radio organize programmes in their own neighbourhood, the taped programme consisting of songs, panel discussions, interviews, homemaking tips, poetry, etc. While programme elements are mainly entertainment and cultural, community problems are also discussed openly. The taped programme is then sent to the station for immediate airing. Freely ventilated, opinions and criticisms keep leaders and government officials constantly on the alert. And they find an opportunity to respond to people's views.

Since people have been conditioned by commercial radio to want entertainment, listeners demand that the station air music programmes. Some evening slots are therefore devoted to music requests and dedications, which include valuable life thoughts for reflection. Religious programmes find their place at weekends when the various denominations are given air time. The Sunday Mass is broadcast live for the predominantly Catholic community, as are services by other religious leaders, whether Muslims or Protestants. As in other Tambuli stations, the programming is proposed by the staff and approved by the Community Media Council.

Volunteer Staff

There are some six people who regularly anchor the daily programmes, with about a dozen others contributing portions and materials. All the anchors, including the station manager, work on volunteer basis. They have other sources of livelihood, such as fishing, teaching, farming, tending a store, or working in the municipal government. The main anchors receive a small allowance to cover their transportation to and from the studio.

Seven volunteer technicians, who have received training both on production and equipment operation, take daily turns at the station. One of them is a licenced radio communication operator. Others are either electricians or electronics repairmen. Announcers and technicians who participate regularly are given a small honorarium from the regular contributions received by the station from the community.

In addition, however, most announcers and technicians are the beneficiaries of a livelihood loan granted by Tambuli and administered by the Olutanga Islanders Media Development Foundation. This livelihood project aims to help them become engaged in a chosen livelihood project with a cost, on average, of approximately P5,000 (US$120). For this purpose, a workshop on entrepreneurship and micro-projects was conducted by an expert from the University of the Philippines' Institute for Small Scale Industries.

Most of the recipient volunteers chose an activity with which they were familiar and which was appropriate to their situation, such as duck raising, rice trading, upholstery making, operating a mechanical repair shop, fish farming, pig raising, etc. Ninety percent of the staff livelihood project participants were successful in their endeavour and have expressed readiness to pay back their loans.

The rest of the participants in the radio project, including members of the Community Media Council, work on a purely voluntary basis. Indeed as at most other Tambuli sites, staff members do not receive any honorarium or allowance.

Olutanga Dreaming

"Olutanga will be the best island in the Philippines!" Great optimism is present in Toto Val Samonte's voice every time he makes this statement over the radio. But for some islanders, the hope that Olutanga will be able to extricate itself from economic and geographic disadvantage is still a dream.

However, Toto exudes confidence as he discusses how self-help projects and perseverance can put the islanders forward on the air. The probability of Olutanga becoming the most highly developed of the region's islands may still be small, but I for one am an admirer of Toto for his selfless dedication and tireless efforts.

RADIO SAGARMATHA: A CASE STUDY FROM NEPAL

by Ian Pringle

Political and Legislative Context

In 1990, Nepal changed from a monarchical non-party system to a parliamentary model. A new constitution enshrined the right to freedom of expression, specifically the right for citizens to demand and receive information on any matter of public importance. This was followed by policy and practical guidelines: in 1992, a National Communications Policy; in 1993, a National Broadcasting Act; and in 1995, Broadcast Regulations.

Prior to 1995, radio broadcasting was the exclusive domain of Radio Nepal, the state broadcaster established in 1951. An attempt in 1984 to establish an independent station with support from UNESCO and Germany was not approved. Even after 1990, the authorities were slow to relinquish monopoly control of broadcasting. The first licence was granted in 1997, four-and-a-half years after the initial application, to Radio Sagarmatha, Nepal's first independent, community-based public-interest radio.

The Media Environment in Nepal

The mountainous nature of Nepal is ill suited to coverage by electronic media or to the mass circulation of print media. Access to all types of media is also limited by widespread poverty, low literacy levels - especially among rural women - and a very low level of electrification.

Until the coming of a democratic system in 1990, the electronic media - Nepal Radio, Nepal Television (established in 1984), and the official print media - two daily newspapers - were controlled by the government. Programmes and content, mainly generated in Kathmandu, are considered largely irrelevant to the rural population who make up some 80% of the total. Private media have increased in number but generally suffer the same limitations.

The liberation of the airwaves from state control brought commercial radio to Nepal. Initially, Radio Nepal established a FM frequency designed to generate revenue to subsidize its national AM service. The channel was sub-let to five commercial operators broadcasting mainly pop music aimed at young, affluent urban dwellers.

Given the limitations and constraints of national media and the commercialized and non-indigenous character of the new FM ventures, many journalists, independent media organizations and development agencies now envision small community-based public-interest radios throughout the country as an alternative. Radio Sagarmatha is a start in this direction. (Sagarmatha is the Nepali name for Mt. Everest.)

The Long Battle for a Licence to Broadcast

The battle for the licence was long and hard. The main organization in the campaign was the Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ), joined later by other organizations committed to seeing some inno-

vation in the country's communication system to address the needs of the new democracy. Their strategy was local FM radio and their goal became Radio Sagarmatha (RS).

The main obstacles were an unstable political environment, conservative politicians, bureaucrats disinclined to change and the monolithic presence of Radio Nepal. Drawn into the fight were figures of national prominence, professional associations, NGOs, the print media - including the government-owned dailies - foreign embassies, and UN organizations. There were four changes of government during the struggle, and with each new one, the lobbying and persuasion had to begin again.

In 1993, there was an international symposium on Community Broadcasting in South Asia held in Kathmandu. The then Minister of Communications was a principle guest. He was positively impressed and engaged NEFEJ in discussions about the next steps for legislative guidelines and regulations. But then the Government fell, and his successor was less receptive.

NEFEJ wrote an open letter concerning the situation and appealing for support from local groups as well as from foreign delegations to Nepal. The strategy yielded results, but just as the Minister seemed to be coming around, the government again fell.

While the struggle was in progress, practical preparations were being made to set up the radio station. Using the resources and radio production experience of NEFEJ, and with financial support from UNESCO and others, training and equipment acquisition was

begun. By the end of 1996, the foundations for a radio station were soundly placed. Only a licence was missing; it was still not forthcoming, despite the legislation in its favour.

By early 1997, the battle had been carried into the international media. The station had equipment and trained staff, but almost five years of struggle, waiting and playing by the rules had brought no licence. The key players were emboldened to take risks of punishment for unlicenced broadcasting: one year in jail and a heavy fine.

In early April 1997, NEFEJ requested a temporary licence to test its set-up. The request was met with silence. Acting on legal advice, NEFEJ decided to begin five days of test broadcasts anyway. The government was confused as to who was transmitting, until on the third day, RS's programme director deliberately informed the authorities. After a few hours a letter arrived from the Ministry of Communications demanding who had provided permission for the broadcasts. The government threatened strong action, reminding the station that their transmissions were illegal.

These events made news. Local and international media publicized the confrontation. The two government-owned dailies even published sympathetic stories on their front page. With the offer of free legal costs, NEFEJ was prepared to take the case to court.

During the controversial test broadcasts, the station announced that it would begin full broadcasting, with or without a licence, on 22 May, 1997, the Lord Buddha's birthday, a day of peace. The government was informed that if legal action was taken against the station, public and media support would be used against it in the upcoming local elections.

Three days later, four-and-a-half years after the application, the licence finally came. As the Government official handed it over, he said, 'You have won the war'. To which the RS programme director replied, 'Lately, you have obeyed the law!'

The licence that had taken so long to come had 14 conditions and restrictions, including: no commercial programmes; no political commentary or news on political events; broadcasting for only two hours per day; and submission of a weekly report to the Ministry. Nevertheless, Radio Sagarmatha began broadcasting as promised on 22 May, 1997, the first independent station in South Asia.

Organizational Establishment

NEFEJ, the driving force behind RS, focuses on environmental, development and human rights issues, working in a variety of media. In the late 1980s, NEFEJ began producing a weekly radio programme on environment and development that was aired on Radio Nepal. Space for a radio studio was included when NEFEJ moved to a new location in the early 1990s, but there was almost no equipment and the bulk of radio programme production was done at the studios of Radio Nepal.

In 1993, after the international symposium on Community Broadcasting in South Asia held in Kathmandu, a UNESCO mission to Nepal conducted a one-week course for journalists from NEFEJ and parallel organizations in basic radio production skills. Though operating with a minimum of equipment, the training was successful in focusing skills and promoting the idea of the station.

Both the symposium and the UNESCO mission solidified local and regional support for the project, drawing in other media organizations and producing a more detailed proposal for the station than that contained in the application submitted the previous year.

The studio equipment for RS began to arrive in 1994. For the first time, NEFEJ was able to produce programmes in their own studio. Though considered to be without a licence, RS was producing programmes. In early 1997, when the transmission equipment arrived, it began moving its operations to a more technically suitable and clandestine site, the house of one of the key players.

Relations with the Government Since the Licence

Despite the innumerable difficulties in obtaining a licence, subsequent official relations have been non-interventionist and productive.

By late 1998, the Minister of Communications was sympathetic to community radio and many pending and new applications had been approved. RS had its licence extended to 13 and then to 24 hours per day; it was granted permission to accept commercial advertising and to rebroadcast the BBC Nepali Service and BBC World Service in English; and it was licenced to provide a mobile service to be broadcast anywhere in the country.

Training and Recruitment

These have been integrated in the sense that performance during training courses and fellowships has been used to select staff. Most of the current staff and volunteers come from a journalistic background.

Following the first UNESCO-supported training course [1] in 1993, further courses and fellowships were organized in 1994 and 1995. NEFEJ and the Nepal Press Institute worked with UNESCO, Panos (London), DANICOM, and Worldview International Foundation for these activities. The fellowships provided opportunities for trainees to produce radio programmes on specific topics. Thus, there was an integrated plan for training/fellowships, programme production, and selection for employment.

Further training in 1996 and 1997 was supported by ODA (Great Britain) and Deutsche Welle (Germany). The former required programmes on community forestry. The partnership included training in interviewing skills, producing issue-based radio, programme assemblage and production. Deutsche Welle supported a training course for less experienced staff from RS and from other FM stations on basic radio production.

In October 1997, a small, focused, on-the-job training programme was organized for RS production staff with the assistance of a Danish journalist working in Nepal. The three weeks of training honed trainees' practical all-round skills. The programme was more individually-oriented than previous courses had been and it involved instruction, assignment of tasks and critique.

A second such course, which included more women, was conducted six months later for ten new recruits. In addition, another group of Panos fellowships was provided to produce programmes on AIDS/HIV.

Other support comes from Radio Netherlands who provided a fellowship in 1998 for a person to go to their training centre in Holland for four months. The Centre for International Studies and Cooperation, a Canadian NGO, supports RS with a general adviser.

Future Training and Recruitment: The station has yet to implement systematic training for volunteers, but, it has prioritized this in plans for 1999. Deutsche Welle has confirmed its support for an in-house, on-the-job workshop. There will also be regular, locally-driven training courses, with or without external funding or resources. Developing RS as a training resource for Nepal and for other countries in the region is a stated objective.

Organizational Structure

NEFEJ is the organizational umbrella for RS, though the station has officially become a partnership of four Nepali NGOs: NEFEJ, Himal Association, Worldview Nepal and the Nepal Press Institute.

The station is headed by a seven-member autonomous Board of Directors constituted by NEFEJ. The Board has representation from all four partner NGOs and meets monthly to review and plan activities, set policy and provide broad direction for the station.

RS is headed by a station manager/programme director. He sits on the Board of Directors as a member/secretary and is responsible for all day-to-day operations.

Staff

RS has the following staff: station manager/programme director; six full-time producers; two technicians; a music librarian; an engineer (on retainer); an accounts officer; and a station helper. There are some 26 volunteers who are an increasingly important part of RS's programming and operations. A significant number of them are reimbursed for expenses or paid a small honorarium.

Women's Participation

RS's informal policy is to develop the capacity and confidence of women within the organization, provide opportunities to women and, through broadcasts, to influence change in the orientation of women's roles. But despite this policy, the cultural bias in Nepal has kept women's participation low, though there have been recent improvements. Women make up about a fifth of the production staff and a third of volunteers.

Audience

There has been much audience feedback in the form of letters, phone calls and drop-in visits, from which some picture of the station's listening audience can be drawn. There are listeners among society's decision-making elite as well as in the shops of small merchants. There are listeners in rural sectors of the Valley as well as in urbanized households of the capital. It appears that listeners are mostly in the over 25 age range and that they possess some higher education, interest in events and issues in the public domain, or in local music and culture.

Some programmes on RS have targeted specific audiences, including children and parents, as well as the Tamang (a minority language) community and women working in the home.

Listenership and audience are difficult if not impossible to estimate without a comprehensive survey. But what is already clear is that RS has a strong profile as a serious broadcaster and one whose programming is all-Nepali and in the public interest - the thinking person's radio.

Community Access and Participation

Community participation has been limited compared to community stations in other parts of the world. The mainstays of production are paid journalists and programming is centrally planned, organized and directed. In many respects, RS sees itself as a public rather than community broadcaster, a responsible public spokesperson and facilitator as opposed to a vehicle for open community participation.

Nevertheless, RS's programming has given hundreds, perhaps thousands, the opportunity to have their voices and opinions heard in a public forum. On a daily basis, the station takes its listeners to the streets and into locations of everyday life as lived by real people.

The station's daily public-affairs magazine also includes two regular access spots: the first featuring comments from listeners who phone in and record their feedback onto an answering machine; the second is a vox-pop segment in which producers record opinions on a particular topic from people in the streets.

In a daily segment called It's My Turn Now, different members of the community speak their mind on a topic of their choice. The segment is pre-recorded and broadcast without editing. To date the platform has been shared by people from a variety of backgrounds and occupations.

Interactive phone-in programming has been delayed by the lack of a hybrid system to interface phone lines with the studio. RS expected to introduce this in 1999.

Community access exists in co-productions with local groups. Community groups and local NGOs produce weekly/monthly programmes with technical and production assistance from the station. This is an important source of programmes as well as a link to different segments of the community.

Technical Considerations

The Kathmandu Valley, an almost level basin of some 25 by 30 kilometres framed by hills, is an ideal location for FM broadcasting. The historical, economic and political capital and centre of the country, is home to the largest concentration of people, 1.5-2 million.

The test broadcasts in April 1997 used a locally made antenna and were from a low elevation, as were the first proper broadcasts beginning a month later. In November 1997, the station began looking for a new site which, at a higher elevation, could improve reception. The one selected after several tests is on the side of a hill overlooking Kathmandu; it has line of sight to most areas of the 25 x 30-kilometre basin. A house was rented and a new studio built.

Since it first went on air officially, the station has broadcast daily, even during moves to new sites, except in early 1998 when the transmitter, a 500-watt Allard model caught fire and was damaged. The station went off the air for 40 days until a 20-watt Chinese-made transmitter and a 100-watt amplifier arrived through UNESCO from the Tambuli project in the Philippines.

The studio and its equipment are essentially the same as when RS began, apart from some small items and a satellite dish with a tuner/decoder. Upgrading the broadcast studio and establishing a production facility with digital components is now a priority.

Programming

From the outset, Radio Sagarmatha has worked to present listeners with a combination of issues and entertainment, social discussions and music, as well as being a conduit for the variety of voices and opinions previously unheard on Nepal's radio channels.

For the daily two hours initially accorded under its licence, the new station chose 0700-0900 hours. RS introduced itself to the valley's listeners with two hours of Nepali music, from rare folk recordings to contemporary popular selections, interspersed with short messages and station announcements.

Public Interest: Public-affairs broadcasting is central to RS's mission for a more responsible media and a more pluralistic society. Using fellowships, RS early on produced a series of programmes about environmental conditions, cultural and social aspects of different regions of the country, AIDS/HIV, community forestry, drinking water, democracy in Nepal, etc. Since autumn 1997, RS has been broadcasting a daily magazine programme called Haamro Khaldo (Our Valley), which covers topical issues and brings in voices from a broad cross-section of society. Some of the issues covered have been: meter tampering by taxi drivers; thieves and pickpockets; prostitution; AIDS, leprosy, TB; increasingly declining air and water quality; child labour; abortion; and changing gender roles.

In addition, there is a weekly discussion of social, cultural and development issues called Dabali (Community Meeting Place), a blend of the traditional Nepali medium and space for public dialogue and discussion and the modern medium of radio.

Recently, RS has begun Safa Radio (Clean Air Campaign). Five days a week it broadcasts the results of air pollution measurements in different parts of the city. Once a week, the cumulative results are discussed on air.

Music and Culture: RS provides a clear alternative to commercial stations playing largely pop music; it broadcasts

almost entirely Nepali traditional, folk and modern music with some classical music from other parts of the world. It presents one daily and four weekly programmes devoted exclusively to music. A Tamang community group also co-produces a programme in both languages with Tamang music.

The station has an impressive music collection with many rare recordings and pieces of authentic national, cultural and historical significance. The collection has been obtained free of cost, with about half of it recorded from the library of Radio Nepal and the other half from donors.

Nepal has a long tradition of oral folk media. Until some 50 years ago, one source of news for communities were artists who spread the word about events, entertained, and educated through specially composed songs. RS utilizes these traditions in a daily serial. The station once invited a musical group from a village to record some of their music in the studio. They recorded ten songs in the traditional style adapted to contemporary issues. While in Kathmandu, they recorded a new song about an alarming aspect of their capital city... the pollution.

Co-productions: Local interest groups produce programmes for a particular audience on a particular topic. The editorial responsibility for the programme usually lies with the community group, with RS providing technical support and airtime. In addition to helping to fill the station's broadcast schedule, these programmes are also an important element of community participation.

Children's Programming: Sponsored by UNICEF, RS commissioned and broadcast a ten-minute serial, an educational soap opera involving a grandfather tree and a baby parrot. They interact with children who play

and listen at the base of the tree. It is produced by a famed Nepali comedy troupe. The serial is presented together with 20 minutes produced in-house of stories, poetry, discussion and participation by children themselves.

Mobile Radio: On the Road

In November 1998, RS received permission to run a mobile radio service anywhere in Nepal using the station's Kathmandu frequency, 102.4 FM. The idea was not to extend RS's Kathmandu service, but rather to bring the idea of local radio to some of the 80% of Nepal's people who live in rural areas and in small communities.

In 1999, a vehicle with a small studio, transmitter and a team of facilitators began to visit rural communities to do basic training and demystify radio so that local people could become interested in starting their own stations. RS has always been seen as a starting point for wider community-based radio services in Nepal. Indeed, momentum is now building fast, with several communities outside the Kathmandu Valley already on the way to starting stations.

Funding and Costs

The facility set-up, initial operations, training and fellowships were financed with international support. UNESCO provided about US$ 65,000. About half of this was for equipment. DANIDA provided operating funds in the second year, and as already noted, many other organizations have provided fellowships and training. Self-reliance is a priority, and after two years on air, RS was beginning to operate on locally earned revenues. The main strategy for achieving sustainability

is building partnerships with local organizations that will provide support as sponsors and co-producers of programmes. The recent lifting of the initial restriction on commercial advertising has also opened a potential source of revenue.

In 1999, the operational budget was US$ 2,750, per month, of which salaries absorbed about US$1,300. Revenue was estimated at US$ 1,075, mainly from co-productions and sponsorship. The balance of US$ 1,675 was provided by an operating grant from DANIDA.

1 For a complete view of this basic training and preparation for broadcast, see Carlos A. Arnaldo and Kjell Linder, *Establishment of a FM Community Radio* (Nepal, IPPC – 352 – NEP 01 Technical report), UNESCO (Paris, 1994).

"Sagarmatha is the old Nepali name for Mount Everest and literally means 'head in the heavens'. This is what Radio Sagarmatha intends to be, an intelligence permeating community thinking on issues of health, environment, education, social well-being and development of the community by sharing ideas with all through the radio waves."

Carlos A. Arnaldo

RADIO ADA, GHANA - A BLESSING ON THE DANGME PEOPLE

by Alex and Wilna Quarmyne

Introduction and Origins

Radio Ada is a rural community radio station in eastern Ghana. The station started broadcasting on 1 February 1998, and it has won a loyal following among its predominantly illiterate audience.

The origins of the station can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s, when the founders got their start in broadcasting: one with a small radio station in Monrovia, Liberia, that has since been washed away by the sea, and the other with one of the very first community radio stations in the Philippines, DZJO, that continues to operate today from its base in Infanta, Quezon. In 1982, one of the founders was instrumental in starting the first community radio in Africa, the ill-fated Homa Bay station in Kenya, on the shores of Lake Victoria, an experience that drove home the risks of such a venture in a continent hostile to independent information.

Indeed, there had been an earlier brush with this hostility in 1974, when broadcasting in Ghana was a government monopoly. Encouraged by private discussions with key officials in the Government, the founders of Radio Ada submitted a formal application for what, if approved, would have preceded Homa Bay as the first community radio in Africa. The application was turned down.

Legal Context

It took nearly two decades following this event to open the way for independent media in Ghana. In 1992, constitutional government was restored and, with it, the possibility of a new communications scene. The new Constitution, which came into effect in January 1993, states that: "There shall be no impediments to the establishment of private press or media; and in particular, there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a licence as a prerequisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for mass communication or information."

The process of establishing private broadcasting did not, however, start until February 1995. That was when the Ghana Frequency Registration and Control Board (GFRCB) issued guidelines for the submission of applications to operate private broadcasting stations.

Frequency Allocation

The application for Radio Ada's frequency was submitted on 17 March 1995 by its legal entity, Ghana Community Broadcasting Services, previously registered as a non-profit company. However, it was not until 16 April 1996 that the application for Radio Ada was accepted.

A positive aspect of the delay was that, in the interim period, private broadcasting companies had negotiated major reductions in the fees levied for the allocation of a frequency, originally set at the equivalent of about US$ 13,000 for all stations. In the event Radio Ada, as a community radio, only had to pay a tenth of this, and on 3 May 1996, it was allocated the frequency 93.7 FM for a period of five years. This was later changed to 93.3 for reasons that will be explained later.

Main Factors Considered when Starting Radio Ada

The information in Radio Ada's application to the GFRCB reflected the station's very specific sense of identity, in accordance with the following elements.

Objectives: The key elements that make up Radio Ada's sense of identity are embodied in its mission statement. This was crystallized from the expressed objectives and expectations of the station's volunteers and from other members of the community. The mission statement includes the following items:

- To support the development aspirations and objectives of the Dangme people in every sphere of life;

- To give a voice to the voiceless in every context and at all levels;

- To sustain the dynamic growth of Dangme culture within the national and the global polity;

- In all of this, to encourage, promote and contribute to informed dialogue and reflective action.

Coverage area and target audience: The primary target audience of Radio Ada resides in the four Dangme-speaking districts of Ghana. These are in the eastern sector of the country, within 100 km of Accra. Large parts of them still lack, or have only recently received, such basic infrastructure as piped water and electricity. The estimated total population of the coverage area is 600,000, over 60% of whom are illiterate. Poverty is widespread.

Language: Radio Ada broadcasts exclusively in the vernacular of its audience, Dangme. Dangme comprises five mutually intelligible languages - Ada, Gbugbla, Klo, Ningo and Se. There are marked cultural distinctions between the speakers of these languages. However, the linguistic interface, and the marginalization hitherto of the language in the national discourse, give them a special bond as a people. In recent years, there has been an effort in the educational and religious institutions to develop "standard Dangme", a uniform version of the languages. The policy at Radio Ada, however, is to use Dangme in its various, original and native spoken forms.

Location - base area: The station is in Ada in the Dangme East District. Theoretically, it could have been based anywhere in the coverage area, but one of the founders is a native son of Ada, which meant that the station started out with a reserve of trust that facilitated getting community support and local resources. At the estuary of the Volta River, Ada comprises two contiguous towns, Big Ada and Ada Foah, and their surrounding villages in a virtual *cul-de-sac* that gives residents a particularly intimate sense of community. Most residents in the area are engaged in farming and fishing.

Actual site: The site of the station building was chosen because of its easy access to the surrounding community. It sits in full view on the main feeder road to the national highway, at the junction to Big Ada and Ada Foah.

Name: The station's on-air name, Radio Ada, is drawn from its location, although it is a radio station for the Dangme-speaking community as a whole, not just Ada. Because of this, it has often been suggested that the station's name should be "Dangme Radio". The station has, however, retained the name Radio Ada because, while it promotes strong local cultures as a basis for sound national development, it also guards against chauvinism.

The building: The Radio Ada building was purpose-designed and built. It provides one on-air studio, two production studios with adjacent control rooms, two offices and a few small service rooms. The decision to construct was taken after it was established that converting an existing building, whether purchased or leased, would not be cost-effective.

The design tries to blend the essential elements of a professional broadcasting operation with the special requirements of a community radio station, especially the need for access and the realities of working in a rural area. For example, rather than being sealed off, the on-air studio looks out onto the main road, allowing anyone who comes to the station to see the announcer, or even passers-by on the road to exchange a wave with him. The ceilings are lined with "tsatsa", a local mat woven out of reeds which has proven satisfactory acoustically while also giving the studios a cool and indigenous feel.

Equipment selection: The equipment chosen reflects the station's dual character as a rural, community-based yet professionally complete broadcasting operation. The items of equipment are the best options technologically for their price, offering high performance with ease of operation, low energy consumption, and minimum maintenance.

Transmitter: The transmitter, a 350-watt Mallard unit, has performed exceedingly well in covering the target area, but it will soon be used only as a standby unit. It will be replaced by a 1-KW transmitter to enable the station to get a stronger signal into the nearby metropolitan areas, where there are sizeable Dangme-speaking populations, thus expanding its market potential.

Antenna Tower: The tower stands 150 feet high right next to the station building. It was built out of pieces of scrapped antennas after the cost of a shorter (100-foot) new tower proved prohibitive. It was hoisted by professional riggers working during their own time.

Studio equipment: Two of the three studios are fully equipped; the third is expected to be equipped soon. The on-air studio equipment consists of two sets each of professional compact disc players, minidisc and cassette recorders/players and a 12-channel audio mixer. The production studios have the same equipment, but of a semi-professional standard. The mix and performance of the equipment has proven entirely satisfactory.

Field recording equipment: Radio Ada attaches great importance to field recording equipment because of its emphasis on programmes originating in the community. Currently, it has four portable minidisc recorders and two professional and one semi-professional audiocassette recorders. After some initial resistance to the minidisc recorders because they seemed too high-tech, staff now favour them for their greater portability, recording quality, precision of operation, editing facility and efficient in-built rechargeable batteries. The high cost of minidiscs has lead to a policy of using them as masters with most programmes being dubbed on to audiocassette.

Funding: With long-term sustainability in mind, it was decided early that requests for donor funding would be limited to equipment. Land and the building were provided from the limited resources of the foun-

ders. For sentimental reasons, Radio Ada first solicited funds for its equipment from UNESCO[1], a pioneer agency in community radio. UNESCO regarded the request favourably but was able to meet less than half the cost. The shortfall for the equipment, except for one studio, was covered by the Stem van Afrika Foundation of the Netherlands and the World Association for Christian Communication.

Major Elements in Running a Community Radio

At the heart of running this community radio station are the following elements:

Programmes: Radio Ada broadcasts 17 hours a day between 0500-2200 hours. The programmes can be broadly divided into the following categories: news and current affairs, socio-economic development, local culture, religious, youth and general interest. Guiding programming is the station's holistic view that regards every programme as a potential tool for development. The main news offerings are three daily 15-minute bulletins and a daily 110-minute news magazine programme. The bulletins emphasize local news, especially stories filed by the station's volunteer stringers. A 10-minute market report is also broadcast on market days.

Programmes that are specifically development-oriented include four weekly half-hour programmes for four key occupational groups - farmers (women and men), fishermen, fishmongers (i.e. fishsellers who are also fish smokers) and drivers - as well as programmes on health, the environment and on literacy and development. All these programmes are produced and recorded in the field, based on the participants' concerns and interests, and they typically include discussions, interviews and spontaneous performances of traditional worksongs or other music

The occupational, as well as the literacy programmes, apply the principle of "narrowcasting" and are sandwiched between general-interest programmes during the optimum listening time for the target group. More occupational programmes are being developed, e.g. for artisans, traders and teachers, with the idea that every group in the coverage area should feel it has a "piece of the action" in the station. In addition to its news and development-oriented programmes, the station produces a weekly total of approximately 30 half-hour programmes in the other categories. Its programmes on local culture include storytelling, traditional cookery, Dangme bookreading, discussions on various aspects of culture, and a daily half-hour of traditional music featuring local groups recorded either at the studio or in the field.

One development-oriented programme on the environment is designed as a travelogue, with the producer going from village to village each week, highlighting its special features of interest and in the process calling attention to environmental problems. Despite the soft-sell approach, the message seems to get through. Arriving at a village one day, the producer noticed a sudden flurry. He had been recognized, and children were sent scurrying by their elders to fetch brooms and tidy up the area. While this was flattering confirmation that the producer's words were being heard, the ultimate objective of the station is that programmes should lead to sustained community action. This requires attractive, contextual presentations that build on people's knowledge and that are closely integrated with interventions on the ground.

Staff: Radio Ada's staff consists of about 50 volunteers. Fourteen work full-time. Twenty producers operate mainly in the field and come to the station at least once a week to discuss programmes, edit recordings, etc. Ranging in age from the early 20s to the early 50s, the volunteers include farmers, teachers, hairdressers, masons, civil servants, traders, school leavers and extension workers. Approximately a third are women. About half of the volunteers have full-time jobs outside the radio station, while the rest are self-employed or unemployed. When resources permit, the remuneration of a core group of staff will be considered. The founders of the station serve as its volunteer executive directors.

Staff training: Prior to their involvement with Radio Ada, none of the staff had had any experience or training in broadcasting. Except for five who went for short-term courses in radio production in Kaduna, Nigeria, all received their entire training through courses organized by Radio Ada. This was for two reasons: first, conventional training courses do not emphasize a development philosophy and community-based approach; second, conventional training normally requires qualifications that are unnecessary or even irrelevant for a community radio station. The basic criteria for volunteers at Radio Ada are simple and inclusive: commitment to the community, willingness to work as a volunteer, and ability to speak Dangme and English - the latter because the majority of the trainers did not speak Dangme.

All formal training was organized through a series of participatory workshops covering: participatory research tools, basic programme production, news production,

and announcing. The workshops, conducted by specialists who support Radio Ada's objectives, started out with its development philosophy and the necessary professional concepts and they offered practical, hands-on experience. Training, organized in various forms, has continued as a permanent activity of the station.

Management: Much of the management of the station is done by a committee of seven of the more senior volunteers. This establishes, implements and monitors policy on all aspects of the station and also maintains the station's bank account. A station coordinator is the acknowledged head but refers routinely to the executive directors. The decision-making of the committee is based on constant consultation with each other and with other volunteers. Team spirit and self-appraisal are fostered in monthly evaluation workshops involving all the volunteers, except for the news stringers who are not resident in the immediate catchment area.

Community support, access and participation: Prior to its application for a licence, the idea of setting up Radio Ada was discussed with, and informally endorsed by, the appropriate traditional leaders and government authorities in the intended host community. With the allocation of its frequency, the first task was to widen the process of building community support. This was concentrated on the station's immediate catchment area, from which it would necessarily draw its main resources. Built into the process was the recruitment and training of volunteers.

A community survey was conducted by these volunteers in July 1996. Its purpose was to introduce the idea of a development-oriented, vernacular station and solicit the ideas of the community on programming and

operations. The survey involved over 1,200 respondents in 42 villages who gave virtually unanimous, almost emotional, support to the idea of the station. Typical responses from the survey, during a community meeting, were:

"Yes, FM in Ada will be helpful. We do not hear about things happening on the radio. Anybody who rejects this idea must be jailed. In the old days we never had this chance. Now when it comes, we must embrace it. Now all of us can listen to our own voices. We can now listen...in our own mother tongue. It should come now, now."

The enthusiastic response of the community to the idea of the station has been sustained by the participatory character of its programming and operations. To give yet another opportunity for community participation, five minutes are set aside after the midday and evening news for a commentary where listeners may record their views on any subject, with the only proviso that they do not make slanderous or derogatory statements.

One commentary involved the leader of an association of women fishmongers. Traditionally, it is only the men who fish, and it is from them that their wives purchase fish to smoke and sell. The men sell at their price and the women keep any profits they make on their sales to consumers for the maintenance of their household.

In her commentary, the leader of the fishmongers bitterly criticized Radio Ada's market report and protested against the beating of some members of her association by their husbands. This is because when Radio Ada started broadcasting the market news, the husbands of the fishmongers angrily claimed that their wives were cheating them by selling at far more than the price they had paid to them.

In a presentation on Radio Ada, it was explained that the market prices reflected the cost and time of the 12 different processes involved, or value added, between the time of purchase and the time of sale of the fish. The presentation elicited respect and calmed the situation.

Audience reaction: Lacking the necessary resources, Radio Ada has not been able to conduct a formal listener survey. However, feedback is constant through the staff's interaction with listeners on their recording trips and the influx of letters and visits to the station. The feedback is consistent in characterizing Radio Ada as a "blessing on the Dangme community." Letters and comments from a variety of sources quote precise details, indicating that listeners pay attention meticulously to programme content. Many offer constructive criticism and make suggestions for other programmes. As many letters as possible are responded to in a weekly mailbag programme.

Reports from the field indicate that whole sections of towns and villages stop for certain programmes, such as the series of an indigenous street musician who weaves local legend and moral tales into song. For many, the station is clearly their only source of information of the outside world. It has also become a player in the life of the community, being called upon frequently to establish the veracity of issues and mediate in disputes.

Operational costs: Radio Ada has not solicited any subsidies for its operational costs. These are intended to be funded entirely from income from commercial advertising and from low-priced social announcements (e.g. obituaries). Currently, expenditure is mainly for utilities, supplies and, in the absence of a station vehicle, transport allowances which are calculated

at actual cost. After nearly a year in operation, and even with an all-volunteer staff, income is running at about half of expenditure. This is mainly because, with the many other tasks involved in establishing the station, not enough attention was focused on marketing. It is expected that with more aggressive marketing, the station will at least break even by the end of its second year of operation.

Problems and Difficulties Encountered

Problems: There were delays in the arrival of materials for the construction of the building, but even so it was completed in 13 months. The <u>transmission frequency</u> was the most serious problem. After Radio Ada's successful test broadcasts in August 1997, a powerful FM station in Lagos, Nigeria, began operating on the same frequency, effectively jamming Radio Ada and making it impossible to begin full broadcasting at Christmas 1997 as planned. Radio Ada had to apply for a new frequency, and 93.3 MHz was granted in mid-January 1998, postponing broadcasting until 1st February.

Sixteen days later, Radio Ada was surprised by sudden and severe <u>electricity rationing</u>. For a while, it tried to operate with generators borrowed, firstly, from an NGO and later from a local government department, but neither provided enough power for full operations. The programme schedule was cut to 10 hours a day. But listeners made impassioned pleas through the radio station to the local government authorities to provide it with a generator. Without Radio Ada requesting it, the Dangme East District Assembly donated a generator to the station in recognition of its vital services to the community. The station now operates seamlessly through power cuts.

Difficulties: The management of a large corps of volunteers presents special difficulties. These are addressed through dialogue, mentoring, and self-criticism and evaluation. However, even with paid staff, there would be a shortage of the necessary qualities and skills. At the same time, there is a shortage of trainers with participatory development experience, competence in radio programme production and relevant vernacular language skills.

Another difficulty is that the development services are too weak to be able to support and follow up on radio programmes properly. In the circumstances, and since the task is too important to be postponed, the station has to try to energize and facilitate those services. Accessing resources to meet all these needs is a full-time job for several people - who do not at present exist.

The station has not yet developed the marketing strategies required for accessing the advertising potential of the market. There is a need to introduce the "culture of advertising" to the small enterprises and traders in the coverage area to generate revenue for the station. This advertising drive is a task that will require care to ensure that the objectives of the station are not compromised.

Main Lessons Learnt

The first year of operation has been an important lesson in validation: for the community, that radio can play an essential and developmental role in their day-to-day lives; for the volunteers, that they have the capacity to run and maintain a broadcasting station; and for the station itself, that it provides a vital and appreciated service.

The main lesson learnt is that, in the interests of sustainability, the commercial aspects should have been addressed from the very beginning. There was so much pressure to get the station up and running that no staff were assigned to "sell" the station's services.

This is particularly urgent now because the achievements of Radio Ada have carried their own momentum. Overnight, the station outgrew its capacities. The community response has been such that the station is called upon for a greater variety of outreach services than ever anticipated. The necessary resources exist but the station must now help to mobilize them.

The final lesson is more of a reminder: in addition to material resources, knowledge and skills, it needs faith and solidarity to carry an idea forward - as Radio Ada's volunteers have amply demonstrated. Admonishing a fellow volunteer for his priorities in giving more time to party politics than to the station, a volunteer said: *"Party politics is for four years. Radio Ada will be here forever."*

1 Alex Quarmyne worked with UNESCO for many years promoting community radio. On retirement, he and his wife returned to his home community to start Radio Ada.

BUSH RADIO 89.5 FM, SOUTH AFRICA - PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

by Zane Ibrahim and M. Adams

The Context for Community Radio

After years of broadcast monopoly by the (then) Apartheid state's South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), "the struggle to free the airwaves" has been won. SABC was restructured and in 1993 an Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) was established. Since the first licences were issued in 1995, South Africa now has more than 85 independent radio stations, and community radio is here to stay. (See Chapter 3 for details of South African legislation.)

The presence of community radio has changed the face of broadcasting in South Africa. It has recruited a countless number of volunteers and community workers who actively participate in their stations. In addition, the sector has managed to attract advertisers, and in certain instances, stations are generating a fair income from selling airtime and promoting events. However, the stations that have achieved most in terms of financial independence are, in one sense, victims of that success: they are often seen as too commercial to belong fully to the developmental community radio sector.

The community radio sector has shown, in its short existence, a tremendous ability to survive. However, the need to continue developing, training and most importantly, to work toward self-sustainability is clear.

Donor support has been excellent over the last few years, especially for broadcast equipment. Some stations also receive core funding for daily operations. It seems clear that for now, donor funding remains one of the few dependable options for start-up support. In moving toward self-sufficiency, many stations have identified other possible income sources, the most prominent of which, apart from advertising, are membership fees and community fund-raisers.

Getting Started

In the late 1980's, a small group of people interested in the development of an alternative audio communication system formed an organization that recorded information on cassettes in radio format, made duplicates, and distributed them in and around Cape Town.

The organization was called CASET (Cassette Education Trust), located in a small office in Salt River. Its objective was to inform and educate the poor on subjects like literacy, hygiene, health and of course relevant political issues. Since its humble beginnings, the initiators of the project always knew that broadcasting would be integral to its long-term educational and empowerment objectives. CASET began to discuss the idea and its potential, and eventually proposed establishing a community radio facility at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), just outside Cape Town.

After much deliberation, however, it became clear that the UWC campus would not be a suitable location: it was too far away to be accessible to the black community as a whole. In fact, UWC had been built in 1960 for "coloured" people, a racial definition that defined persons of a hybrid origin. The College, located far from the city and surrounded by dense bush, soon became known as Bush College and its campus cafeteria radio station was known as Bush Radio.

In due course, CASET was dissolved and recreated as an aspirant community radio initiative. Keeping the original campus name, Bush Radio was born. Constituted in 1992 as a Voluntary Association, owned and operated by its members, it focused on getting the community on air. The objective was to give black people the opportunity to be broadcasters. Money was needed to keep the initiative afloat. Many donors were approached until finally the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), a German foundation involved in broadcasting training, provided support.

News of the FES support spread. The concept of community radio was exciting and applications for training from all over started to flood in. Bush Radio soon established itself as a key trainer and lobbyist for the establishment of community radio in South Africa. Pressuring the government to grant it a licence to broadcast and training fledgling stations across the country, Bush Radio slowly established both itself and the concept of community radio as a significant force.

Defiance

After a number of licence applications were rejected, Bush Radio decided to broadcast illegally. In May 1993, a group of volunteer activists took the station's

equipment, including its illegally obtained transmitter, into a room, set it up, and prepared to switch on. A press release was circulated, a short programme schedule was designed, and a song was composed. After a few test runs, Bush was ready. Interspersing short drama, talks, short poems, and comic turns, Bush Radio went on air.

The broadcast lasted four hours before the authorities invaded the premises and seized the equipment. Bush Radio's two key members were charged on three counts: illegal broadcasting; illegal possession of broadcast apparatus; and obstructing the course of justice. The case dragged on, but friends and supporters nationally and internationally understood why Bush Radio members would risk being jailed for the right to be heard. After tremendous pressure from individuals and organizations world-wide the state dropped the charges eight months later.

Training and Activism

During the next two years, the country witnessed massive political change and prepared for its first democratic elections. Meanwhile, Bush Radio continued its quest to get the community on air. It pursued and vigorously implemented its national training activities. It became the first South African community radio initiative to join the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), and continued to champion the cause for the establishment of community radio in South Africa.

At the beginning of 1993, the FES donated a fully equipped studio, for the primary purpose of training. It was indeed a wonderful sight. Bush Radio was starting to look like a real radio station.

A full-time training co-ordinator was brought on board. The courses included: introduction to community radio; features and documentary production; women and technology; and managing community radio. The activities were in essence the training of trainers. Participants were expected to return to their stations and gradually train their volunteers. Other organizations soon became involved, and partnerships and exchange programmes were established with Deutsche Welle, Radio France Internationale, USIS, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

National institutions, including the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism and the Media Training Centre also started to offer radio courses. So a resource of basic radio production and management skills was slowly established. Radio training, networking, and lobbying, were together sowing the seeds for today's community radio movement in South Africa.

To promote the cause of community radio further, a National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) was established in 1994 to lobby government and co-ordinate and guide the sector. Initially operating from the offices of Bush Radio, the NCRF later raised its own funds, and set-up an office in Gauteng. By the end of 1994, more than a hundred licence applications for community stations had been submitted to the IBA.

Licence at Last

In June 1995, exactly seven years after CASET made its first commitment to get the people on air, Bush Radio received its licence. But the IBA had to work with an inherited frequency plan that could not accommodate the flood of licence applications. And because of Cape Town's notorious Table Mountain,

they offered Bush Radio a shared frequency, a 50/50 split with a community station called C-Flat. Although not perfect, everyone was happy. Bush Radio broadcast daily from 14.00 to 02.00 hours and C-Flat took over until 14.00 hours, and so on.

Getting Ready to Broadcast

The mission to get a licence was achieved, and the people now had to go on air. Until that time, Bush Radio had three full-time staff, a pool of trained and enthusiastic volunteers, and a well-equipped training studio.

Activity now needed to be focused on successful programming, marketing, and fund-raising for an operational station. In July 1995, Bush Radio held a strategic workshop to assess, plan and establish a common vision for its future activities. Bush Radio membership had grown to 1,000 and there were about 100 active and trained volunteers. Countless NGOs were also keen to support and get involved in the service of community radio.

A schedule of programmes including both entertainment and education was debated with the members. Strong emphasis was placed on representing the culture, language and aspirations of our local communities with honesty and pride. The three dominant languages in the Cape (Xhosa, English and Afrikaans) were naturally approved as the broadcast languages for the station. The motto we agreed was: "It's yours, its mine, it's ours."

With a programme schedule agreed and with less than eight weeks before going

on air, volunteers rushed to attend brush-up courses, programming meetings and other preparations. The Soros Open Society Foundation funded a state-of-the-art broadcast facility.

Finally, Bush Radio began broadcasting at 14.00 hours on 1 September, 1995. This is National Women's Day. As a mark of the importance the station gives to women in the country's development, the station had deliberately chosen to start on that day.

Bush Radio recently relocated to new and larger premises, still in Salt River. The 300 sq.m location, on two floors is twice as big as the previous one. The complex is a sophisticated analogue training, production and broadcast facility, probably the most technologically advanced community station in the country.

Sound Management and Community Participation

Bush Radio was originally structured as a Volunteer Association, guided by an appointed board of trustees and an executive committee. Once on air, it was decided that in order to move toward self-sufficiency, a new structure was needed. The Board opted to create non-profit company, and this has facilitated operating the station. It also puts it in a position to attract sponsorship and support from the business community because a company has a better organizational base.

One of the legal requirements is that a seven-member board of directors be set up to account for the assets and operation of the company. Bush Radio's newly appointed directors are both highly skilled and fully committed to the station. Their portfolios include, fund raising, programming, marketing, staff, etc. The board comprises some of Cape Town's top achievers.

Community participation is at the core of Bush Radio's operations. At the outset, it was made clear that the station is in existence for only one reason: to serve the community. Everyone from the community is eligible for membership and training. Through its broadcasts, productions, and training, the station maintains contact with its target communities.

In addition, outside broadcasts held in these communities give access for participation, as well as maintaining and expanding the volunteer base, which at present numbers about five hundred; many have been a part of Bush Radio since its inception.

Members come from all sectors of the community representing various interests, cultures, and languages. They include students, single mothers, the disabled, gay activists, the unemployed and the recently retired. The members have direct access to all aspects of the station, from administrative and financial matters to programme content and training needs. Policy discussions and workshops are held once a month and the community is invited to give their inputs for running the station. Community control and ownership is thus assured.

Overview of Programming

The challenge is to offer identifiable voices and role models on air. Music programmes focus on non-mainstream music e.g. hip-hop, reggae, R&B, jazz, blues, and jungle, as well as on popular local music. The music slots often include competitions, call-ins, interviews, gig guides, music charts, and even comedy. An objective is to promote local artists and performers, as well as genres of music not usually available on commercial radio.

While music is a vital component, the station remains committed to tackling issues that engage and educate the community. It therefore prefers to host discussions and air features that facilitate information exchange, critical thought, and debate. In features and talk shows, Bush Radio makes available a broadcast platform for members of the community who ascribe to the objective of "true" development. Recently, it launched a refugee programme, run by refugees, with the aim of informing the public of their plight.

Some specific regular programmes are:

Backchat: Representatives of various community organizations explain the role they play and how the community can access their services. From discussions and calls during these programmes, it appears that not enough has been done to inform the community of the various organizations that can help them. These services include help for rape victims, health, childcare, pensions for the aged, etc.

Community Law: Produced by 4th and 5th year UWC law students, factual information that the general population seldom has explained to them is provided on a variety of issues. Care is taken to carefully outline even the simplest of laws or human rights. Phone-in segments of the show have proved to be extremely popular, while written requests for information are also encouraged.

Everyday People: This daily, 3-hour programme is in music magazine format. It uses mainly local music and its emphasis is on township developments. The music is interspersed with public-service announcements, information bulletins, notice-board news, competitions and call-ins. It has a high profile in the community, and it is the only local youth programme that reflects the dialect and personality of Cape Town's Xhosa speaking people.

TRC Report: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to help the nation heal itself after Apartheid. Bush Radio hosted a member of the commission on a fortnightly basis. The commissioner would elaborate on the station's news report on the TRC happenings of the week. The discussions often clarified and provided missing detail on the Commission' hearings. On several occasions, the station's guests were asked questions by callers that they found to be important and worthy of further investigation.

TAXI TALK: Minibus taxis are the only reliable means of transport to and from the townships. However, escalating rivalry amongst taxis have led to gun battles where passengers are also shot and killed. Bush Radio and the Shell Oil Company joined forces and produced Taxi Talk, a programme where all involved were invited to the station to discuss their grievances. The Federal Minister of Transport also played a major role in mediating between the parties.

Rape and Alcoholism: Rape of women of all ages has reached epidemic proportions. Bush Radio has established groups doing in-depth studies to find the best way to develop programmes that will assist in helping to reduce and even eliminate this social disease. Alcoholism plays a major part in it, and for this reason the station refuses to advertise alcoholic products. Similarly, it does not carry tobacco advertising for health reasons. Once produced, the rape and alcoholism programmes will be offered to all other community radio stations.

A Training Station

As important as broadcasting is to Bush Radio, the station remains essentially a training centre. Emphasis is placed on developing potential broadcasters from the community, rather than on just filling airtime. Apart from the manager and administrator, all of Bush Radio's staff are in-service trainees, gaining valuable on-the-job experience in areas like news, music, features and programming.

Each year, the station receives hundreds of applications for training from communities nationally, and in some cases from initiatives abroad. Much attention is paid to the selection criteria for trainee candidates and their future ability to pass on their skills. Bush Radio has developed training methodology and basic curricula to suit trainees' varied cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds.

During its first two years on air, much of the activity of the station was directed at building and maintaining solid programming and management. This meant that training had to take a back seat. Now that the station is more settled in its broadcast ability, and in response to much demand from the sector, it has returned to its training focus. In September 1998, Bush Radio launched a new fully equipped facility, streamlined and geared toward a comprehensive radio training programme. Training involves broadcast journalism and technical and management skills. These are sophisticated fields of study, and Bush Radio continues to offer much-needed introductory level training programmes in them.

Overview of Courses

Introductory courses: These cover different forms of radio, community radio and its role, an introduction to field recorders, reel-to-reel machines, studios, basic editing, various programme formats and the role of producers, presenters, reporters, engineers, etc. At the end of the course, trainees have enough knowledge to be able to function at a minimum level of competence.

In-service trainees: A practical one-year on-the-job experience, structured to offer young graduates or others an opportunity to learn while working in the field of radio. They work in the following areas:

News: In-service trainees are required to gather information, log, edit, and read the news live on air.

Music: The trainees are expected to ensure that the local content quota, as stipulated by the IBA, is adhered to. They also help to maintain the music library, develop links with record companies, and ensure that the station is offering a balanced variety of music on air.

Production: Apart from technical aspects of programme production, trainees spend much time learning about the community's development needs e.g. in health, safety, education, etc. The amount of research is sometimes overwhelming, but trainees gain essential skills for programme planning.

Programme management: Many stations have problems in the area of programming expertise. The programme management part of the course assists the trainee in

carefully assessing the needs of the station, the resources available to it, and the make up of the community. The trainee is enabled to design, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive programming schedule.

Prison Radio

Bush Radio was approached by the Criminology Department of the University of Cape Town to develop a training programme for young prisoners to be trained to operate a radio station. After months of negotiations with prison officials, a viable plan that would enable prisoners to operate a simple radio station within the facility was drawn up. The enthusiasm shown by the participants convinced the authorities that the therapeutic effect the programme had on the inmates were beneficial to their rehabilitation. The project continues and it is expected that several other prisons will be receiving equipment as well to duplicate the project.

Lessons Learnt

Management and operation: For the station to operate efficiently, there must be constant development through training and other professional activities. Internal communication is essential. Regular staff meetings should be held to make sure that everyone has a clear understanding of where they fit into the organization. These meetings can also be used to encourage resource and idea sharing among the staff.

Staff members should be encouraged to form strong contacts with the volunteers. In Bush Radio, we have learned that staff members tend to develop feelings of superiority over the volunteers, probably because we are situated in an area with a high unemployment rate. To be employed at a radio station also has an element of glamour.

Marketing the station is also very important if the station is to become self-sustaining.

Volunteers: Most of the volunteers at Bush Radio come from deprived communities, i.e. from the station's target audience. They often have limited educational levels and most are unemployed. The communities that many of them have grown up in are very tough. They have a dire lack of role models, facilities and amenities. Thus, community radio often is subjected to a high level of theft, abuse, resistance to authority and change, a lack of self-confidence, pride and commitment, and an inherent apprehensive attitude towards training and education. Very few volunteers understand the concept of volunteerism, its responsibilities and limitations. In effect, most of the community radio's target constituency simply cannot afford to volunteer. They are so poor that some travel to the station on public transport illegally.

Nevertheless, the commitment of some of the volunteers is astounding, but despite their energy and vigour, and even when they get on air, it is difficult to depend on their input. Without compensation, they run out of steam and often, just when programmes have reached a steady following, the volunteer participants are drawn to job offers, family commitments, or other more viable activities.

Women in training and recruitment: Women are often excluded from areas that require technical knowledge. For this reason, Bush Radio has a policy that no training programme can begin unless at least 50% of the trainees are women.

Community access and participation: A community radio station must be constantly trying to find ways of providing the community with easier access to it. Apart from encouraging staff, volunteers and interested parties to come forward with ideas, Radio Bush encourages visits to the station. However, these have had to be limited to certain days and hours. If not, too many people hang around and disrupt operations.

Fund-raising: The expectations of the donor and those of the project have to be carefully discussed and agreed upon before any funding takes place. Many projects suffer as a result of misunderstandings. The station must abide by its mission statement in any application for funding. Too often projects compromise their mission statement in order to receive funds. In the long run this creates confusion.

There are many different formats used for applying for funding. There is nothing wrong with contacting a potential donor and asking what information is needed, whether there is a regular application form, and so on.

Many donors also expect to be kept informed on a regular basis. This should be done whether it is asked for or not. It is good to keep a donor or programme sponsor up to date on developments at the station.

RADIO CHAGUARURCO, ECUADOR - NOW YOU'RE NOT ALONE

by Bruce Girard

The Roots in Latin America

It was in Latin America that the world's first community radio experiences were initiated 50 years ago when two very distinct movements turned to radio as a way of both increasing their influence and of contributing to community development. These were Radio Sutatenza in Colombia and the Miners' Radios in Bolivia (see boxes 1 and 2 in Chapter 1).

From these roots of rural Christian social development and militant trade unionism, community radio has grown to have significant presence in Latin America; church, commercial, university, trade union and indigenous peoples' radio stations have combined to make the region's radio the most dynamic and diverse in the world.

A Need to Communicate

Radio Chaguarurco, located in a rural part of Ecuador's southern province of Azuay, is a young station that continues in the tradition of Latin American community radio. The idea of setting it up started with a series of workshops in 1990. These were organized by campesino organizations and by the local churches in the counties of Santa Isabel and Pucará, in the province of Azuay.

The workshops were intended to organize the communities so that they might gain access to basic services, such as drinking water and electricity, and to ensure that human rights were being respected.

A document written by the station's founders explains the process that launched the radio station:

"We started to talk about what we needed; first we mentioned electricity and drinking water, but after that, we started talking about communication, about being able to share a common reality and being able to analyse it in order to improve it. That was how Radio Chaguarurco started. Some people who didn't live in the countryside asked why a community radio station was necessary when there were so many other priorities? Isn't a radio station a luxury? Sure, there are lots of other needs: health, nutrition, education, day-care, better agricultural techniques to improve production. But rather than patching things up to fulfil our needs temporarily, it's important to think about the causes of the problems, about the injustice and inequality that cause poverty and marginalization."

The director of the station says that the idea grew out of the need to communicate. Because of Radio Chaguarurc's location, it is very difficult to receive radio stations from the region. Few people have access to television, and even fewer to newspapers. Telephones are still unavailable in many of the towns, and they are not available at all in the countryside, where most people live.

The communities are very scattered. Some are only 30 minutes from the county centres, where the political structures and the markets are located, but others are between one and 12 hours' walk away with no roads. For the population of such communities, it is practically impossible to be in daily, or even weekly, contact with the centres.

Communication began to be seen as a necessity by the Church and campesino organizations in the area. The idea of a community radio station thus caught on quickly, and within a few months it became one of the main topics of discussion during workshops. People in rural areas were used to being excluded from the media, so they were excited about having their own radio station, a platform for talking about the necessities of their communities and about the problems in getting basic services.

No doubt, the idea of a radio station was a good one, but who would make it a reality? A frequency and government permission would be required. Equipment would have to be bought. Who would own the station? Where would the station be located? Which communities would it serve?

The local Church and the peasant organization, Proyecto Norte, quickly emerged as the two main backers of the project. They had collaborated on previous development projects and had participated in the discussions about a radio station from the outset. Helped by the area's representative in Congress, they started laying plans.

The first problem was obtaining a broadcast licence. In 1992, Ecuador's law did not recognize community radio. Getting a commercial licence involved a complex process that, even after years of waiting, could easily fail. But there had been a station in Santa Isabel in the past. Even though the man it belonged to had died

and the station had been off the air for many years, the commercial licence was still valid. Buying a station with a licence still requires government permission, a process almost as complicated as being assigned a new frequency. But it was a definite possibility.

With the process of legalizing the ownership of the frequency underway, the next step was deciding where the station should be located.

Santa Isabel and Pucará

Santa Isabel is a county capital with a population of 3,000 people. It seemed the logical place for the station, for it was the largest town in the region and an important market centre. Apart from the Church, the central plaza is ringed by banks, doctors' offices and shops. It is less than two hours from the provincial capital of Cuenca, and because it has a telephone service, it is an important communications centre for the region. At an altitude of 1,500 metres, it has a perfect climate for growing tomatoes, onions, and even sugar cane, products that are sold throughout Ecuador.

The village of Pucará, also a county capital, has a population of less than 1,000 and is only 40 kilometres from Santa Isabel. However, the non-stop bus takes two hours to climb the unpaved road to more than 3,100 metres above sea level. In the rainy season, the road can be closed for days at a time. There are no telephones and when the road is closed, the village is incommunicado.

Pucará, where the road ends, has a single street in a tear-shaped loop, with a brightly painted Church in the middle and a perimeter of breath-taking mountains

and valleys. This majestic view camouflages a harsher reality. With an average annual temperature of only 12 degrees and nights that drop to near zero, Pucará's climate supports little more than subsistence agriculture - the staples of beans and potatoes - and a precarious living. But Pucará did have one important advantage for a possible radio station: its altitude and more central location meant that, from a technical perspective, it was a better place to locate the transmitter than Santa Isabel. In any event, the town's residents only make up 20% of the total population and the main target audience would be among the rural 80%.

However, the question of where to put the station also had a political dimension. The community where the station was located would be more likely to have its concerns broadcast, its members on air, and to benefit most from it.

The solution was to put the transmitter in Pucará, the administrative centre in Santa Isabel, and to put studios linked via microwave in both communities. Thus, when Chaguarurco's director talks about the radio, he says it is actually two stations sharing a single frequency and a single identity.

Local information is gathered at both. News programmes are also duplicated, with two anchors, one in Pucará and one in Santa Isabel. Some interviews are also duplicated, with the interviewer in one community and the person being interviewed in the other. Some music programmes are produced only in Pucará, and others only in Santa Isabel, but many programmes are produced in both locations.

At the time of writing, a third studio was under construction in the village of Shaglly. This has a population of only 250, but it is the nearest

community for 2,500 rural dwellers. There are plans to continue the decentralization process by establishing new studios in other communities.

The Chaguarurco Foundation

The issue of ownership of the station was as important as that of location. From the beginning it was agreed that it would not be owned by the local priest, or by the parish, or by any single person. It was to be owned by the people. In September 1992 the Chaguarurco Foundation for Rural Development was established with representatives from campesino organizations in the two counties, from the Catholic parishes, and from the workers and volunteers of the radio station. The radio is under the care and supervision of the Foundation, ensuring that the people, who in effect own it, will always be in control and have access to it.

The Chaguarurco Foundation's board meets every three months, with extraordinary meetings held when necessary. The board receives reports from the station director and makes the important programming and budget decisions.

By the time the Foundation was set up, the dream of the radio station had been circulating for almost two years. Nobody foresaw that they would have to wait another two-and-a-half years to see how the Foundation would function, obtain funding for the equipment, get approval for a frequency, and train people for the station.

Funding in the region is difficult, and the project was going to be an expensive one. The area's geographic characteristics called for an AM transmitter, which was substantially more expensive than an FM one. The 5 kW Nautel transmitter, including its antenna

and installation, was going to cost US$80,000, more than the community could ever put together on its own. Once the Foundation was established, it started the slow process of getting the money together from local and international sources. However, even though they needed the money, the community was not prepared to sacrifice the station's independence for it.

Practically all new equipment was needed; what was available in the old station was not even good enough to put in a museum. The transmitter, antenna and installation were donated by the Spanish aid agency, Intermon. Caritas, Manos Unidas, some Spanish volunteers and a solidarity group in Madrid also helped. The Church in the provincial capital, Cuenca, donated a pickup truck.

Donations were only sought for equipment and installation. The Foundation was determined that the station would pay its way, and that is what has happened.

Training the Community

While the process of legalizing the purchase of the frequency crept slowly ahead, a group of volunteers began training people from the community. One problem was that nobody working on the project had had any experience in radio, apart from two Spanish volunteers who had a little experience in community radio stations in Madrid.

In essence, those involved had to train themselves first in order to be able to train others. They read whatever books they could find and travelled to other stations to see how these were run. Experienced radio people were invited to speak and to give courses. In the end, a manual and a trainers' package were produced based on what had been learned. Then the

newly-trained trainers went out to start training the community volunteers.

Serious training started in December 1993. The idea was that each community would look for a person that they considered to be an appropriate correspondent. In addition, there was a general invitation to anyone who was interested to participate in the courses.

Four trainers divided the work between December 1993 and October 1994, going to different communities week by week. There was no shortage of volunteers. Many of them walked four, five or even six hours to get to the place where the courses were held. There was particular enthusiasm in one village where there had been many conflicts and much abuse of power by the authorities. Some people had even been killed. People believed that the radio would help them put an end to such abuses.

In November 1994, the staff was selected from among those who had been trained. In December they underwent a month of intensive and more specialized training. The ongoing training and discussions about the radio kept the project moving forward and people involved. However, five years had passed since the project was first discussed and the wait had a cost. Some people had got discouraged and had left.

However, the station finally went on the air on 1 January, 1995. As one participant remembers:

"It was the most beautiful thing. With lots of people listening. We were crazy. Greeting all the people. Thanking the ones who had been with us since the beginning, those who had taken courses with us, the correspondents. Making calls to Cuenca to see if the signal reached the city. There

were people who knew we were going to be on the air, and they called us. We played lots of music and every few minutes announced, 'This is Radio Chaguarurco! We're on the air! Listen to us on 1550 kilohertz! Tell your neighbours to listen!'. It was crazy!"

'Now you're not alone'

After years of waiting, people's expectations were high. They were not going to be satisfied with a station that sounded like all the rest. They wanted to hear their own experiences and concerns, told in their own voices and in their own language. Now there was a communication medium where people could talk, say what they felt, and denounce officials who were giving them a hard time. The phrase, 'Now you are not alone' summed up the sentiment produced by the station.

To produce the kind of radio that the community wanted called for a special kind of radio producer. Only four of the eight full-time staff and 20 volunteers had ever formally studied journalism. The others learned their skills in Chaguarurco's own courses, but all of them now work as journalists and programme producers. Five of the full-time staff are based at the station in Santa Isabel, and the other three are based in Pucará.

The staff in the station are in fact almost volunteers. Their salaries are not even the minimum that the law requires. However, as the radio's income rises, their salaries will also increase gradually.

Role of Volunteers

In addition to the paid staff, there are some 20 volunteer producers. Six of them are correspondents in surrounding villages. They gather the news in their areas and periodically travel to the station with their stories and tapes. The station supplies them with tape recorders and rechargeable batteries. Proceeds from an annual raffle are used to pay their bus fares.

One volunteer produces a one-hour music programme six days a week. It features Ecuadorian music, which is a special interest she developed at a time when this was unavailable on the radio. She uses her personal collection of records and tapes and says that the radio programme has "collectivized" it.

Other volunteers produce a weekly market programme, hosted simultaneously in Pucará and Santa Isabel. This looks at prices and trends in the area's markets. It has played an important role in controlling speculation.

There is a constant turnover among the volunteers, and for this reason the station continues to offer regular training courses to new ones.

Participation and Programming

There are important characteristics that distinguish Chaguarurco from other stations in the region. The most important is the priority the station gives to local voices, language and culture. Unlike radio stations in the city, which have announcers who try to hide any regionalisms in their accents or their language, Chaguarurco's announcers celebrate their own way of speaking. Another important distinction is that the station actively seeks the participation of people from the countryside, inviting them to visit the station, to tell their stories, to sing, or just to greet their friends and family over the air.

The station also plays an important role as a communication channel at the service of the communities - a telephone service for those who do not have it. When places in the radio's coverage area are without roads and are difficult to reach, the people who live there listen to the station for information about impending visitors so they can be ready for them.

For example, the community health project has a medical team which periodically visits remote communities. Before the radio went on air, this would travel to a community and lose hours or even days waiting for the news of its arrival to get out to the people in the countryside, and for the people to travel in to where the team was waiting to attend them. Now the radio announces visits ahead of time, and the community is ready and waiting for them.

Health matters are very important to the station. They are covered, for example, in radio dramas that the station produces and broadcasts daily. The dramas have characters that the people in the countryside can identify with. They chat with each other and tell stories about health and related matters. They talk about treating garbage, vaccinations, nutrition and about the environment. Some of the dramas also deal with politics, culture and human rights. These dramas, acted by the station's own staff, provide a valuable way of explaining complex issues in everyday language and in a way that people can easily understand.

A recent addition to the station's programming is the inclusion of news from Latin America and the world that the station gets from ALRED (Latin American Association for Radio Education), and the Púlsar news agency. A satellite dish at the Pucará station receives ALRED's programmes, and news from Púlsar arrives via the Internet.

This information from other countries and continents, which people did not have before, has met with favourable comment. *"We see that there are people out there just like us, campesinos like us. We're exchanging information with them. In the same way, we receive information here from other countries, we also send news from here to them. And this is interesting, to communicate like brothers."*

A Minga for Chaguarurco

The way the Chaguarurco Foundation meets its objective of covering the station's running costs is to keep costs low, using resources freely offered by the communities it serves. In addition to the volunteer services, the studios in Pucará and Santa Isabel are in space provided free by the local churches. When a studio needs a handyman, or when a pot of soup is needed for a *minga* (a day of volunteer labour for a community project), there are always people around to offer their skills or help. Even so, Chaguarurco has to generate some US$2,000 per month to cover its operational costs.

The station's financial situation is healthy. It manages to generate enough revenue to cover its fixed costs, as well as putting aside a few thousand dollars a year to improve its equipment or cover unforeseen costs. Sources of revenue include advertising, community messages, production services, and broadcasts of cultural events.

Advertising, which brings in about 20% of the station's revenue, has always been a controversial subject. Some people argued that commercials had no

place in community radio. Others said that the survival and growth of the station was the most important thing and that all advertisers should be welcome. The compromise policy is to advertise only local goods and services. The philosophy is to promote what is traditional and local, rather than the consumption of imported products developed through high technology and chemicals. The message of the commercial radios is seen as promoting these, at the expense of home produce. Thus the station does not give advertising space to carbonated drinks produced by multinationals. Nor, in the interests of health, does it broadcast commercials for alcohol or tobacco.

Political advertising is also controversial. For most of the country's radio stations, elections are a bonanza. More than a dozen parties buy airtime, and it is customary for stations to put a surcharge of 20% to 150% on it. The temptation is strong. During recent elections, one party offered to buy time from Chaguarurco at a price that would have paid the bills for months. The offer was not accepted: it was not thought beneficial to the community. The station prefers to give equal possibilities to all political parties rather than allowing the more powerful ones to gain further advantage through commercials.

Community announcements and personal messages account for about 40% of the station's revenue. Yet another source of income is the production of pro-grammes on health and other issues for local NGOs and government. The station also continues to get help from the solidarity group in Spain organized by one of the volunteers who helped set up the station. This raises funds through bingo sessions, dinners, and the sale of handicrafts.

Is Anyone Listening?

Between June and November 1996, a team of students from Santa Isabel, under the guidance of a Dutch volunteer, designed and conducted a survey of 400 people in the station's coverage area. The main conclusions were:

- Radio is the most used medium. In the towns, 64% also watch television, especially in the evening. In the countryside only 40% of people have access to television.

- Radio Chaguarurco is number one in terms of audience in both the towns and the countryside. It is, however, most popular in the countryside, among adult listeners, and among people with less education.

- Forty percent of respondents from the villages claim to listen to Radio Chaguarurco "everyday". In the countryside this rises to almost 50%.

- The most popular programming is music, followed by news programmes and community announcements.

The survey showed that the radio station was well received by its audience, but it also showed where improvements could be made by adjusting the sched-ule, providing better training to the announcers, and putting more agricultural information in the programming.

In addition to the figures, however, the survey also showed that, after only four years on the air, Radio Chaguarurco has helped to make a number of important changes in community life. It has improved communication, helped bring about more democracy and less abuse, made a positive contribution by promoting the sharing of experiences and solutions to problems, and made people more aware of and proud of their own culture.

How the Radio Station Has Helped the Community

The station has a system of announcements and communiqués. For three half-hour periods a day - morning, noon and evening - people can send all kinds of messages concerning the situation of patients in hospital, deaths, lost animals, invitations to meetings, etc. The radio is thus the telephone for those who do not have one.

As a result of the station's existence, the authorities, institutions and merchants have become more democratic. Before it was an everyday practice to abuse campesinos, charge them more than the right price, sell material that was intended for public-works projects, and so on. Now, everybody hears about such abuses on the radio, and they have practically disappeared as a result.

The radio has served to share experiences and problems. For example, a community that has succeeded in the struggle to obtain a service, such as electricity or drinking water, explains on the radio how they went about it, the procedures, and what public offices they had to go to, making it much easier for others to follow. In addition, solu-tions to everyday problems are shared, e.g. ideas about farming techniques or latrine building are exchanged.

The radio is also helping to revalue the local culture, music, and way of speaking. Songs that had practic-ally disappeared and that were only sung by the oldest people during family gatherings are once again heard on the radio. Programmes containing such songs are among the most popular programmes on the radio, and they are generating renewed pride in the local culture.

COMMUNITY RADIO HANDBOOK

This Community Radio Handbook aims to show that ordinary people, even non-technical rural folk, can plan, set up, manage and produce radio programmes by themselves with a minimum of dependence on outside help, whether for technical advice and training or for funds and equipment. Although quite a number of radio stations began with a big helping hand from outside, many community stations that on the air today were 'self-start-ups.' They began with a minimum of equipment and technical knowledge, but a strong community organization and a group will to push ahead and succeed.

The Handbook highlights the case-stories of several such stations, including Homa Bay Radio in Kenya, Radio Apam in Ghana, Miners' Radio in Bolivia, Radio Sagarmatha in the Kathmandu valley, Nepal, Tambuli Community Radio in the Philippines and several others, in order to share these creative experiences with others preparing to set up similar radio stations.

As a handy reference for planning, management, technical background, group dynamics, broadcasting legislation, and radio production formats based on pioneering experiences, this book is a basic yet comprehensive and practical reader for communication students, researchers and planners and a 'must' for prospective community broadcasters.