Learning with Community Media
Stories from the Commonwealth and Latin America

Ian Pringle, Ekta Mittal and Mónica Valdés, Editors
The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

Commonwealth of Learning, 2012

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Learning with Community Media: Stories from the Commonwealth and Latin America
ISBN: 978-1-894975-55-1

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The author and publisher wish to thank the following institutions, organisations and photographers by whose kind permission the photographs are reproduced: AMARC Guatemala, Catavento Comunicação e Educação, Centro de Imprensa, Assessoria e Rádio Brasil, Corporación Júraco, Farm Radio International, Benjamin Fiafor, Funcación Puntos de Encuentro, Alirio González, Gram Vaani, Instituto Radiofónica Fe y Alegría, Jeffrey Town Farmers’ Association, MaiMwana Trust, Maraa, Metropolitan Foundation, Eric Miller, Namma Dhwani/VOICES, PCI Media Impact, Kevin Perkins, Ian Pringle, Radio Riverside, Rupantar, Bart Sullivan, Veracruzana University Radio, Jerry Watkins, Cathryn Wood

Illustrations: Pallavi Chander
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If we are to achieve *Education for All*, there is little doubt that countries and communities alike must utilise all the means at their disposal to expand the scale and increase the quality of learning opportunities. Conventional educational institutions will need to be supplemented and complemented by open schools, distance learning centres and various community media and technology facilities.

The nature of community media as local communication platforms, characterised by the type of local issues covered and the priority assigned to the involvement of local stakeholders, warrants a special place in educational and development programming. Community media operate in indigenous languages, are firmly rooted in specific cultural contexts, and draw on local human resources, both as content creators and subject *experts*.

Community media in the developing countries of the Commonwealth also represent a largely untapped resource for educational communication and development support. In order to address collective development goals and to meet the aspirations of communities the world over — for example, livelihoods for youth and improved maternal and child health — all development stakeholders must leverage the power of this unique type of communication.

Community media perform two important functions in relation to communication for development:

1. Community media reach large audiences in specific geographic and cultural-linguistic contexts, often in remote areas largely unserved by other media and lacking in other infrastructure.

2. Much more so than national broadcasts and international online media, the participation of local populations in determining the most appropriate content and formats is a critically important element of their character.

Along with national governments and other international and national stakeholders, COL recognises that in many regions community media have a long way to go in realising their full potential, and that there are significant and particular gaps in available capacity. For example, programme design methods, engaging listeners and community stakeholders, and the measurement of results often need improvement.
As community-based organisations, community media face major challenges in achieving self-reliance and sustainability.

The experiences detailed in this publication tell us at least two important things:

1. The models and principles of open and distance learning have great relevance in media-based non-formal learning for development; for example, the need for collaboration between media producers and subject experts, the value of blended approaches, the importance of assessment and the need for quality assurance.

2. Although designing and delivering educational programmes is challenging and requires financial, human and technical resources, content that addresses the real needs of local populations increases the degree of participation and ownership by community stakeholders, builds social capital and contributes directly and indirectly to social and financial sustainability.

The extensive presence of community radio in developing countries such as Cameroon, Mozambique and South Africa, the growth of the medium in populous nations such as Bangladesh, India and Nigeria, as well as its great potential in the islands states of the Caribbean and the Pacific, make it an important area of research, innovation and exchange of good practices, a need which this book addresses.

Community media is in large part about dialogue — between and among citizens and groups from civil society, public and private sectors. Aptly, this publication is also a space of dialogue, bringing together experiences from the Commonwealth and those from Latin America, the cradle of community radio and certainly where it has found one of its most impressive expressions.

This resource provides readers with fresh insights into the practice of participatory educational communication using community media, particularly radio and increasingly mobile devices. It shares a range of examples from the Commonwealth and Latin America as part of an ongoing exchange and collaboration. Those from the Commonwealth are drawn from COL’s network of partners, while those from Latin America were selected by the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters for Latin America and the Caribbean.

We are delighted to be able to showcase and support the capacity building in community media in its very important role in the field of “learning for development.”

Asha Kanwar
President & CEO, Commonwealth of Learning
Acknowledgements

This publication emerged from advocacy work done by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and its many partners during 2010/11. These efforts centred on the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters’ Tenth Assembly (AMARC10), which took place in November 2010 in Argentina, and the Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF7), also held in November 2010, in India.

Both these important events highlighted the role of community radio and other media in enabling education, formal and non-formal, with a special emphasis on the exchange of good practices among the Commonwealth, Latin America and other regions of the world where community broadcasting has developed as a platform for learning.

Learning with Community Media is the result of a year-long collaboration between COL and the AMARC chapter for Latin America and the Caribbean (AMARC-ALC). This publication would not have been possible without the generous contributions of time, effort and expertise by Mónica Valdés, Colombian journalist and anthropologist and the Training Officer for AMARC-ALC, as well as the support of Carlos Rivadeneyra Olcese, Regional Co-ordinator of AMARC-ALC, based in Peru. We are also indebted to AMARC’s international secretariat in Montreal, especially to Marcelo Solervicens for his help in bringing AMARC and COL together.

AMARC-ALC is responsible for the selection and translation of pieces from Latin America. Our thanks to Cesar Martínez and Wally Broderick who did the translations of the original articles from Spanish and Portuguese, Mario Bucci who assisted in the translation process, and Alirio González and Martha Calderón.

This book is also the result of collaboration with Ekta Mittal and the Maraa media collective, including Ram Bhat, Monica James and Zulfiya Hamzaki, all based in Bangalore. These individuals have been involved since the germination of the idea for a publication following the PCF6 seminar in India, and their inputs were invaluable in shaping the book’s focus, structure and content. Special thanks also to Pallavi Chander for the illustrations that help bring the text to life.

Thanks, too, to Wijayananda Jayaweera, formerly Director of the Communication Development Division at UNESCO and a long-standing champion of both community media and communication for development.
His opening remarks at the 2010 PCF6 seminar on “Learning from Community Media” held in Kochi, India, inspired the introduction to this publication much as his ideas and professional support have inspired and helped enable community broadcasters and media workers far and wide.

Thanks also to Denise Tremblay, Designer and Production Co-ordinator at COL, and Georgina Montgomery of West Coast Editorial Associates for their excellent work and flexibility with the design and copy editing of the publication.

COL is grateful to the authors of the various chapters, both from Latin America and the Commonwealth, for their contributions to this book, including the many excellent photographs. Even more, we are grateful for the committed and creative work the authors do in promoting and supporting better learning opportunities through community media — and for their willingness to provide their insights about these efforts.

Finally, our thanks to all the men, women, girls and boys from both sides of the microphone and mobile phone who have shared their experience and stories of learning with community media.

Ian Pringle for the Commonwealth of Learning

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Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education. – Paulo Freire

Linking communication, participation, education and development

Community media — whether conventional radio or video, or new online and digital media forms — are natural vehicles for participatory communication. Participatory communication is a process-oriented approach to communication in which learning, understanding and knowledge emerge through a two-way conversational model of communication. In contrast to more traditional one-way, top-down approaches, target audiences in community media must be central actors throughout any process of change.

As Freire suggests, there is a strong inherent connection between participatory *dialogical* communication and education, in particular adult and social constructivist approaches to education in which learning is understood to be active, contextual and full of social relationships. Although founded largely in the desire to overcome barriers of time and distance and expand the scale of education, the field of open and distance learning (ODL) is, by promoting self-directed learning and learner-centred educational models and approaches, a close relation.

This book shares a wide range of experiences of community media, education and development groups in conceiving, designing, delivering and evaluating participatory communication programmes in developing countries of the Commonwealth and Latin America. It profiles educational participatory communication experiences from the perspective of facilitators and trainers, stakeholder individuals and groups, as well as participants.

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Why community media?

Based in local geographic areas or communities of interest, community media are accessible, in terms of production and use by citizens and in terms of the capabilities and costs involved. In other words, community media enable citizens to be meaningfully involved in the creation of media content: there are few barriers to listening or viewing content; the overall process of media management is relatively simple compared with that for other forms of media; and, relatively speaking, the costs of production and distribution are low.

Community media’s relative technical accessibility is combined with a stated mandate for socio-cultural development. The growth of community media, in regions such as South Asia and the Commonwealth countries of Africa, is based partly on the interest of governments and civil society groups in the explicit developmental orientation of community media — specifically, how these media contribute to social change and local development by giving citizens greater chance to participate in public life and to be empowered by opportunities to voice ideas, concerns and experience.

The field of community media is often framed by freedoms associated with free speech, expression and information. It has most famously been described as the voice of the voiceless. Expression and what Latin American scholars have long identified as the “right to communicate” are closely linked to the empowerment and agency of citizens, which underlie any type of participatory development. Literature about community media highlights the media’s role as local watchdog, which favours press functions, reporting and news in the service of keeping local government accountable.

Comparatively little has been written of community radio from an educational perspective, particularly as it concerns non-formal education. Education is typically discussed in reference to training and technical education for citizens (for example, in building communication skills for students or community volunteers) rather than in reference to public education through a broadcast medium.

This publication, Learning with Community Media, is part of a process that aims to help put education more squarely on the agenda of community media groups, and to put community media on the radar of education and developmental groups. Both offer the opportunity to launch new educational programmes as well as to promote a more participatory approach to learning.
People’s participation in educational media content is critical for relevance, both in terms of the problems identified and the solutions offered. Field-based interactions and interviews, such as the one pictured above in Mchinji district, Malawi, are an essential strategy if programme content is to reflect the lives of the target audience, in this case mothers.
Community media for development

The developmental or educational potential of community media is based on the combination of scale of potential listenership and the possibility of genuine participation of citizens within a specific cultural context. The movement is rooted in development communication which originated in the 1950s and 1960s with farm radio and school-on-the-air broadcasts, largely a top-down approach to knowledge transfer using media. It evolved towards a communication for development approach, in which knowledge and social change are understood to emerge from a two-way model of communication though dialogue with different stakeholders in the development process.

In this context, the idea of community media developed as an accessible, open space for widespread communication at the community level, and it is in this sense that it is often described as “giving voice to the voiceless.” Its real significance as a means for education lies in its emphasis on people’s participation in communication.

Recognising the challenges as well as the benefits

The natural association between community media and participatory communication does not, however, mean that participatory communication programming is easy to do for community media or other district-based groups, or that participatory communication practices among community media are necessarily widespread.

This book shares stories of participatory communication and learning programmes by community-based media and development groups, bringing together experiences from developing areas of the Commonwealth with those of Latin America. Chapters address different themes and challenges faced by community media, including how to involve communities in ways that result in meaningful participation, what makes for compelling programming, and how to integrate mobile devices and telephony to engage audiences.

In addition to its strengths and potential, the bottom-up approach to development communication suggested by community media has limitations and challenges. Running media at the community level raises problems associated with human resource capacity and know-how across a range of knowledge and skills areas. These challenges range from programme design and field-based production to collaboration among groups at the local level and mobilisation of the resources necessary to sustain programming in difficult (often dire) financial circumstances.
Challenges persist in part because the criteria for success are still unclear. The case for community media as a viable, effective vehicle to support learning for development continues to be lacking insofar as convincing partners — from public, civil society and private spheres — to invest. Even where community radio has been used effectively for community learning, many institutions responsible for local education and development are not sufficiently motivated to get involved in participation communication and learning strategies.

Innovative, low-cost solutions are needed — ones that ensure quality throughout the learning process — if participatory approaches to non-formal ODL are to be popularised. Ironically, while quality educational programming may in fact be a net contributor to the sustainability of radio stations, in the short run it is difficult for stations to devote time to building the requisite know-how and partnerships that enable this sort of programming.

It is our hope that the chapters that follow go some distance in addressing these issues, mitigating some of the challenge; and that they make a meaningful contribution to advancing community media, participatory communication and ODL.

How this book is organised

Learning with Community Media is divided into five parts made up of four or more chapters.

Part One: The Educational Potential of Community Media

This first section of the book touches on key themes that provide an overview of the educational potential of community media, including experiences that cover the spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal education.

Kevin Perkins’ chapter (1) gets to the heart of a key question confronting community radio advocates: the generally poor evidence of impact of educational communication. He presents compelling results from a large-scale study of participatory radio campaigns conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa to increase knowledge and promote the uptake of agricultural innovations. In the process, he also addresses the criteria for quality and success: learning and change outcomes and cost.

Amalia Jiménez Gallan’s chapter (2) on the background and experience of community radio in post-conflict Guatemala represents a strong current in the Latin American experience of community media — namely, the role of communication (in this case, community radio
stations broadcasting in local languages) in linking post-colonial, often post-conflict realities to traditional cultural and spiritual guides and revaluing indigenous world views, what Jiménez calls the cosmovision. She emphasises the importance of communication that is rooted in culture, a theme that comes up again in Rezaul Haque’s chapter (5) on traditional cultural forms and, indeed, through the stories that follow in Part Two.

In Chapter 3, Carlos Manuel Araña traces the history of educational communication in Venezuela through the work of the Faith and Joy Radio Institute (IRFA). Araña takes readers through different ages of IRFA over the course of 30 years, from work guided by the slogan “every house is a school,” in which the radio extended the classroom into students’ homes, to a social constructivist approach informed by students’ prior knowledge and experience, and on to the present day, which finds IRFA in a quest for a new 2.0 model that targets youth, mostly girls and youth women, and aims to support technical and vocational education.

In “That Wave Is for Sure” (Chapter 4), Edgard Patrício introduces the radio-schools of Brazil. In contrast to IRFA’s early work in taking the classroom to the home using radio, Catavento, an educational communication organisation in northeastern Brazil, has brought the radio to the classroom and the school. Each radio-school functions as a joint school-community workshop space to develop practical communication skills among teachers and students. Through both face-to-face interactions and radio broadcasting, the whole community learns.

Rezaul Haque in Chapter 5 illustrates the importance of cultural context and traditional communication forms through the work of Rupantar with three different cultural media formats. Rupantar is a development communication organisation in Bangladesh that works with traditional cultural forms as development communication tools and is now exploring the use of community radio, which was sanctioned by the government of Bangladesh in 2010. Haque suggests that community broadcasters look to traditional cultural forms, such as theatre, the visual and performing arts, and even more contemporary popular print publications, to inform models and approaches to non-formal education and local, community media.
Part Two: Stories of Learning

“Smart people learn from experience. Smarter people learn from other people’s experience.”

Part Two shows the power of stories by sharing stories — of listeners, citizen-producers and producer-citizens. Experience packaged in stories, those illustrated through interviews with community stakeholders and those shown through drama and other cultural forms, help ensure that learning content is contextually appropriate and linked to people’s everyday lives. Taking these experience-based stories to community media, through serials and magazine programmes, enables the exchange of other people’s experience across communities, often at a significant scale.

Joke van Kampen’s chapter (6) takes readers for a ride on airwaves of local FM stations into the villages of Malawi. Through a series of micro-stories, community media are shown to be megaphones for storytelling about real problems faced by ordinary people and role models and actual solutions gained across the different stages of behavioural and social change. The stories featured on community learning programmes airing on local broadcasters could be listeners’ own. These are stories that are real, inspiring and empowering, with key messages that are understandable and doable.

“From Public Speaking to Community Broadcasting” (Chapter 7), written by a Guatemalan women’s collective, describes women’s own journeys and those of their communities. In the process, it shows the power of community radio as a tool for the emancipation of women in Guatemala, a way for them to find and channel their voices and their experiences of the long civil conflict and unrest and the discrimination they face as indigenous women. The radio enables them to disrupt negative conventions and exert their social leadership in public-community space.

In Chapter 8, Mónica Valdés introduces us to Martha Calderón and traces her journey from the kitchen to the radio studio in the town of Belén de los Andaquíes in Colombia. Martha transforms from a nagging citizen, who uses the local radio station as a forum to vent her frustrations with local citizens’ attitudes and behaviour, into a social communicator and a focal point for dialogue in the community through her very own programme, which becomes a vehicle for informal learning and community participation.

Gail White tells the story in Chapter 9 of Thabang Pusoyabone, station manager from Radio Riverside in Upington, South Africa, taking an HIV test live on-air as part of a community learning programme. The story

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2 A saying of her grandmother’s, related by Simone Simpson in a programme development workshop at Roots FM in Kingston, Jamaica, in November 2010.
demonstrates the importance of formative research and the power of role modeling, especially when it is combined with live broadcast and real-time online media.

Part Three: Praxis in Latin America

“Praxis” means theory put into practice. Freire called it “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.” It is precisely what community media and their local partners do in developing and running participatory communication programmes such as those examined in this publication, helping us to understand what participation means in specific social contents and how it is achieved, as well as offering insights into its significance for communication, education and development.

The five chapters in Part Three, each from a different country in Latin America, emphasise: the centrality of popular and engaging formats, exemplified by the edu-entertainment approach adopted by so many practitioners; the importance of blended approaches, including print and face-to-face mobilisation; and the role of online, mobile and social media in reinforcing and complementing community-based broadcasting.

The relative maturity of Latin America’s experience of participatory communication and community media is evident in the co-ordination and networking, often at a national level, among individual communities and communication initiatives.

In Chapter 10, Kenia Regina Sanchez Ford profiles DKY FM, or de Calle FM (Of the Street FM), which broadcasts simultaneously on five community FM stations in Nicaragua and online. The programme uses a popular media approach, combining education and entertainment, with evidence indicating that little by little DKY FM is modifying attitudes, changing behaviours and improving adolescents’ and youths’ interpersonal communication skills. The result is more dialogue concerning women’s rights and autonomy, HIV/AIDS, sexual diversity and gender violence. In addition to radio, DKY uses Facebook and short message service (SMS) texting, as well as face-to-face networking in listening communities.

João Paulo Malerba chronicles, in Chapter 11, the work of CRIAR Brasil in developing a network of social communicators and community radio stations to combat violence against women. Broadcasters are trained as social communicators in order to engage local communities. The resulting discussions inform the design of learning materials, including series of short audio spots, radio drama serials and magazine programmes broadcast on more than 100 community radio stations. At the heart of the participatory process is consultation with concerned communities in order to inform decision-making about programme content, and
community dialogue facilitated through media broadcasting, which in turn underlies a constructivist approach to learning and the use of stories as a pedagogical tool.

In Chapter 12, Maria Ilse Andrade shares the experience of Colombia’s Júraco groups in running Minga of the Sun, a project that grew out of the establishment of neighbourhood communication collectives to become open workshop spaces for children and youth to learn about and use media. The children create micro-programmes that are broadcast on community stations. In the process, they develop a range of communication skills and at the same time animate a space of dialogue among other children and youth and with the wider community about their lives, rights and the natural environment.

In “Joining the Dots” (13), Javier Ampuero Albarracín shares the experience of PCI Media’s My Community, a long-running series in Latin America of edu-entertainment programmes (which use radio drama, magazines and face-to-face mobilisation in schools and community spaces). Ampuero Albarracín highlights the case of Aquí no pasa nada (Nothing Happens Here), an educational programme about youth sexuality, linked to a network of 21 organisations working in HIV/AIDS in Peru. In the process, he points to the stories and relationships as being the real substance of communication and shows how drama mixed with discussion can be an appropriate and effective format to bring those to life within an education- and change-oriented context.

In writing about The Paths of Life, a radio serial about six young people who make a living on the land in a small rural community in Mexico, Eloisa Diez emphasises the importance of “starting your walk with listeners well before the stage of content creation”; and of working to close the gap between teacher and student, producer and listener (Chapter 14). Alongside the intrinsic value of the communication skills gained by the children involved, she says, is the function of drama in self-identification, self-reflection and learning overall.

Part Four: Praxis in the Commonwealth

Many of the chapters about praxis from the Commonwealth are based on presentations made during a seminar, “Learning from Community Media,” which was held jointly with UNESCO as part of the Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, in Kochi, India, in November 2010. There the idea for this book was germinated. The chapters in Part Four examine strategies for enabling participation, experiences of collaboration at the local level, and the importance of assessing programme outcomes.
In “Stories from the Bag of Life” (Chapter 15), Gladson Makowa, in an interview, shares his experience with the process of designing and operationalising a participatory learning programme about maternal and child health in Malawi. Makowa analyses what it is that makes Phukusi la Moyo (Bag of Life) a participatory communication programme. He focuses on the design process through which the programme was created, highlighting the participation of women, especially pregnant women and new mothers, in making decisions about the programme.

A follow-up interview with Charles Simbi, Makowa’s colleague who was also part of the team that facilitated the initial development workshop for Phukusi la Moyo, looks in detail at the design process of the programme. The chapter (16) focuses on the message matrix tool that Simbi and the team from Story Workshop developed to engage in the development of the programme both representatives of the target audience (women, especially mothers and their families) and key stakeholder groups (including the district health office, a maternal and child health project and the community radio station).

Patrick Prendergast of the Caribbean Institute for Media and Communication looks at the key issue of partnerships and collaboration in participatory communication programming and community media (Chapter 17). He identifies the key constituencies associated with learning programmes in Jamaica and Belize and discusses different configurations and how they have changed in the course of training and programme design and delivery.

In Chapter 18, a companion piece to Prendergast’s, Rosamond Brown, also with the Caribbean Institute for Media and Communication, considers the effect of different partnership configurations in Jamaica and Belize on participation by members of the community. She also looks at how participation is enabled through the message matrix, a tool described by Charles Simbi in Chapter 16, and through storytelling.

Gail White, in Chapter 19, provides insights into the relationship between media and community partners in the case of Summer for All, a learning programme about HIV/AIDS developed in Upington, South Africa. While technical elements of the Summer for All programme were well handled by the radio station, whose station manager underwent an HIV test live on air (discussed in Chapter 9), engaging directly with members of the target audiences proved to be more successful under the leadership of the lead community partner — a finding that emphasises the need for improving models for collaboration. This mirrors some of the same matters raised by Prendergast (in Chapter 17) with respect to community programmes in Jamaica and Belize.
In his chapter, “Pausing to Plan at Kumaon Vani” (20), Ram Bhat provides a snapshot of working with a community radio group in Uttarakhand, India, to develop strategies and tools for use in planning ways to monitor and assess community radio initiatives. This assessment is necessary in terms of understanding whether specific expectations are being met (for example, the number of people participating in particular programmes), as well as of determining whether expected impacts — notably, changes in the community — are being achieved.

**Part Five: Tools for Integrating Mobile Devices and Telephony**

The educational and developmental potential resulting when broadcast media is combined with mobile telephone devices is increasingly the focus of a high level of interest from community media groups. The final section of this book therefore looks at how broadcasters and other community-based groups can make use of the voice and text functions of mobile telephones across different aspects of educational programming, including content provision, programme logistics and learner support.

In Chapter 21, Bart Sullivan shares a case study of Freedom Fone, an open source tool for telephones using interactive voice response (IVR) menus to make content available to callers. Although Freedom Fone can be used by anyone with a dedicated computer, a special modem and mobile phone number, the focus of Sullivan’s study is the use of Freedom Fone by radio broadcasters as a way of complementing and extending communications, particularly feedback from listeners.

The two chapters by Zahir Koradia (22 and 23) look at different technical systems that are designed for mobile telephones but also have promise for radio broadcasters and other community media. Chapter 22 compares four different tools — Frontline SMS, Freedom Fone, GRINS and vChannel — based on what they can and cannot do and what applications each has for 1) learning materials, 2) learner support, 3) programme logistics and 4) feedback and evaluation. In Chapter 23, Koradia provides a detailed look at GRINS, a solution developed for community broadcasters by a small IT group in India. He describes how it facilitates increased community participation in programming using mobile telephony while at the same time helps streamline production and broadcast systems and reduce the demand on human resources.

In the last chapter of the book (24), Gail White shares the experience of South Africa’s Media and Training Centre for Health in introducing strategies to use mobile telephones as part of community learning programmes. She specifically discusses the use of mobile telephones as a way to: identify learners and, where possible, get feedback from them;
link learners to other learning channels (for example, social networking sites); and access further content, as demonstrated by the production of an inexpensive cellbook about HIV/AIDS.

**Community media as part of Healthy Communities**

Learning with Community Media is part of the ongoing Healthy Communities initiative of the Commonwealth of Learning. The aim of the initiative is to facilitate more and better participatory learning opportunities at the local level using community media and other communication channels. Strategies include helping community broadcasters and local development and education stakeholders build capacity through efforts such as: collaborative management and gender integration; community learning demonstration projects and applied research; advocacy with practitioners and policy- and other decision-makers; and knowledge-sharing between and among Commonwealth groups and their counterparts in the other regions of the world.

COL and its partners welcome your feedback and involvement in our journey through this exciting and rapidly evolving field in participatory communication for education and development.

Digital technologies have enabled a whole new world for FM radio: content, such as telephone calls from experts and listeners alike, can be easily stored and retrieved, indexed and analysed. Content can also be shared with other broadcasters and listeners in new formats, such as online streaming and podcasting, and for new devices, such as mobile telephones.
PART ONE:

The Educational Potential of Community Media

1. Participatory Radio Campaigns and Small-Scale Farming Innovations: Promoting Learning and Uptake
   – Kevin Perkins

2. The Strengthening of Being (*Jun Winaq*) through Community Radio of the Mayab in Iximulew
   – Amalia Jiménez Gallan

3. Tracing a History of Edu-communication in Venezuela with IRFA
   – Carlos Manuel Araña

   – Edgard Patrício

5. Learning through Traditional Cultural Forms
   – Rezaul Haque
Participatory Radio Campaigns and Small-Scale Farming Innovations: Promoting Learning and Uptake

Kevin Perkins

Small-scale farmers produce approximately 70 per cent of the food consumed in Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, despite being the primary food producers, small-scale farmers are more likely than any other segment of the population to be impoverished and to suffer the effects of hunger and malnutrition. An important way to change this situation is by providing small-scale farmers with the supports they need to improve their productivity, enhance their resiliency and connect more successfully with markets.

Many agricultural innovations have been developed — by researchers and by small-scale farmers themselves — that, if adopted on a wide scale, would make a significant contribution to increasing food security and reducing poverty. Too often, these innovations are hidden in a localised development project or stuck on a library shelf. The challenge is to find a way to communicate these ideas to hundreds of thousands of farmers in an effective and affordable way. Agricultural radio has long been used as an extension strategy, but, until recently, very limited evidence was available to confirm that farmers listen, learn and act as a result of hearing radio broadcasts, and little was known about best practices.

The African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) was an unprecedented investigation of the effectiveness of radio in addressing the food security and agricultural goals of resource-poor farmers in five African countries: Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Tanzania and Uganda. The project started in 2007 and ended in September 2010. AFRRI was implemented by Farm Radio International in partnership with World University Service of Canada, and with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

A participatory, multi-stakeholder programme, AFRRI aimed to discover, document and disseminate best practices for using radio-based communications to enhance food security in Africa.
A key impetus for AFRRI was to gather evidence on the changes in farmers’ knowledge, attitudes and practices that occurred as a result of specific farm radio programmes.

To this end, AFRRI co-ordinated the development, broadcast and evaluation of a new and specific approach to farm radio called *participatory radio campaigns*. Two sets of participatory radio campaigns were planned and aired in partnership with 25 radio stations (five per country) and reached about 40 million farmers. The first round of 24 campaigns was completed in mid-2009, and the second round of 25 concluded in June 2010. Outcome evaluations were conducted in January 2010 and July 2010, respectively.

### Why “campaigns”?

The AFRRI project design anticipated implementing a series of radio campaigns that would be broadcast over a defined period with a specific and measurable set of objectives. It was believed that the efficacy of radio campaigns could be more readily evaluated than other approaches to farm radio because they were time-bound and focused on particular, observable changes in behaviour that could be anticipated as a result of the radio programming.
After reviewing traditional approaches to campaigns, the AFRRI team and its partners agreed that a new model was needed. The traditional approach to radio campaigns did not seem well suited to the particular challenge of helping farmers learn about and adopt new agricultural practices relevant to them. Historically, radio campaigns have used marketing principles to convince large numbers of people to adopt a new behaviour and usually better practice (such as being immunised or wearing a seat belt). However, in the case of farmers, the behaviour or practice that they have been encouraged to adopt has not necessarily been one that they identified or even considered a priority. The messages are often created and delivered in a top-down fashion by expert outsiders.

AFRRI created a model that put the participation and dialogue with farmers at its centre — one that valued farmers as decision-makers rather than as passive recipients of diffused information. It is for this reason the model is called a participatory radio campaign. The defining principle was that campaigns aimed at farmers should be more bottom-up in nature, with a clear focus on helping farmers make informed decisions about practices that matter to them. This approach acknowledges that farmers understand and can express their own needs: that if they have the right information, they can evaluate their options and make reasonable decisions to adopt — or not to adopt — a particular agricultural practice.

For the AFRRI programme, Farm Radio International defined a participatory radio campaign as:

“A planned, radio-based activity, conducted over a specific period of time, in which a broad population of farmers is encouraged to make an informed decision about adopting a specific improvement selected by their peers, based upon the best available information, to improve the food security of their families. It then provides the adopting farmers with the information and other support they require to implement the improvement.”

Participatory radio campaigns have a useful role to play in rural radio. They are special tools for a special purpose. They can be used in conjunction with other forms of agricultural radio that smallholder farmers need, such as marketing information service, weather forecasts and weekly agriculture shows.

A participatory radio campaign:

• is produced by trained and experienced radio station staff as a special service of the station to the community;
• is carefully planned through a participatory formative research and campaign design process;
• assures the participation of farmers and broadcasters in all stages of the campaign;
• features the voices of farmers;
• gathers continuous feedback from listeners;
• engages and entertains listeners using a variety of effective radio formats, including mini-dramas, music, interviews, community debates, panel discussions, phone-in and phone-out shows, and field reports;
• involves close collaboration among broadcasters, farmers and their organisations, agricultural extension officers, researchers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the area, and others; and
• uses a “core story” to provide a common thread through the campaign, keeping it focused and engaging.

Participatory radio campaigns engage farmers as active participants from day one. The focus of the campaigns is farmer-approved; the time of day and day of the week of broadcast is farmer-selected; and farmers are intimately engaged in the knowledge-sharing process throughout. The purpose of the campaign is to help farmers evaluate and make an informed decision about a new practice that could help them. The farmers are provided with the best information from reliable sources to help them navigate and implement these practices.

Do participatory radio campaigns have an impact on learning?

Participatory radio campaigns are designed to have a measurable impact. Did the campaigns do this? Did they increase farmers’ knowledge and adoption of practices that could improve the farmers’ resiliency and productivity?

In August 2010, AFRRI carefully evaluated 15 participatory radio campaigns (three per country) to find out whether:

a) farmers listened to the campaigns (and, if so, how frequently);
b) the campaigns resulted in increased knowledge about the improved practice; and
c) the campaigns resulted in adoption of the improved practice by farmers.

In total, the survey reached 4,800 randomly selected farmers in 90 different communities across the five countries. One-third of the interviews were conducted in active listening communities. In active
listening communities residents could listen to broadcasts and they were active participants in planning and giving feedback to the programmes. They were also frequently interviewed. Another third of interviewees were in passive listening communities. Passive listening communities were able to listen if they chanced on the programme by themselves, but otherwise they did not have other contact with the programme. The passive listening communities are typical of the majority of the people reached by the radio station’s broadcasts.

A final third of interviewees were in control communities. Control communities could not receive broadcasts and were not aware of the participatory radio campaigns.

The figure below presents the main findings from this evaluation. (Note: PRC is an abbreviation for participatory radio campaign.)

This rigorous study revealed that two out of three residents of passive listening communities listened to at least half of the episodes in a participatory radio campaign, and that one in three listened to nearly all of them. Across the 15 radio stations that were studied, at least 22 per cent and up to 97 per cent of community members — male, female, young and old — received 7–15 hours of extension services through each participatory radio campaign over the airwaves.
By itself, the number of farmers reached has little meaning unless that number results in measurable changes in smallholder farmers’ knowledge and practice. AFRRI proved that changes take place in both these areas — and both in impressive numbers.

The figure below clearly shows the impact of participatory radio campaigns on the knowledge level of farmers. The 4,800 surveyed farmers completed a quiz designed to test their knowledge of the agricultural improvement featured in the participatory radio campaign. Over 80 per cent of respondents who listened to all of the campaign demonstrated detailed knowledge of the improvement, and another 17 per cent had good knowledge. None had little or no knowledge.

At the other end of the spectrum, 98 per cent of respondents who did not listen to any of the participatory radio campaign had little or no knowledge of the improvement, and only 2 per cent had good knowledge. In short, the more farmers listened, the more they learned.

**Do participatory radio campaigns have an impact on behaviour?**

Farmers may have learned more by listening to the participatory radio campaigns, but did this knowledge lead to uptake of the new practice? It did. In fact, 39 per cent of the members of active listening communities and 21 per cent of those in passive listening communities started practising the agricultural improvement after the start of the radio campaign. By comparison, only 4 per cent of respondents in control
communities adopted the practice, in spite of the availability of conventional extension services. Thus, farming families in passive listening communities were about five times more likely to adopt a recommended new practice than were farmers who had not been exposed to the campaigns. The most effective participatory radio campaign — Radio Ada’s campaign on the production of compost manure to enhance soil fertility in Ghana — resulted in 48 per cent of members of passive listening communities adopting the new practice. There was no uptake in Radio Ada’s control communities.

The study’s findings showed that participatory radio campaigns affect practice in much the same way they affect knowledge: the more that farmers listened, the more likely they were to adopt the new agricultural practice featured in the participatory radio campaign. Fifty per cent of respondents who had listened to 100 per cent of the participatory radio campaign episodes started practising the featured improvement after the campaign began. By comparison, only 9 per cent of those who had not listened to any of the campaign adopted the practice.

In terms of cost effectiveness, the average per-adopter price of this methodology ranges from $0.30 to $3.00 (CAN), with an average cost of about $1.00 per adopter.

Based on these results, Farm Radio International is now working with a range of partners — from the International Centre for Research in the Semi-Arid Tropics in Mali to the International Livestock Institute in Ethiopia — to employ this methodology as an effective way to help farmers make informed decisions about a variety of agricultural practices that can improve their family’s food security.

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Farm Radio International is a Canadian charity that supports radio broadcasters in Sub-Saharan Africa to provide small-scale farmers and rural communities with effective communication services. The organisation develops and distributes radio scripts, produces an electronic news service, offers distance and in-station training services, and implements communication projects with partner radio stations.
While conventional approaches to agricultural extension prioritised the knowledge of experts, participatory communication programmes give equal or greater significance to the voices of target audiences and the community at large. In addition to making programmes attractive to local audiences, field-based content gathering among citizens also acknowledges that local contexts are critical if health and farm radio are to succeed, and that target audiences are experts in their own right.

For further reference, see:

- www.farmradio.org
- www.farmradio.org/pubs/farmradio-misreport2011.pdf – a full report on market information services on the radio
- www.farmradio.org/pubs/farmradio-ictreport2011.pdf – a full report on convergence of radio with other information and communication technologies (ICTs)
The territories of Iximulew (the Mayan name for Guatemala) have been involved in a peace process for almost 15 years. Adding to this the 36 years of civil war in Guatemala and considering the almost 500 years of invasion and successive extermination policies, one can easily reach the conclusion that the survival of Mayan values and spiritual and cultural practices is a miraculous achievement of the original people of the Mayan territory.

The survival of indigenous practices and values has been possible thanks to the contribution of spiritual guides: women and men who have orally transmitted their knowledge from generation to generation. Building on the importance of oral traditions and the transmission of ancestral knowledge, community radios in their time have played a key role in cultural preservation by keeping the people informed — in their own languages and within their own cosmovision, their own view of the world.

The Guatemalan radio stations affiliated with the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) have emerged from the need for expression and information of ethno-linguistic and geographical communities suffering from severe social exclusion and often lacking even the most basic social services. Most of these radio stations survive because of the voluntary contributions of people from within their own communities — from the people who use the radio’s creative and innovative capacity to overcome economic deficiencies and the monopolisation of media by private companies, even as state regulations promote equitable access to radio and television.

The dominant social imagery promoted by the commercial media does not include Mayan languages or culture. The broadcasters themselves are people who do not dress or identify themselves in any way with the ethno-cultural groups that originally lived in Iximulew (Guatemala).

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3 Cosmovision is a specific way of feeling, behaving, measuring and thinking according to the culture of a people’s heritage.
Community radio in Guatemala is helping preserve Mayan tradition and develop intercultural relationships.
By contrast, community broadcasters associated with AMARC transmit both in the predominant languages of the ethno-linguistic region where they are located and in Spanish. In addition, they reinforce local identities, speaking from the perspective of their own Mayan cosmovision.

It has been nearly 15 years since the peace process established the need for changes to the laws governing broadcasting, specifically to make radio frequencies available to indigenous communities. However, no government has actually followed through, despite promise after promise. Community radio stations have nevertheless kept on broadcasting although they face the threat of legal prosecution.

A legal initiative now before the National Congress was elaborated by representatives of community radio stations over the course of five years. Initiative 4087 was enriched through the contributions of dozens of organisations, institutions and social movements. It integrates international human rights standards and is a good solution for the people’s needs, yet it has languished for the past four years.

“The Kastajinel radio station, for example,” says Mr. Cándido Rodríguez Guaján, director of the station and national representative of AMARC Guatemala, “was created because we realised that no other mass medium spoke in Kakchikel language. And this situation continues; thus, our language was at risk of being lost and, with it, our culture. For this reason we took advantage of the Peace Accord on Identity and Rights of the Indigenous People that says that the state must grant media frequencies to indigenous communities, which is very important for us: it is how we keep speaking in our language and from the point of view of our culture.”

It is for this reason that training, exchange and other support activities developed in the AMARC network have been directed towards the:

• empowerment of the communities and their right to communicate; and

• improvement of the capacities needed for the integral management of the people’s spiritual, political, cultural, organisational, communicative and economic dimensions.

The work done around these two priorities helped to identify the need for strengthening the knowledge and practice of the Mayan cosmovision among the partners of the radio stations. The community radio groups themselves have always worked alongside the *aj’q’ij’ab*, spiritual guides of the Mayan tradition who lead collective work inside the communities. Year after year, the association of radio stations has celebrated ceremonies around the sacred fire to thank *Ajaw* for the life and opportunities received and to harmonise their being in relation with the cosmos.

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*Ajaw* is the light that joins everything together, the Great Spirit, Creator and Shaper of everything.
Some of the radio stations aired programmes concerning the Mayan cosmovision. These programmes were prepared and broadcast by elders in the community — for example, the honourable Mr. Diego at La Compañera radio station, in the Kiché territory. Others, like Sinakán in Kakchikel territory, or La Libertad in Petén, used to broadcast the celebration of Mayan ceremonies around the sacred fire on some special dates in the Mayan calendar.

Since 2010, training work has gone deeper, enabling a recognition among people in the radio association of their nawals and learning of the basic use of the Mayan calendars (including Cholq’ijn, the sacred one that is based on the rotation of the Moon around the Earth; and Aab, the agricultural calendar that is based on the rotation of the Earth around the Sun). At training workshops, people have learned from different traditional authorities and actors about epigraphy, the architecture of cities and sacred temples, Mayan prophecies and other aspects of Mayan knowledge and wisdom.

The approach to training and the methods of programme development were designed with spiritual leaders, a process which itself has reinforced the need to spread cultural values through the radio stations and to recognise the role of traditional actors and authorities in the context of Mayan socio-politics and culture.

With the training processes undertaken since 2010, the stations have deepening their skills and knowledge, both of radio production and the importance of Mayan values (for example, in relation to Mother Earth). Stations are in a better position to design and produce radio programmes, although they still need to prepare themselves to engage more deeply with their audiences. In order to assist radio stations that still do not have their own local cultural programmes, AMARC has initiated a collaborative project to produce a series of radio programmes shared among all stations in the network and at the same time to identify more spiritual guides with whom to work more closely across all the communities. With materials gathered from the interviews with elders, spiritual guides and traditional authorities, the association will create a collective production, the first of its kind as a network.

Through this training process, the community radio stations have reaffirmed that their radio programmes are essential for rescuing Mayan culture, developing intercultural relationships and promoting a national and global community solidarity.

We are more conscious of the collective rights that we have as indigenous peoples, of how we can organise our collective work and of how we can

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5 Nawal is the word for spirit or guardian. The meaning refers to your own identity, including one’s energies, the spiritual guides of the invisible world, the protective animals, and the features of one’s being in this and past lives.
better take care of the health, peace and life of the people and nature in an integral way. We now have legitimate radio broadcasters, committed to serving the rights of indigenous peoples, human rights and the Peace Accords. As an association, we are facilitating intercultural relationships among our partners as well as among our peoples. We believe in the power of bringing knowledge together. We work to better enable the radio stations to express our cosmovision and the identity of our peoples. These are only the first steps, but they are significant ones: working through the communication platforms enabled by community radio broadcasters to rescue and to restore value in transcendental knowledge — not only for the survival of our culture, but for all humanity.

Amalia Jiménez Gallan graduated in Information Science at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Her interests lie in a combination of communication, literature, meditation and traditional Chinese medicine. She has been supporting the strengthening of community radios of the indigenous Iximulew peoples for the past 13 years. In Amalia’s words, “My first birth was in Cardeñosa, Ávila, Españá, in February 1971. The second happened when I went to the land of Mayas in 1998 and was sheltered and cared for by the ancestral wisdom of these wonderful peoples.” Email: amaliajimenez@yahoo.com

Guatemala’s Asociación Mundial de Radios Comunitarias (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters [AMARC]) is a network of 13 members, 11 of which are community radio stations in different parts of the country. AMARC Guatemala emerged during the peace process and was registered in 2000. Its objectives include defending freedom of speech, renewing the value of indigenous peoples’ cosmovision, promoting the empowerment of women, contributing to the improvement of community living conditions, and strengthening the reach of community radio. Among the achievements of the women’s network of AMARC Guatemala has been to introduce feminist political training alongside theoretical and practical training in radio production.

For further reference, see:

- www.amarc.org
- www.amarcguatemala.blogspot.com
- www.facebook.com/amarc.guatemala
“It is no longer our intention to guide the student’s hand in learning different writing styles. Not by giving directions on the radio. We do, however, want to share knowledge, using the enchantment of the radio, giving priority to the skills to be learned and not just the content produced. More than an official educational programme, we look for the most relevant content to help listeners to face life as it is on the streets.”

Gerardo Lombardi’s words help us to remember the main purpose of Venezuela’s Instituto Radiofónico Fe y Alegria (IRFA; literally, the Faith and Joy Radio Institute): namely, to bring the poorest areas of the population into the educational system using radio and innovative pedagogies based on an edu-communicative experience. Specifically, this means developing content that is adapted to the changing needs of both the youth and adult audiences who make up the listenership of IRFA’s programmes.

IRFA’s history is marked by a dedication to political education, and the organisation has responded to many “moments of exclusion” that have affected the poorest areas of the population in Venezuela. For social groups that do not have economic power or technological means to produce or access content, educational radio development is an exercise in social inclusion, one that has gone through many phases of development.

The changes undergone by IRFA in its own history parallel those experienced by Venezuela and indeed even by Latin America as a whole. So as not to fragment IRFA as an institution, we prefer to describe our developmental trajectory in terms of ages instead of stages — a growth or maturation process that has occurred naturally.

We consider the following to be the ages of IRFA over the past 30 years.
Every house is a school

Father José Maria Velaz, founder of the Fe y Alegría organisations, said, “If we wanted to make each of the Fe y Alegría schools into a house in which children could find themselves, now with the radio we are going to make each house into a school.” This is IRFA’s essential paradigm: school and home, or, in other words, education and experience.

When IRFA first started more than 30 years ago, there were only four radio stations in the country. Venezuela had a 20 per cent illiteracy rate. Peasants left their fields to go to the capital with the hope of achieving development. It was a country looking to become modern and to shake off the stigma of underdevelopment.

While IRFA’s founders were looking for good examples of educational projects, they found the Cultural School of the Canary Islands (known by its Spanish acronym, ECCA), which in turn followed the work of the Colombian radio station Radio Sutatenza, the first radio station in the region to use the medium as a teaching tool. Father Francisco Villén of the Canary Islands was inspired by this educational approach and reformulated the islands’ educational system, reorienting the process on the basis of three synchronised elements: printed learning (didactic) materials, recorded audio classes, and learner support (orientation and tutoring).

At its outset, IRFA configured the relation between radio and education with these three pillars supporting it: a radio class known as “The Teacher at the House,” print materials and face-to-face tutoring. Using the radio, an instructor explained activities to the audience, page by page, referring to printed materials as if to give the feeling of close proximity to the student-audience, as much as possible taking the hands of the students and guiding them. Radio classes were followed by tutoring available every Saturday.

It was a purely behavioural or traditional educational paradigm, with no real interaction between teacher and learner. The radio was used purely as a conduit between the speaker, a teacher, and the student who could not speak through the radio, but merely listen.

Education and social transformation

In spite of this behavioural radio method, an interest in Paulo Freire’s pedagogical theories and practice developed among IRFA practitioners and, with it, an appreciation for his ideas of a liberating education and the teacher as an aesthete. In its second age, IRFA matured its project
From its start, Venezuela’s Instituto Radiofónico Fe y Alegría (IRFA) combined educational programme broadcasts with weekly face-to-face tutorial sessions.

Today IRFA is exploring new approaches to educational radio programming, including providing learning spaces for youth who are now more involved in all aspects of the learning process.
using these guidelines, moving towards edu-communication, in which education is the main tool to confront the potency of colonising projects.

For someone like Mario Kaplún, a theorist of democratic communication from Uruguay, an edu-communication opportunity is an opportunity for a teacher to achieve a sense of freedom. *Abrebrecha* (or “Gap opener”) and *Avanzemos* (or “Let’s advance”) become more than just slogans: they are ways to understand adult education as it was to become practised at IRFA. And practising these ideals is exactly how the organisation’s expansion happened.

Radio stations and orientation centres alike started to appear all over the country, in line with IRFA’s goal to bring education to everyone. The development myth continued to keep Venezuela’s real advancement hypnotised. However, as more radio stations became established, a different approach to constructivist educational communication gained in popularity. This was an approach in which learning was viewed as a process through which individuals could “construct” meaning based on prior knowledge and experience.

In time, a dilemma between behavioural and constructivist followers appeared within IRFA, bringing it into an ideological crisis. Constructivists argued that behavioural schemes could not respond to contemporary needs. Old debates re-emerged about what can be successfully taught through the radio and how: answers or questions, interaction or monologue. As a result, the possibility that the radio audience would be able to think and participate was once again on the table. Constructivist educational and communicational theories were seen as being more suitable, but radio producers and educators continued to probe the boundaries and limitations of both paradigms.

**Innovative model – Version 2.0**

Today IRFA is exploring new approaches, adapting the constructivist radio model and consolidating its work as the organisation faces new challenges.

IRFA’s educational programming is different today, largely because school classes are no longer conducted through the radio. Instead IRFA has developed a live interactive youth radio magazine. Learners are no longer adults — statistics indicate that the average age of IRFA students is between 15 and 25 years old — and more than 50 per cent are girls or women. Technology has also changed: tape is no longer the

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*Fe y Alegría* radio stations, known for their success in teaching, will reach more than 15,000 participants by the end of 2012.
standard for recording programmes, having been replaced by compact discs. Educational design is no longer based on objectives but rather on competencies. Technical and vocational learning is the new adventure. Venezuela’s economic situation requires increasing technical knowledge. Therefore, education programmes must respond so that the country’s human resources develop in such a way that young people are prepared for the challenges of the future. One of radio’s great contributions to educational communication is that it draws different segments of the population to the same conversation through the same process of communication — from indigenous peoples to women and children. This enables all people to learn about and know each other by sharing their lives and experiences.

The greatest challenge facing IRFA is to return to a place of education and communication innovation — in other words, to keep alive the restless attitude that gave life to the organisation in the first place. In its current capacity, IRFA is resisting the trend towards the reduction of communication to a mere product and of education to simply a generator of manpower. The organisation appreciates that the young and old alike find not only a place to study but a place where they can grow as people. More than ever, IRFA must pay attention to the changing times and become stronger with other institutions through collaboration.

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Instituto Radiofónico Fe y Alegría describes itself as a “Movement for Integral Popular Education and Social Development.” It works to empower the most impoverished and excluded members of the population by helping them in their personal development and participation in society. It sees education as a part of a pedagogical and political proposal for social transformation rooted in the local communities.

For further reference, see:

- www.feyalegria.org/
That Wave Is for Sure: The Radio-School in the Socio-cultural Management of Learning

Edgard Patrício

Concept
The very name radio-school suggests a learning environment mediated by the radio. The required radio equipment can be installed in a school, a community, a child- or youth-oriented centre or any other context in which the radio may be useful.

Introduction
Integrating technology into schools has been difficult. In part, this is due to the resistance of educators in using new technologies. However, it can also be traced back to the attitude of technicians and technology-promoters who have no knowledge of the intricate fabric of relations and symbolic relations established through the practice of schooling — a practice that involves teachers, students and the community.

There are two key factors involved in creating effective technology-supported learning. First, approaching educational technology from the standpoint of symbolic processes is essential if that technology is to be taken up by the school community. Second, cultural values must be understood as part of understanding these processes.

These matters are addressed in this chapter, which discusses the goal of combining radio — which is an accepted and long-used technology for reaching communities — with Internet technology in order to share the cultural and life experiences of the community in an educational setting. “That Wave Is for Sure,” the name of this radio-school approach, aims to contribute to the creation of a high quality of education for all.
Objective
That Wave Is for Sure means to bridge the gap between radio, education and community within the socio-cultural reality of the participants. It does so through the use of contextualised educational processes and enjoyable learning methods. Results are evident in improved school performance and the enhanced self-esteem of teachers and students, which in turn provide a foundation for actions that have impact at a still broader level.

Justification
What is the relation between the radio-school and quality education? For education to be effective, it has to be properly contextualised. In other words, it must be done in close relation with cultural considerations. Therein lies the key to social transformation. Local radio itself is one of the most appropriate technologies to sustain such transformation, as it is culturally embedded in the context of the communities in which it operates, be they rural or urban communities, on the periphery or at the centre.
Far from a coincidence, the idea of working with radio as a means of communication for the education of children and youth is a very intentional strategy. Working with and through radio at the local level builds ties with the community and its schools. It allows for a process that strengthens the culture of the communities at the same time that it improves pedagogical performance and educational practice in a simple and efficient manner.

**Methodology**

*Presentation and discussion of the radio-school project with the whole community*

In discussions about the project, there is representation of the whole education community: parents, adult caregivers, teachers, students, technical and administrative personnel, as well as project promoters. Representation should also extend to small businesses in the community in order to foresee the sustainability of the project through local support.

*Creation of workshops for the training of teachers and project promoters*

About 80 hours of training are provided to project promoters and teachers in groups of 20 for every school. The contents of the training include: the relation between communication and education; the relation of student-teacher-student; radio as a pedagogical practice; curricular performance and educational communication; and pedagogical practice of educational communication.

*Creation of workshops for the training of students*

Students receive 120 hours of training, 25 students for each school. Training covers technical aspects of equipment, previously installed at participating schools. Training also covers the rights of children and youths, the relation between education and communication, and interactive techniques of radio communication.

*Set-up of the work plan and definition of the degree of programming of the radio-school*

A work plan for each radio-school project is made, taking into account the demands of the teachers, promoters and students that are defined during the training process. Issues discussed include: the structure and responsibilities of the Work Group, which is established to handle the administration of the radio-school; institutional arrangements (partnerships); adherence to ethical codes of the radio-school; the programme schedule; and the self-reliance and sustainability of the
radio-school. The work plans are finalised after the workshop training, in a process lasting 36 hours.

Follow-up of the programming of the radio-schools

Follow-up mentoring and monitoring is carried out through a visit to the site every 15 days. Site visits include an analysis of: programme diversity, level of participation of teachers and students, use of the radio-school as a pedagogical tool, involvement of the community in the functioning of the project, cultural support perspective, and presence of cultural aspects in the programming.

Results

Beyond the work carried out through the radio in relation to specific subjects, the method aims also to contribute to citizenship formation among the students. These objectives are reflected in the following results that have been observed from the radio-school’s efforts to date:

- **In relation to the attitude of the students** – Findings show an improvement in speaking and oral presentation skills, particularly among quiet students who previously generally avoided sharing their points of view. Improvements have also been noted in the acceptance of criticisms and in the attitude of students towards working in groups. As well, students have shown a better disposition to reading and a stronger desire to write correctly.

- **In relation to the participative management in school** – The Catavento team has observed that by supporting better communicative processes, the radio-school has also become an instrument for highlighting conflicts that were previously invisible because there was no proper means of dialogue among different groups. The resolution of these conflicts adds a positive element in understanding the overall development of schools.

Sample of Radio-School Testimonials

“For me to participate in this project is a privilege, a cause of great happiness and learning. I gained more experience than I could express in words.” (Danilo, 17-year-old student)

“Raquel used to go to bed early, but lately she doesn’t because she only goes to bed after she has watched the news on the television.” (Isabela, mother)

“People can see that this project has helped our children. The importance of learning with these kids is immense. So, people are happy and grateful with each one of you for the love you give to the kids.” (Alenir, teacher)
• **In relation to school violence** – There are a growing number of teachers whose testimony points to a decrease in physical violence in the schools reached by the radio-school project. For example, the confrontations and quarrels between students were notably reduced after the effective functioning of the radio-school. This has been particularly evident during breaks between classes when the radio is most active.

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**Catavento Comunicação e Educação** is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) located in Fortaleza, the state capital of Ceará in northeastern Brazil. Catavento originates from the initiative of teachers and students of the faculties of Social Communication and Law at the Federal University of Ceará. Today, communication and education are its strategy for human development. Catavento works with and for children, adolescents and youth.

For further reference, see:

• www.catavento.org.br
Non-formal open and distance learning

The success and impact of community learning on sustainable development, particularly at the grassroots, continue to grow as new models and methods are being applied to the learning process. Non-formal development education imparted at the community level through a variety of indigenous development communication tools and technologies has added a new dimension to traditional open and distance learning (ODL) approaches.

In an effort to bridge the fields of development and education, this new dimension may be referred to as non-formal ODL. Conducting development communication by using traditional cultural forms as tools and technologies — in effect, tools not common to formal ODL approaches — is part of non-formal ODL.

Why traditional cultural forms?

Despite the unprecedented development and advancement of modern communication across the globe, there remain millions of disadvantaged men and women, in thousands of communities in Commonwealth countries, who have yet to access modern electronic and print media. Poverty, underdevelopment and illiteracy are the prime causes.

Development goals will continue to remain unachieved for these communities if their members are unable to access development education through alternative communication tools. Traditional cultural forms provide this alternative.
Folk media in development communication

Traditional cultural forms — often loosely and interchangeably referred to as traditional media, folk media and folk art forms such as drama and songs — are strong and effective means for development communication. They are rooted in indigenous culture. Originating from different societies and evolving over time, they have been used for moral, religious and socio-political education. These forms are still alive and receptive to new ideas, and therefore have great potential as development communication tools.

Traditional folk media forms are personal, familiar and credible. Community members can easily identify themselves as part of their folk art forms. Therefore, despite the rapid diffusion of new communication technologies, folk media continue to demonstrate value as effective vehicles for developmental messages.

The appeal of traditional cultural forms is also that they are universal and intimate. They are popular regardless of the educational, social and economic standing of any community. They use colloquial dialects, which makes the communication clear and distinct. Another big advantage of folk media is that it is flexible in accommodating new ideas, themes and issues. Folk media satisfies the inner need for self-expression and everyone can participate in it. Thus, it is particularly effective for community learning. Folk art forms not only preserve and disseminate the wisdom, tradition and culture of the past, but they can also be adapted to incorporate modern development education.

Rupantar’s method of development communication

Rupantar is a development communication organisation that believes culture and sustainable development are closely connected. For the last 15 years, Rupantar has been using, alongside conventional methods, traditional cultural forms to impart life- and livelihood-centred education and awareness to people in Bangladeshi communities. Some of the key areas in which the organisation has successfully worked are: women’s empowerment and leadership development; disaster preparedness and mitigation; alternative livelihood options; human rights (including rights of women and children); biodiversity conservation; revival of folk culture; grassroots democracy and good governance; protection of women and children from human trafficking; and theatre education for children. Development messages on these issues and other matters, communicated through traditional cultural forms, have reached over 2 million people annually.
Although Rupantar works to revive dozens of traditional cultural forms for developmental purposes, it uses three distinct forms primarily in its development communication activities: pot songs, folk drama and popular publications.

- **Pot songs** – Pot songs are songs illustrated by drama and coloured pictures and scenes painted on a large canvas scroll. As the song and dance proceed, the canvas scroll is unrolled, changing the pictures to correspond with the words of the song. The script is prepared in a participatory method where the composers, performers and would-be audience take part. This 12th-century low-cost communication technology can effectively and easily reach illiterate and semi-literate people with messages about complex developmental and social issues. Rupantar has so far developed over 100 pot songs on various issues.

- **Folk drama** – This ancient, traditional form of entertainment has been used to educate and communicate with common people on moral, social and life-based issues. Rupantar has adapted this form into living theatre and uses it as a means of “edu-tainment,” or mass education through entertainment. The themes are usually based on issues of relevance to the community. The desired messages are conveyed in attractive style and rhythmic form for better understanding by the audience. The script is prepared in a participatory way with the performers. For this method of folk drama there is no need for decorative lights, heavy make-up, costly props and stages. Rather, it is highly minimalist. Rupantar has used this form extensively for civic and development education.

- **Popular publications** – Popular publications represent a special type of literature and form of journalism. These are written in easy and simple language and often with lots of pictorial illustrations. The target readers are urban and rural people with basic literacy skills who likely do a limited amount of “serious reading” because of educational, social, economic and occupational constraints. The contents of the publications use real-life problems, issues of current relevance and topics of human interest. Hawkers and peddlers usually sell these publications to passengers on trains, buses or steamer boats. The cost of a booklet is between the equivalent of 10 and 20 cents (US). Rupantar’s many booklets with development messages have reached communities that do not otherwise have access to such information.
The communication activities of Rupantar rely on three main traditional forms — pot songs, folk drama and popular publications — to promote learning on a mass scale.

Folk drama has been used to educate and communicate with common people on moral, social and life-based issues for hundreds of years. Rupantar has adapted this form into living theatre and uses it as a means of “edu-tainment,” or mass education through entertainment.
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Rupantar is a development non-governmental organisation (NGO) working in 12 districts of Bangladesh, impacting the lives of 1.2 million disadvantaged people. Rupantar endeavours to establish democracy at the grassroots level; promote mass education; revive and foster folk culture forms and methods; conserve biodiversity and the environment; and enhance peoples’ coping capacity with climate change and natural disaster impacts.

For further reference, see:

- www.rupantar.org
6. Good Morning, You Are Listening to Community Radio
   – Joke van Kampen

7. From Public Speaking to Community Broadcasting
   – Guatemalan Women’s Collective

8. From the Kitchen to the Radio Studio
   – Mónica Valdés

9. Inspiring HIV Testing in Upington, South Africa
   – Gail White
Good Morning, You Are Listening to Community Radio: A Collection of Stories about Listeners in Their Communities

Joke van Kampen

GOOD MORNING, NKOTAKOTA.
Meet Dalitso.

Dalitso is washing the dishes while she is listening to the community radio channel. Dalitso is worried.

This morning she looked at her stock of maize, which is supposed to feed her family until the next harvest. But there were little black spots all over the maize. That means that her maize is infected by some sort of pest. The programme on the radio features a farmer who has built a storage hut for the maize in a way that protects the maize from pests. Dalitso listens to how the storage hut was built and decides to talk to her husband as soon as he is back from the field to see whether they can do the same.

People learn from role modelling, notably based on stories that could have been their own and that involve solutions that can be easily copied.

IT IS 12 O’CLOCK IN MANGOCHI. YOU ARE LISTENING TO DZIMWE COMMUNITY RADIO.
Meet Grace.

Grace is sitting on her kondwe, the veranda. She is biting her lip and feeling at her black eye, which hurts.

She is listening to a radio drama in which a woman tries to end her suffering from beatings by her husband. Grace sighs. Like the woman in the story, she has gone to her ankoswe, her marriage counsellor, many times. It helps, but only for a short time. As soon as there is a little money in the household, her husband starts drinking and beating her when he comes home.
The woman in the radio programme finally gets help from the victim support unit of the police, people who are trained to support victims of domestic violence. Grace listens attentively. She knows she has to do something as well. The final message of the programme is: *Walk out while you still can walk.* Grace sighs again. She does not want her husband in jail; she wants the beatings to stop. But she needs to talk to someone, anyone. Maybe she, too, should go and talk to that lady she knows at the victim support unit.

*Grace is somewhere between Intention and Action on the behaviour change ladder, pictured below. Learning in itself is not necessarily or automatically empowering. On the contrary, many learning processes enhance negative values, including notions of the inferiority of women. If you have no agency over your own life, you will not be able to respond to an invitation to change and to become an agent of change. Storytelling provides an empowering way of learning.*

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**WELCOME TO THE WEEKLY CHILD RIGHTS PROGRAMME AT MSIMBA COMMUNITY RADIO.**

Meet Joyce.

Joyce is sitting on the floor of the classroom with her friends. They have established a child rights club and they listen to the child rights radio programme together on Wednesday afternoons. The programme contains a drama on child rights, followed by a discussion among children on the same topic.

Some weeks ago, the producer of the programme came to their club to record a discussion. It was nice for the club to hear themselves on the radio the next week. Joyce and her friends are now preparing a child
rights day in the area. They have invited all the important people, the chief and the social welfare department. They have written poems and developed a theatre play. The issue they are going to address is that Joyce and her friends are supposed to assist their parents in making wine from sugar cane in the season. They know now that that is child labour. The girls are supposed to get the sugar cane and to pound it into something that turns into alcohol after brewing. The boys are supposed to go and sell the wine, which is even worse because they do not go to school in that period and they drink the wine themselves. The club is proposing that whoever sees a girl carrying sugar cane should report it to the chief, who will then fine the parents (they will have to give a goat to the chief).

It is a general understanding that community media have a special role in providing a voice for the voiceless. We are your megaphone. Strictly speaking, this is not entirely correct since the radio needs not only to make the message louder, but also to get relevant parties to listen. Giving a voice to the voiceless is usually interpreted as a set of techniques to get the needs, desires and concerns of the community into the mainstream. Communities are also mini societies, with rich and poor people, people who are discriminated against, and people who are not listened to. Integrating their stories into the mainstream debate in the community is important.

IT IS 3 O’CLOCK. YOU ARE LISTENING TO MUDZI WATHU COMMUNITY RADIO STATION.

Meet Hilda.

Hilda and 12 other women are sitting around the radio under a baobab tree. They are listening together to a radio programme on maternal health. Two years ago, Hilda’s sister died while giving birth because she had no professional support and did not make it to the hospital in time. Hilda got a group of women together who wanted to do something about the high level of maternal mortality in the area. They go door to door to inform women on issues related to pregnancy and delivery. The radio programme provides them with information on these issues. Today the programme is talking about healthy food for a pregnant woman and the need to rest. Hilda smiles when, in the middle of the programme, songs on pregnancy and childbirth are aired. Hilda’s group wrote and performed these songs; they are listening to their own voices, their own stories and ideas.

A line one hears too often: Education is here to eradicate ignorance. However, the real point is that people are not ignorant. They may be disempowered and disenfranchised, but they are not ignorant. And if you approach them as being ignorant, your message will not get far.

If learning is empowering, it helps people to take action.
Meet Andrew.

In the hills near Zomba, Andrew is listening to the radio. He listens to this programme all the time because it helps him to diversify his business. The staff from the radio station visited his community some time ago and he received a series of instructional materials that come with the radio programme.

Today’s programme is about starting up beekeeping. The so-called “low-literacy” sheet shows how to build a beehive and how to maintain it. Andrew thinks that this should be possible in the nearby forest. However, he needs to find out first whether he is allowed to put beehives in the forest. Who owns the forest? He will need to visit the District Forest Office tomorrow. The programme tells the story of a community that managed to get permission from the forest office to use the forest in a sustainable way — no small achievement since the forest office is infamous for its corrupt practices. Maybe, Andrew thinks, I should get together a group of farmers here first, and then go there together.

*No community radio station will be able to avoid getting involved in governance/political issues. The key is to be rooted in the community and to use storytelling to get the message ahead.*
HELLO, EVERYBODY. WE ARE BACK ON AIR. WELCOME TO PASCO RADIO STATION.

Meet Patrick.

Patrick is sitting in the open-air radio studio of Pasco Radio. It is a small operation. Mister Chata, a former teacher, built the whole thing himself even though he is blind. Pasco is on air every afternoon for four hours to a coverage area of about ten kilometres. It is a small area, but within those ten kilometres are many dedicated listeners.

Patrick is a member of a support group for people living with HIV/AIDS. He is interviewed by Mister Chata about their activities. He is telling the story of their community *dimbo* (vegetable garden) and kitchen where the group members grow vegetables together and cook once a week for the orphans and the sick people in the neighbourhood. They learn about healthy food and they practise community care for the vulnerable. Last week they made a stew from sweet potatoes and avocado. Who says that men cannot cook?

After the interview, Patrick cycles through the township. When he passes the bottle store, the men sitting outside call out to him: “Hey Patrick, we heard you in the radio, man! Come have a drink with us.”

*Stigma and discrimination can be fought by openness and raising the visibility of vulnerable groups. Role models can change the status of disadvantaged groups in the community.*

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**Story Workshop Educational Trust** (est. 1998) is a Malawian organisation with a mission to bring together social change communication and entertainment to help Malawians improve their everyday lives.

For further reference, see:

- www.storyworkshop.org
From Public Speaking to Community Broadcasting

Guatemalan Women’s Collective: Amalia Jiménez Gallan, Sadi Car, Lisinia Aguilar y Bernarda López Ramírez, Margarita Herrera, Argentina Olivas, Inmaculada Postigo, Ana Jorge Alonzo, and Claudia Villamayor

“We women are educated in fear. From the time we are little girls, we have not been allowed to express ourselves about anything, much less about the context of war,” said Berta Lidia Ramos in Petén, the northern department of Guatemala. In this Central American country, marked by 36 years of internal war, women have now started to break the silence and community media is playing an important role.

War survivor Elvira Corado, who spent eight years in the mountains during the war, says, “We suffered a lot. We ate what we could. We never stayed in the same place for a long time. If our children were crying, sometimes we gave them pills so they fell asleep and the army wouldn’t hear us. We lived in fear. We had no freedom. We couldn’t meet other women.”

Women’s fears manifested themselves in several ways, in different codes. María Elena Andrés, a member of AMISMAXAJ, a women’s organisation in the Xinka territory, says, “I was ashamed to say hello to people in the streets.” Another woman of the territory says, “I used to walk with my head and my face covered with the rebozo⁷ (scarf).” Freedom of expression was limited by the culture of oppression against women. However, things began to change when women started to organise themselves into associations. Describing her first time speaking to other women in public, one member said, “The first time I had to speak in public, as I started saying hello to everyone I felt like I was going to make a mistake. I thought, What am I going to say? Sometimes I thought I was going to forget even my own name!”

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⁷ The rebozo or peraje, worn by indigenous women, is used to cover them from the cold when they are harvesting fruits or vegetables or to cover what is in their baskets. It is also common for Xinka women in Xalapán to cover their heads when they are entering church.
From isolation, women make use of their freedom

The women of AMISMAXAJ have a plan to recover two important “territories”: the body and the land. Women have lived and suffered the structural oppression of patriarchy and racism and the effects of capitalism, including the battle to defend their Xalapán territories (southeastern Guatemala). To recover the body and the land, women use their meetings and the radio, as a tool of emancipation, to communicate.

Women from the Xalapán Mountains are discovering that they can express themselves and establish their thoughts through radio. It provides them with an opportunity to share their ideas and to fight against segregation and subordination. As they speak through the radio, they express how they feel and what they think. In the process they develop an alternate reality with their own voice, one that promotes a collective transformation.

Elvira Corado, co-ordinator of Radio Libertad in Petén, shares her experience:

“My voice was shaking, which happened because I wasn’t valuing myself, because they had made me stop believing in myself. I wasn’t even the half person I am now. Now I feel free to talk to other people. Being able to express myself allowed me to be in contact with other people, to make me grow myself into a leader and start to take my own decisions.”

The women of AMISMAXAJ, a women’s organisation in Guatemala, have found that radio gives them the perfect platform for expressing their ideas and speaking out against patriarchy, racism and oppression of indigenous people.
AMISMAXAJ is the only feminist organisation in the Xalapán Mountain region within the Jalapa Department. The women see an opportunity in the power of communication to dispel the fear ingrained within their society, accumulated during years of war. They take the microphones and set out their point of view. The radio is where they say what they feel and what they hope for. Beyond the radio, they extend their leadership in other social spaces.

A new proposal: We are protagonists of the radio!

“When I developed my voice, my mind developed too. Now I talk to other women through the radio,” says Berta Lidia Ramos from Radio Libertad in Petén.

The women of Finca Santa Rita, in La Libertad municipality, Petén, are fighting to recover their dignity. The idea to establish a radio station at the finca (rural property) came about through meetings held to defend the territories against the construction of a dam. The radios started to broadcast on 13 March 2004 in the north of Petén Department. What was once a jungle is today the centre of the region’s African palm industry. As the industry grows, it takes more and more land from farmers, who are already suffering as a result of historical and structural reasons, leaving them even further impoverished.

Most of those who form Radio Libertad are women. Through the radio they express and defend their ideals. They exert their and others’ leadership, hoping to end their isolation and to begin collective tenure of the land.

AMISMAXAJ members describe their community radio as a space where they can promote the politicisation and transformation of women who have been assigned identities rather than forging their own, and prevented from creating their own realities. The radio is an instrument that accompanies them in this historic fight to disrupt negative conventions and stereotypes, such as:

- Indigenous women don’t talk.
- What women say doesn’t have any value.
- Women must be at home and not participate in public spaces, such as communication media.
- When women meet and share, it’s just a form of gossip. Political themes are only for men.
Through their work using radio as a platform for expression, the women have established a new means of communication for other indigenous women:

- “Women can decide over their own bodies: it is our first territory.”
- “As indigenous women, our life is linked to mother earth. Our fight passes through the defense of our land and our territories.”

The women generate social dialogue when they communicate, and they build capabilities for communication among others. In this way, the women show that it is possible to work for equality and the eradication of exclusion. They are hoping that new generations will not lose this spirit of collectivity — that they will not forget their history of struggle and resistance against a repressive state. Women at Radio Libertad assume positions against megaprojects and genetically modified seeds, and for women’s rights and historical memory.

While thousands of Guatemalans, women and men, awake listening to music and national and international news, at Radio Libertad, Elvira Corado hosts *La Estrella de la Mañana* (Morning Star), a radio programme that looks to create and shape consciousness. She explains to the people the risks of socio-political sleepiness. She calls on them to defend their territories and their resources.

Petronila says she was so afraid, she cried the first time she spoke on the radio. As the days went by she stopped crying, but she was still shaking with fear. Now, she explains, all the fear is gone. At Totonicapan, the women took control of their own bodies, and this alone is a very important achievement. To use their voices to claim their territory, to develop themselves and their community, is yet another budding achievement.

Amalia Jiménez Gallan, AMARC Guatemala and EMA-RTV; Sadi Car, AMARC Guatemala; Lisinia Aguilar y Bernarda López Ramírez, AMISMAXAJ; Margarita Herrera, independent social communicator, El Salvador; Argentina Olivas, Vice President of the Women’s International Network of AMARC Latin America and the Caribbean and Director of Vos Radio, Nicaragua; Inmaculada Postigo, Málaga University; Ana Jorge Alonzo, Málaga University; and Claudia Villamayor, Head of Department at Quilmes and La Plata universities.

For further reference, see:

- World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters for Latin America and the Caribbean (AMARC-ALC) – www.alc.amarc.org (Spanish)
The community radio comes on every morning before the light peers through from the Andes Mountains and the Amazon rainforest, in the south of Colombia. At 5 a.m., the airwaves come alive with the sound of guitars and invitations to enjoy the morning. The host brings his mouth to the microphone with a greeting, “Good morning to listeners throughout the Andaquí Radio broadcast area. Wings to your voice ...”

Martha Calderón listens, faithfully and critically, to the radio. She has been a listener since 1997 when the station came onto the FM dial with 250 watts of power. She listens as she washes the dishes. She listens as she prepares the food she sells to visitors, to the police and to officials who serve temporarily in this town of 11,000 inhabitants, located in the northeast of Caquetá Department.

Martha listens to the radio from her spotlessly clean kitchen and complains. Things are not going well in the village. She needs to talk.

The town of Belén de los Andaquíes was established in 1917 by men and women who came from the coastal areas of central Colombia looking for land, opportunity and a place to raise their children. It remains a distant place, with unsatisfied basic needs and high levels of corruption. It is a place lacking in infrastructure, job opportunities and, above all, education — particularly civic education. There are no opportunities for the people to learn to be citizens, to know their rights and duties as citizens, or to understand the value of public goods, space and utilities. However, Belén de los Andaquíes is also a privileged place: a place of rivers, mountains and rainforests — and of enterprising people with the potential to transform their situation.

Martha’s very first call to the radio was about the garbage left by people on the banks of the Sarabando River. At the station, Alirio González, the director, replied, “Hello, thanks for contacting us. What do you want to tell us?”
Martha came forth over the phone with anger and indignation. A large accumulation of waste along the river’s banks — from rides and games, lunches and restrooms — threatens not only its beauty but the very survival of its waters. She asks the people of the village why they do not take care of the river. Would they leave their houses as they have the river, full of dirt and disorder? Why do they not acknowledge the generosity of nature? She talks and complains to get rid of that anger that consumes her.

For several months Martha called the station to denounce everyday acts of residents and their leaders that contributed to problems in public services, the care of natural resources, the management and investment of the taxes, a lack of respect and solidarity among neighbours....

One day Alirio González made her a proposition on air: “Martha, why don’t you come and give us the benefit of your daily nagging right here at the station? You are no longer just a listener to the station; you have become the voice of our people.” She resisted: “No, I am not going there to the station. I don’t like microphones and I have a lot of things to do in my kitchen.”

Much like the old saying, “If Mohammed will not come to the mountain, then the mountain must come to Mohammed,” Alirio took the radio to Martha. He put together a remote transmitter and brought it to Martha’s kitchen where he talked to her on air. She complained, but she also spoke

Colombia’s Martha Calderón was once a regular call-in listener to Andaqui Radio, speaking her mind on things she saw as wrong in the community. Today she is the host of her own popular programme — La Cantaleta (The Nagging) — which gives all citizens in the broadcast area the chance to air concerns about civic, social and family problems.
about her recipes and what she was cooking that day. The radio programme was so well received that in no time listeners were familiar with this daily ritual of Martha talking about everyday problems in their municipality while simultaneously explaining some new recipes. This occurred always in dialogue with the director or the announcer on duty. That’s how Martha’s programme, *The Nagging*, got started. However, this was not enough. Martha began to receive complaints from other people and, in order to assume them as her own, she started to acquire a journalist’s habits and skills. She never denounced people or groups without first investigating and following up on complaints. The bulb of a street light, for example, was missing from a local road, inviting theft and inciting insecurity among people in the neighbourhood. Martha denounced it on the radio. When the bulb was replaced, she took to the airwaves, acknowledging the response, but warning public officials to be attentive to the complaints of citizens.

Martha is over 60 years old, which does not prevent her from teaching and learning. Her main concerns are related to civic culture and public management. Her approach is simple: she complains about things that are wrong and do not work.
“One weekend, we went to the Sarabando River with a group from the radio station. We walked along the river bank. We collected 17 bags of garbage. It was terrible. There was every kind of thing you can imagine on the banks of the river: diapers, old shoes, chicken leftovers, etc. I said, ‘Isn’t this disgusting? Aren’t they ashamed? They don’t know that by polluting water they are polluting life?’ I came back with that anger and spoke at the station.” Since then she does not rest from her “nagging,” half an hour in the morning from Monday to Friday.

Although the care given to the river has improved, there are many issues that remain and which cannot be neglected. Martha’s programme talks about the cleanliness of the village, the use of public space, the lack of efficiency of local government and the indifference of its inhabitants. Family issues are also her priority, such as parenting and the prevention of everyday hazards in the household and the countryside. Martha also continues to give advice on how to keep the kitchen clean and how to handle food (for example, to control insects that cause diseases). She knows that these problems can be addressed by the community radio, helping citizens to learn and to contribute gradually to positive individual and collective change.

In a little town, everybody knows everything and everyone knows everyone. But not everyone has the courage to speak up when something is wrong. This is especially true within contexts of social violence and armed conflict, such as that of Belén de los Andaquíes. Listeners seek Martha out in the marketplace, at her home and even while she is walking down the sidewalk. They tell her what they think of her programme. Feedback is immediate. Her listeners are also the protagonists in the stories she tells, and together they work through their complaints and grievances using the space provided by the radio. Martha’s programme has become a critical eye providing a kind of oversight to the administration of the municipality. It is a space for people to vent about social issues and the public knows hers is a voice that will be heard. They go to Martha because she has credibility.

Martha says her strategy is to talk to the audience — and those whose ears she is pulling — as if talking to a friend. Her style is simple. She does not name names, but speaks loudly and applies a strategy of sweetness. Many times when it comes to an issue concerning the town administration, she invites bureaucrats to get up out of their chairs and go see the problems for themselves.

Her language is not the most eloquent or diplomatic. People have criticised her approach because sometimes her tone is too tough, too critical. Nevertheless, the people enjoy Martha’s open if un-poetic speech. Journalist’s Day is celebrated in Colombia on February 9 and one year on
that day she received a congratulatory scroll. She laughs and says, “Oh, a so-called journalist. I am really just a member of the community. I have been fine-tuning my approach.... Now I am fine to talk,” she says with a big smile. “In any case, there is still much to do, but it is a seed. As my dad use to say: ‘He who plants a tree, plants a life.’”

Mónica Valdés, a Colombian journalist and anthropologist, is currently Trainer Director with the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC) for Latin America and the Caribbean. She is an experienced media producer and researcher whose areas of interest include educational, creative and social application of information and communication technologies (ICTs); social and citizen participation; health and social change communication; human rights; and public policy. Email: monvaldes@gmail.com

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) for Latin America and the Caribbean (ALC) is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) with 400 member radio stations, national associations in 18 countries and a regional council represented by sub-regions: Andean countries, Brazil, the Caribbean, Central America, Mexico and Southern Cone countries. AMARC-ALC’s mission is to support its network in promoting the democratisation of communication, freedom of speech and community radio as a social movement, and to contribute to social participation and equitable development. Latin America and the Caribbean, as with all regions of the world, are represented on the governing board of AMARC International.

For further reference, see:

Fear of testing for HIV is driven by many factors, not least of which is the fear of rejection by family, friends, colleagues and others in the communities in which we live. It is a fear perpetuated by the stigma and discrimination associated with AIDS. Although the South African constitution protects people living with HIV from discriminatory practices, social realities tell a different story.

Regular testing for HIV is an important strategy in any national protocol to address the increasing prevalence of HIV. Through sharing stories and experiences of people who have already been tested, community media can play a vital role in the promotion of testing by providing accurate information, ensuring that listeners know where to access services, and helping to alleviate the fears associated with testing.

Radio Riverside, a community radio in Upington, South Africa, did just that. In an episode of the radio-based learning programme, *Summer for All*, which focused on HIV testing, the producers scripted a live HIV test, including pre- and post-test counselling, to guide listeners through the whole process of testing.

Needs assessments conducted for the *Summer for All* learning programme in Upington had shown that many people fear needles and blood. Many people assumed that an HIV test involved pain and large quantities of blood. People were also unsure about the length of time they would have to wait to get the results of their tests, and were anxious that their results would not be confidential. The live on-air HIV test was therefore scripted to cover all of these aspects.

The station manager at Radio Riverside, Thabang Pusoyabone, who is well known and respected in the Upington community, volunteered to do the test on air. A trained nurse conducted the test in the Riverside studios, explaining the process as she went along. She informed listeners from the outset of the programme that regardless of whether the test results were positive or negative, the results would remain strictly confidential.
HIV tests in South Africa are often done in informal settings using a mobile clinic, a service offered by civil society groups such as the Treatment Action Campaign and the Desmond Tutu Foundation. Summer for All, a community learning programme broadcast on Radio Riverside in Upington, South Africa, encourages listener-learner groups to make use of this service.

The outside broadcasting unit of Radio Riverside is used to engage with listeners by taking the studio into the community and promoting interaction and dialogue.
She also explained that she required only a drop of blood in order to do the test — the outcome of which would be available after just 15 minutes.

During the quarter-hour waiting period, the Summer for All presenter interviewed Thabang to find out how he was feeling and the reason for him testing. Thabang simultaneously updated his Facebook page, explaining that the reason that he had decided to be tested was so that he could lead by example. He expressed his hope that other colleagues and friends would do the same. Listeners were also given an opportunity to call the studio or to text their questions or messages of support during the programme, extending the dialogue into the listening community.

As a result of this programme, another popular presenter at the station also agreed to get tested and then shared his experience with listeners during his morning drive-time show as part of an HIV-testing campaign conducted by the health department. This simple intervention led to 79 people requesting an HIV test on the same day following the broadcast at a small rural health clinic in the area.

This example illustrates the power of radio as a vehicle for community learning. An important lesson learnt was that if communication programmes are produced to address people’s concerns, gaps in knowledge and the overall needs of the community, those programmes can lead to significant behavioural changes and measurable outcomes. As well, the HIV-testing radio campaign demonstrates the influence of community role models who lead by example.

Perhaps most significantly, the campaign highlights the power of storytelling and shared experiences in conveying health education in contrast to the use of traditional didactic approaches in which experts tell people what to do. This intervention was successful because listeners could relate to and identify with the experience of the station manager. They shared his anxiety in waiting for the test results and applauded his brave stance — and in return, they “rewarded” his behaviour by following his example.

Gail White is the executive director of the Media and Training Centre for Health (MTC) in Cape Town, South Africa. She is a graduate of the University of Cape Town, where she completed a BA in Drama and African History. She also holds a post-graduate certificate in Communication for Behavioural Impact from the University of New York. She has worked in the field of Health Communication since 1985 and has worked for MTC since 2001. Email: gwhite@mtcforhealth.co.za

The Media and Training Centre for Health (MTC), established in 1994 as an affiliate to the National Progressive Primary Health Care Network,
has provided training to the majority of community radio stations in South Africa. MTC takes a collaborative approach to media development. For further reference, see:

- Radio Riverside, Upington, South Africa – www.radio-riverside.co.za
- Media and Training Centre for Health – www.mtcforhealth.co.za
- “HIV Test Diary” episode of Summer for All, featured on Speaker’s Community Learning Programme show – www.spreaker.com/user/4497107/dagboek_toets_test_diary_riverside
PART THREE:

Praxis in Latin America

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PART THREE: PRAXIS IN LATIN AMERICA

DKY FM: Radio on the Street in Nicaragua

Kenia Regina Sanchez Ford

The Fundación Puntos de Encuentro (Meeting Points Foundation) is a Nicaraguan feminist non-governmental organisation (NGO) with 20 years of experience in communication for social change using two different but complementary strategies:

a) massive communication based on a blend of entertainment and educational activities, with popular education designed to promote reflection and dialogue in order to bring about change to public opinion; and

b) capacity reinforcement through participatory and experience-based methods that articulate and develop leadership and networking among different social actors in order to stimulate public initiative.

Radio is one of the main pillars of the massive communication approach. In Nicaragua, as in all Central America, radio is the most accessible and popularly consumed media. The advent of new technologies has favoured radio’s capacity to reach and positively impact several key population groups. Now, for example, youth, particularly adolescents, listen to radio on their mobile telephones, iPods and online.

DKY FM’s focus: targeting youth

DKY FM is the most recent of three major radio programmes that the Fundación Puntos de Encuentro has developed and run over the past 18 years, each based on the needs of different generations of youth. In October 2008, a consumer preferences study was conducted with adolescents and other youth, along with communication specialists and commercial and non-commercial media representatives. The result was DKY FM — or de Calle FM (Of the Street FM) — a new youth radio programme.

DKY FM is broadcast live simultaneously by five radio stations across the country, providing national coverage, and on its website. DKY FM’s radio studios are mobile, moving to find adolescents and other youth, male and
female, 13–24 years old, where they live. Target audience members take a leading role, becoming broadcasters for a day, transmitting from their own school, centre or other public space that has been turned into a radio studio.

DKY FM is designed to be fun and entertaining while at the same time educational. Its popular media approach is ultimately directed by adolescents and other youth from women’s movements, sexual and reproductive rights organisations, as well as the Nicaraguan chapter of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC). This diversity of knowledge and orientation contributes to DKY FM’s approach to subjects such as the rights of girls and women (including sexual and reproductive rights), power issues in relationships, sexual diversity and HIV/AIDS — all with a gender and generational perspective.

In a 2009 study of the new programme, CIET International surveyed over 5,930 people. The study found that, six months after DKY FM started, one in ten respondents between 13 and 24 years of age had already listened to the programme. In addition, three of every four respondents indicated that the following topics drew their attention: sexuality and identity (identified by 28 per cent of respondents); violence and abuse (25 per cent);

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8 CIET International is a non-profit organisation doing scientific research at the local level involving professionals from different fields (e.g., epidemiology, social economy, planning, communication). For more information, go to www.ciet.org.
and sexual and reproductive health (18 per cent). Twenty-eight per cent of respondents identified other subjects as drawing their attention.⁹

Thirty-eight per cent of audience members surveyed said that as a result of the programme they had taken initiative and talked with someone (e.g., a relative or friend) about pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or violence. Communication with relatives was greater for girls than for boys, whereas communication with friends was greater for boys (55 per cent versus 43 per cent for girls).

The evidence indicates that little by little DKY FM is modifying attitudes, changing behaviours and increasing the interpersonal communication of adolescents and other youth concerning women’s rights and autonomy, HIV/AIDS, sexual diversity and gender violence.

**DKY FM: radio and more**

DKY FM is more than a radio programme. Its overall strategy includes the following elements and activities:

- **a radio magazine** that fuses together different voices and speakers, including reflections, debates and opinions from and for adolescents and young people – The magazine maintains a fresh and youthful style, using humour and intimate conversations with adolescents and other youth, with regular segments such as Feminine Version, Masculine Zone, Your Sexual Parts and The Un-Recommendation of the Week.

- **a range of radio formats**, including sketches, jingles, dramatisations, articles and interviews

- **social networking using Facebook and mass SMS text messaging** in order to promote the programme, reinforce key messages and advice, and encourage debate and interaction

- **a network of youth correspondents in Central America**, made up of 20 journalists from across the region, who question, analyse, denounce and propose new ideas using short audio capsules depicting the situation of women and youth rights in Central America

- **promotional tours** that open up spaces for reflection and debate inside classrooms, public parks, markets, shopping malls and the streets, where doubts and myths on selected social issues can be clarified – For these tours, alliances are essential with regional and national delegations of education ministries, municipal offices, other local organisations, radio stations and adolescent and youth organisations. Promotional tours also enable participants and

⁹ The list includes family and spousal relations, human rights, social organisation and participation, drugs, alcohol, and commercial sexual exploitation.
facilitators alike to recognise prejudices, arguments, doubts and other unexplored issues raised by the audience and to take those topics up in the radio programme.

What's next for a model like this?
Based on the success of these radio broadcasts, the foundation hopes to share the DKY FM experience and its distinctive “fun-educational” model with youth journalists, community radio broadcasters and a range of public and civil society organisations that are also betting on communication for social change as a strategy and a vehicle for Central America.

To extend and fortify this kind of work in Nicaragua, greater investment in communication strategies is needed so that programmes such as DKY FM can continue to influence public opinion in favour of women and youth rights. To this end, there is also a need to create a radio production centre for feminist and women’s organisations.

Along with building on the potential of the radio — given its mass reach and accessibility, its strength as a vehicle for creativity and its ability to build empathy and solidarity — DKY FM is also planning to open up more discussion spaces for young people in their classrooms.

Kenia Regina Sanchez Ford is a 26-year-old living in Nicaragua. She is in charge of radio production for Fundación Puntos de Encuentro and is the producer of the DKY FM radio programme, the only youth programme with national coverage. Through DKY FM, Kenia organises campaigns that aim to reach adolescents and other youth on subjects such as HIV, sexual and reproductive rights, and gender issues. Kenia is a qualified specialist in HIV as well as Child Rights Communication. She is the founder and president of the HIV Journalists Network. Email: kenia.sanchez@puntos.org.ni

Fundación Puntos de Encuentro is a Nicaraguan feminist non-profit organisation using popular mass media strategies for social change communication. Along with DKY FM, the foundation also produces an educational television series and educational print materials and has an area for youth leadership reinforcement. Email: puntos@puntos.org.ni

For further reference, see:

- www.dkyfm.com
Training and Social Mobilisation to Combat Violence against Women

João Paulo Malerba

The Radio Network to Combat Violence against Women was created in 2010. It was a joint effort by the Centro de Imprensa, Assessoria e Rádio (CRIAR Brasil) and the Superintendent of Women’s Rights of the State Government, involving female popular communication workers from all around the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Based in Rio de Janeiro, CRIAR has worked for 17 years with popular communication for the defense of human rights all around Brazil, through the production of educational materials, training and social mobilisation. It also seeks to promote the democratisation of communication and is one of the founders of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) Brasil.

The idea for the Radio Network project emerged from a sad reality: every 15 seconds a woman is a victim of violence in Brazil. In the majority of cases the aggressor is a relative or lives in the same house as the woman. Because it touches on private and emotional issues, this makes violence against women a difficult issue to address in the media. The main objective of the project is therefore to form a network of popular social communication workers who are prepared to approach the problem in an open and responsible way. The idea is to use community radio for its educational, informative and motivating power in combating this type of violence.

In the first phase of the project, the radio stations participating in the network decided for themselves on the most important points to be addressed in relation to violence against women. From this process a number of educational materials were produced, including:

- an information booklet
- ten audio spots – short, high-impact audio messages that would be available for frequent, repeated broadcast in a station’s schedule
• 20-minute long journalistic programmes in which the content was not dated, making it possible to repeat and rebroadcast them at any time

The purpose of this material was to involve the community in information dissemination and discussion about violence against women. Brazil has a sort of culture of silence with respect to domestic violence, which discourages any interference in conflicts between a husband and wife, painting such instances as a private matter and not subject to external intervention. A central goal of the project was to break with this practice by mobilising listeners through radio broadcasts to create and foster networks in the community that would offer women protection.

The approach taken by the project focused on the use of radio drama to depict violence against women in family situations, followed by messages that encouraged complaints about violence against women to be taken to the authorities. The messages were based on the Maria da Penha Law, a federal law that increases the severity of punishment for aggressions against women.

These materials were broadcast on more than 100 community radio stations in the state of Rio de Janeiro, and also made available on a social networking site (www.radiotube.org.br) designed to share informational and educational content, including audio, video and text, with a focus on citizenship.
Text-based materials were designed to meet the needs of broadcasters as well as citizens. Previous experiences had shown that even more than the audio material, local broadcasters need printed information at hand while talking about the issue. The booklet therefore presents strategies on how to summarise the subject and link to the local networks and other resources. Based on demands from participants in the network, the booklet includes the complete Maria da Penha Law as well as a list of services available to women. In this way, popular social communicators in the network have the essential information about how to proceed with complaints concerning violence.

The approach to training and content creation was based on three key elements: a) the issue of sexism in society; b) the fundamental rights of women; and c) the exchange of information, life stories and experiences among women and the participation of women in the community. The depiction of the issues began with macro-community situations and carried through the daily situations of the participants. The objective was not only to create a space for training and content development for the radio programmes, but also to raise awareness and understanding among social communicators about violence against women, enabling those communicators to discuss, rather than simply present, issues on the radio.

The method used in designing programmes and developing content was participatory and constructivist. Not only teachers but also participants contributed to the learning process, bringing their own personal experiences and life stories to bear. This method has been effective in bringing the issue of violence against women into the everyday realities of the concerned communities and generating active participation from women. When community radio broadcasters engaged with the theme, highlighting its proximity and relevance to community life, citizens began to act proactively to counter violence against women.

The booklet was also used in a two-day thematic training of 40 popular social communicators working for community broadcasters. More than learning communication techniques, these women deepened their understanding of the issues, exchanging information and life experiences with members of government involved in women’s rights. These two-day training workshops ended with participants producing audio materials about the topics.

The last phase of the CRIAR project was to structure the network in such a way that it would continue and go beyond itself. A virtual community was established at the social networking site www.radiotube.org.br, through which broadcasters and other members of civil society share and discuss information about citizenship. The objective was to widen the exchange, increasing the number of actors involved in the network.
(including other radio stations), sensitising them and encouraging them to join in the struggle to combat violence against women.

Rosangela da Silva Santiago, who works in Bicuda FM Community Radio in Rio de Janeiro, said the training was important in helping her to identify and distinguish different types of violence against women (such as psychological violence and verbal abuse): “I’ve seen these types of situations happen. They have already happened to me. I felt somehow it was natural and I didn’t realise that this was a form of violence against me. The training was essential to prepare me and enable me to identify and assist victims of gender violence.”

Excerpt of audio spot script

SPOT 8 – TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Broadcaster #1: Violence against women is not only physical, which may leave marks on a woman’s body or even sometimes take her life. Domestic or family violence happens at home. It is usually practised by someone who lives with the victim. Alongside physical and sexual violence, there may also be psychological effects, as well as neglect or abandonment.

Bridge: impact sound effect #1

Broadcaster #1: Slander, defamation and abuse of the honour or reputation of the woman is a kind of moral violence. Damaging, destroying or withholding objects, documents or property is also a form of violence.

Bridge: impact sound effect #1

Broadcaster #1: Sexual violence (that also happens in relationships among couples) is when a woman is forced to have sexual relations or engage in practices without her consent.

Bridge: impact sound effect #2

Broadcaster #1: In all these cases, violence against women is a crime and must be denounced.

Broadcaster #2: Stopping violence against women — a victory for the whole society.

Male voice: Production by CRIAR Brasil …

Female voice: With support from the Superintendent of Women’s Rights of the State Government.

Male voice: Brazil …

Female voice: A country of all …

Male voice: Men and women.
Methods used in designing programmes and developing content associated with the Radio Network to Combat Violence against Women is participatory and constructivist. Not only teachers but also participants contribute to the learning process, using their own personal experiences and life stories. The method has been effective in bringing the issue of violence against women into the everyday realities of the concerned communities and generating active participation from women.

João Paulo Malerba is a researcher at the Community Communication Laboratory of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), with special expertise in communication policy and legislation, particularly at the community level. He co-ordinates social projects at CRIAR Brasil, a non-governmental organisation working in popular communication and the democratisation of communication throughout the country. João is the executive co-ordinator of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) Brasil. He holds an MA in Communication and Culture from UFRJ and speaks and offers training about radio, community journalism, and communication theory. Email: joaopaulorj@yahoo.com.br

Centro de Imprensa, Assessoria e Rádio (CRIAR Brasil) is a non-governmental organisation that has been promoting the democratisation of communication since 1994. Its mission is: “To support social movement organisations on strategic communication and production, consulting, research, and training in radio and other platforms — print, Internet and audiovisual. It aims at the realisation of human rights, focusing on the right to communicate.”

For further reference, see:

• CRIAR Brasil – www.criarbrasil.org.br (Portuguese)
Under the open sky, by a tree, on the street, inside the home of one of the participating kids, next to the local stream, at the soccer field or at the street corner, “Small Explorers” hold workshops and weekly meetings. They are part of the children’s collective at the Minga del Sol (Minga of the Sun) communication school, part of the Corporación Júraco, a Colombian organisation made up mostly of youth leaders who aim to promote the rights of youth, girls and boys of their regions through the use of multi-media communication.

Minga of the Sun uses a process that promotes spaces for child, youth and community training, participation and expression using communication. These non-formal educational spaces help the participants explore their creative capacity as citizens so that they can feel and become empowered in the public world through the practice of their rights.

The Minga of the Sun school was established in 2005 by the members of Júraco in an effort to replicate their experience and to strengthen the community participation of children and youth. The idea emerged from the formation of communication collectives in different neighbourhoods of the city of Neiva, capital of Huila Department, in the south of Colombia. Children and youth in the collectives had been trained in different types of media production, including print, audiovisual and especially radio. In the context of these communication collectives, media became pedagogical tools that the children and youth used to: narrate their personal histories; invent stories (for example, about water and rainbows); create fables, giving life to imaginary characters; and record and share their parents’ and grandparents’ stories about the environment and natural surroundings, their livelihoods and past ways of life.

10 Minga is a regional word meaning a gathering to work in a common purpose.
The children’s collective at the Minga del Sol communication school in Colombia works to promote the rights of youth through the use of a range of creative approaches, including writing and interviewing for radio broadcast.
The children and youth of Minga of the Sun have found in mass media, especially in radio, a way to express their thoughts, worries, dreams and feelings. They narrate and record them in micro-radio programmes that are later transmitted by the community radio stations in their region. They share them in child and youth groups, through the school’s blog and by presenting them during special event days in their neighbourhoods. The audience includes their families, friends and neighbours who, in many cases, play starring roles in the stories.

In the end, it is their peers who are their main audience. Through dialogue, producers and audience alike share knowledge and life experience. Everyone’s voice is important.

Júraco does not operate a radio station of its own, but rather works with the community and school radios of Huila Department, and adopts other strategies to disseminate the programmes, for example radio-forums in the neighbourhood and community meetings, which have the added benefit of face-to-face interaction and immediate feedback. Parents have played a key role in the development of the school: accompanying the process and supporting proposed activities, they have assumed important commitments and participated in a range of activities.

Public speaking, taking pictures and telling stories allow the participants of the Minga of the Sun school to develop communication skills. They learn to listen and to be critical and purposeful. Mainly, however, they discover how to relate to people who are different from them in age, gender and the way they see life. The programme provides the participants with an opportunity to learn from others, to experiment and to share what they know.

The children and youth of the collectives not only learn about media and their own special interests. They also have the opportunity to: get to know each other and share as friends; decide on the organisation and activities of their collectives; express their ideas and doubts; take decisions; and, if necessary, continue with or change proposed directions.

Workshops, walks, journalism, games, crafts, dance, poetry and theatre are all some of the strategies used by facilitators and instructors to help participants reflect on the importance of knowing ourselves as communicators, beings who are able to feel and create, to express dreams, needs and desires. Self-discovery is one of the guiding principles of the school programme. This is well illustrated by Angie Dussán, a 14-year-old youth collective participant, through a monologue that she produced for the radio. It becomes evident that after exploring the language of radio, she finds both her voice and value in her words.
“I’m Angie. The truth is that some people don’t understand me and some people don’t like the way I am. I don’t understand why they get into my life, why they mind what I do with my life. They don’t know why I am like this. When I was a little girl I didn’t have very good things to say, but I am glad to be like this. I am natural. I am sincere and I don’t pretend to be what I am not.”

The radio has allowed participants like Angie not only to express their thoughts but also to find — in the mixture of music, words, ambient sounds and silences that they themselves assemble — a way to listen to their community and talk about their territory. Madeleine Yáñez, a facilitator who co-ordinates environmental issues in the school and who has also been involved in the protection of water sources in her city since she was a secondary school student, relates her experience in the following way:

“I think that, through the radio, people are made aware of the importance of conserving natural wealth and the biodiversity of species. [The radio] is an instrument that allows one to show the reality, for example of what is happening in our rivers because of pollution.”

Girls, boys and youths, with their microphones and recorders in hand, find the opportunity to investigate and explore their territory, to approach adults in order to probe their knowledge and in turn to share their own.

“I think the programmes the children produce are interesting because, from their own point of view, [the programmes] make us all think about the importance of taking care of the environment here, in our neighbourhood,” said Luz Moreno, a community member, after listening to Exploring the Jabonera Glen, a radio programme based on an ecological walk around a neighbourhood glen.

Fifteen-year-old Carlos recognises the benefit for some of his friends who participate in the process. “You can see they have fun,” he says. “And I like listening to the radio programmes created — they are short, entertaining ... and real.”

Minga of the Sun’s task has not been easy. In its six years of work, the school has faced many difficulties, including the scarcity of funds for operations and the lack of adequate space to carry out some of its activities. Beyond these challenges lie the social, economic and political conflicts of the context in which the school operates: poverty, violence, forced displacement, and lack of public services — all of which affect the families and neighbours with whom the school works.
Despite these problems, the school survives. It is the sum of the wills, hopes and convictions of people who believe that it is possible to change local realities through dialogue, communication and learning, and to promote the active participation of those who have been made invisible for so long. To the proponents of Minga of the Sun, it is worthwhile to go looking for happiness in everyday things, to celebrate life, and to believe in the value of diversity in the world and in the embrace and the smiles that linger in the magical charm of the radio.

María Ilse Andrade Soriano is a social communicator and journalist. Since her youth she has shown her passion for community work and youth leadership in different domains such as theatre, school governance and social organisation. Her connection with Corporación Júraco, which she has chaired since 2003, has encouraged work on the promotion and exercise of children and youth rights. As a trainer and director, she has participated in radio productions that give visibility to citizens’ actions and recount traditional stories on topics such as human rights, participation, sexual health and the environment. Email: zapaticosverdes@gmail.com, mariai.anso@gmail.com

Corporación Júraco is a youth organisation operating in Colombia’s southern region. It runs community-based participatory communication processes and programmes primarily for children and young farmers. For further reference, see:

- Minga del Sol blog – http://escuelamingadelsol.blogspot.com
- Angie’s story (audio) – www.goear.com/listen/54e1f94/yo-soy-angie-angie-dussan
Communication goes beyond spreading information. It includes motivating people to take on new ideas and ways of doing things, new products and services. It encourages dialogue and eases the relationships between people so that they get to know and understand each other, learning to interact despite their differences. The raw material of communication — what we work with as communicators — is not information or media channels, as commonly believed. Rather, it is stories and relationships of human beings.

Are adolescents able to decide autonomously about their sexuality? Can men act responsibly on their impulses? Must women always set the limits on men’s behaviour, thinking of the consequences? Values, disguised as common sense, circulate as stories and discourse through society. As communicators we can either reinforce them or question them, creating spaces to make them visible and of concern. And by doing this we can prompt public debate about them.

Is it possible to create dialogue between parents and children without the imposition of authority? Can women take responsibility for health, not just at home but in public, by influencing political authorities? Communication can help improve the relations between diverse social actors, making the attributes of each more visible and bringing them closer together despite their differences.
Across Latin America, PCI Media Impact sponsors “edu-entertainment” through a radio programme called My Community. Education-entertainment uses radio serials, TV soaps, music videos and other approaches to address sensitive topics such as HIV/AIDS, family planning and gender equality. The model has proven to be an effective way to bring about changes in knowledge, attitude and behaviour at an individual and social level.

**Edu-entertainment: communicating from and to the soul**

Edu-entertainment\(^\text{11}\) makes it possible to take a long-term view while: highlighting specific development problems and initiatives; empowering the primary individuals and groups to take on active roles in finding solutions; generating new knowledge; and changing attitudes and everyday practices at the community level.

The advantage of popular entertainment formats and resources to deal with development topics is that they present alternatives to news headlines that speak, time and again, of insoluble problems. Such formats help overcome the limitations inherent in campaigns, often filled with repetitive slogans and too reliant on ready-made recipes for solutions. The problems of fictional characters are felt first-hand as lived experiences. On a daily basis the audience relives the protagonists’ dilemmas, which helps them — the characters and the audience alike — find better ways to resolve their conflicts. As well as enjoying the stories told, listeners are able through edu-entertainment to consolidate their learning in the

\(^{11}\) Entertainment education (also known as edu-entertainment or edutainment) uses appropriate narrative and symbolic models from mass culture (e.g., radio serials, TV soaps, music videos, comics) to promote learning about specific social topics. Edu-entertainment — on topics ranging from HIV/AIDS and family planning to gender equality — has been proven to generate positive changes in knowledge, attitude and behaviour at an individual and social level.
context of their everyday lives, building on their identification with characters and the emotional commitments created through daily listening.

“What I have learnt as a mother is that I must always be near my son, to guide him and support him with any doubts he may have. If I don’t know the answer to his questions, I look for help so that he can make the right decision, in the good times as much as in the difficult ones; to be there so that he doesn’t make mistakes… Despite the fact that sometimes there is useful information on the television or the radio, there aren’t the life experiences or stories about the things that happen everyday; not like I have lived them listening to the radio serial.”

*My Community: a path to recreate edu-entertainment in Latin America*

Since 2002, PCI Media Impact has been exploring a promotion and recreation model for edu-entertainment in Latin America called *My Community*. Over the years, allied organisations in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Mexico have worked and reflected on the *My Community* programme.

Together they have consolidated, from across diverse initiatives of community communication and participation processes, the following set of inter-related elements key to developing a successful *My Community* programme:

1. Production of a locally made dramatic educational series as the central piece of content, its starting point being the stories, conflicts and characters inspired by the community’s own reality and imagery.

2. Production of an interactive radio magazine in which the serial is broadcast to generate dialogue and debate with the audience, as well as promoting information and services related to the subject.

3. Design and implementation of a plan to stimulate discussion and opinion formation, and to motivate civic actions in public spaces (e.g., parks, streets, markets, schools and public transport).

4. Design and implementation of a means to monitor and evaluate each programme initiative, which should realise both the systematisation and enrichment of the edu-entertainment strategy.

An interesting result has been the way in which making edu-entertainment programmes has changed as the different communities and organisations have taken up the challenge. Each has added new
elements based on findings from experience in their own localities and on the topics of interest their audiences identify.

One example among dozens of experiences is the initiative undertaken by the Cusco AIDS Network (RSC), a grouping of about 21 organisations in Peru. Between 2009 and 2010, RSC produced two seasons (28 episodes in total) of the radio serial *Aquí no pasa nada* (Nothing Happens Here), based on a series of creative workshops with youth. The programme explores subjects such as taking decisions about sexuality, intergenerational communication, and the prevention of pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

The civic mobilisation catalysed through this edu-entertainment initiative was extremely substantial. On one hand, the radio serial was broadcast simultaneously for 28 weeks in three provinces through radio magazines, which were open to audience feedback and dialogue. The programmes were produced and presented by school-based teams of youth from the different localities involved. A team of 50 edu-entertainment facilitators complemented the on-air broadcasts with publicity campaigns and information fairs on buses, streets and public squares. Over 100 teachers from 11 different schools, all of which used the radio serial in face-to-face teaching sessions, received training on sexual and reproductive health, which they used in interactions with over 3,000 students.

This model, integrating different communication strategies and channels, made it possible to reach as far as the family context, where it helped to open up new processes of learning, discussion and action, such as the one shared by Ivana, a 15-year-old adolescent from Cusco:

“At school they got us to listen to *Aquí no pasa nada* (Nothing Happens Here) so we could then share our points of view. They told us that they would broadcast the radio serial and I thought to listen to it with my parents and with everybody in my house. Since we had breakfast quite late on Saturday, I would coax my family with the excuse of *Let’s go get breakfast* and we all would start listening. This occurred to me because I wanted to share my experience with my family so that we could have a more open communication at home. One day I was very surprised when, after listening to the radio serial, my parents said that it was outrageous, and even worse: that it incited young people to have sexual relations. I said to them, *You should have been the ones to tell me these things in the first place and now look at what you are saying.* I left the table and told them that speaking about sexuality is something normal for young people and so they should try to adapt and to try to understand what we go through in our lives.
“With time I started to notice a big change in them. I had already tried to touch upon the subject of sexuality with them but my dad, who was somewhat conservative with me, wouldn’t talk about it. With my mom I could just about mention the issue but still it was difficult. As we have kept listening to the radio serial, however, they have started to loosen up and begun to share their own experiences so that I would know how to take care of myself. I believe it is thanks to the radio serial that parents have learnt to get over their shame of talking about sexuality with their kids so that, when the time comes, the kids don’t make the same mistakes.”

The success of this experience was such that the regional Cusco government reproduced the two seasons of Aquí no pasa nada and its discussion guides, and trained professionals from educational institutions and health establishments across the whole region to use the radio serial as a teaching tool.

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PCI Media Impact is a leader in entertainment-education and social change communications. For 25 years, it has been working with local partners to produce more than 3,000 episodes of 100 television and radio programmes to address pressing social and environmental issues. Together these programmes have reached more than 1 billion people in 34 countries. PCI Media Impact combines entertainment-education stories with the reach of mass media to mobilise individual, community and political action and be a catalyst for positive change.

For further reference, see:

- http://mediaimpact.org/
It always happens. There comes a time when living processes turn into schemes and formulas, becoming formalised in a way that provides us with greater certainty. It happens within the realm of communication as well. For instance, I have always been troubled by the rigidity of that fictitious line dividing and linking sender and receiver, which leads me to ask:

Is it possible to open the exclusive and sacrosanct space wherein educational materials are produced by the same groups for which they are intended?

How do we move from the dichotomy of the producer-listener towards a more creative process, one of dialogue, of collective, constructivist learning? How do we break up the isolated comfort of educational producers?

Does the process of learning begin at the time of listening? Why not invite the audience into the adventure of creating messages and producing content to illustrate them?

The first answer to these questions is to start your walk with your listeners well before the stage of content creation. On the walk, you can converse in the stories of the community, ones that talk about dreams and fears and of the life experiences of the community’s world. In this way, communication becomes a space of identification, self-recognition and learning.

Other answers are suggested by the experience of Los Caminos de la Vida (The Paths of Life), a community radio serial done with Betania Benítez Rodríguez for Veracruzana University Radio. The Paths of Life is the fifth radio serial of a project that started in 2004 with the aim of finding new ways of making radio based on the social construction of knowledge, which combines expert knowledge with the know-how and social commitment of the people themselves.
Developing *The Paths of Life*

*The Paths of Life* was produced in a rural community in Cofre de Perote. It tells the story of six young people living in Matlalapa, a community of 400 inhabitants, who make a living by cultivating maize and raising cattle.

Like the four radio serials that preceded it, *The Paths of Life* is the outcome of an 18-month process that began with a theatre and radio workshop for the children in the community. The workshop focused on developing children’s creativity and imagination through games in which a story is constructed in the image of the community. The main actors in the serial were the children from the workshop, supported by their parents, neighbours and professional actors.

Parallel to the workshop, efforts were made to get to know the dreams, life experiences, worries, fears and joys of the community. Over a period of eight months, programme facilitators visited people’s houses with their recorders, informing them about the project and listening by the fireplace to the stories of people like Doña Lucia, Don Sergio and Doña Cruz. The trust and desire to be part of the project were created in the process.
Diagnostic interviews and other methods of consultation allowed the team to build a matrix database in which two elements emerged:

- One was the topics to be covered in the series, namely the economic crisis in the countryside and the resulting migration (rural, urban and international), family disintegration, school dropouts and underage pregnancy.
- The other was a better understanding of people’s feelings about topics and issues and the way they describe and name them. The consultation provided the cadence of the serial plot and fragments of real stories which, interwoven together, gave way to new stories of how things might be. Based on the community’s history, legends, problems and dreams, the tale of understanding and learning was written to fit the target audience. Scripts were nourished by focus group discussions that helped the writers design programme aesthetics, introduce contrasting arguments and add new elements.

Once the scripts were finished, rehearsals and recording started. A house in the community became a recording studio and, over a few days, children, youth and adults lent their voices to the characters. The children who took part in theatre and radio workshops read the scripts and adults improvised based on written outlines of proposed dialogues. The pieces of the audio puzzle were finally put together at the editing stage.
Excerpt from *The Paths of Life* (Chapter 1, Scene 6)

THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS THROUGH WATER

Fernando: Damn, What can I do now? With 35 pesos I’m not going to build it, *hijole* [common Mexican expression, similar to “gosh”]. But if I don’t do that work, what am I going to bring to my family? No, the best thing is to go to the United States. Who will loan me the money to leave? It’s too much.

FERNANDO ARRIVES AT HIS HOME AND OPENS THE DOOR

Fernando: Good evening, Mom.

Mother: How’d it go?

Fernando: It was ok. And the girls?

Mother: Well, Mari is up there taking care of the yearling calf and Lupe went out to look for firewood.

Fernando: Oh, Ma, I got some work today. Here …

COINS FALL ON THE TABLE

Mother: Oh, Son, something is good. You’ll see, God is going to help us.

Fernando: [DOUBTFUL] Hey, Ma. Hmm … I want to tell you something … Hmm … What would you think if I tried to go to work on the other side? Here, I just feel like I’m not putting it all together.

Mother: Oh, Son, but that’s too expensive, where are we going to get the money? Besides, you know what they always show on the TV. People leave but then they are found drowned. No, God forbid.

Fernando: Oh, Mom. But I’m not going through the river. Besides, do you see Doña Lupe’s son? He went and he came back, and put up a bakery.

Mother: Yes, Son, but, what about the money? Tell me, where are we going to get so much money?

Fernando: Leave it to me. I’m going to take care of that.
Distributing the programme serials

Programmes are distributed in the same regions as they are produced, which has enabled different actors — from libraries to elementary and middle schools, health centres to city councils — to work as multipliers, promoting listenership, facilitating, sharing feedback and reinforcing key messages. When the serial is finished, it is presented to the community and each participant and the local authorities receive copies. In this way, community actors become distributors of their local productions. Local identities are the protagonists of the stories, always keeping in mind the social problems faced by the people of rural communities.

The Paths of Life came alive in 18 episodes, approximately 15 minutes each. Its predecessors include Los Tesoros del Conejo (The Treasures of the Rabbit), a 12-part series of eight- to ten-minute episodes; and Manantial de Sueños (Spring of Dreams), a nine-episode series of 12 minutes each. Each series and the experience of its making are different as each is done with a particular community and target listenership in mind and each story defines its primary audience (e.g., children, adolescents, other youth, and their allied audience — teachers, adults and other authorities).

Different productions have followed the same distribution scheme, with each of the five radio series being available for distribution free of charge. Working from Veracruzan University Radio, alliances have been established with university and community radio broadcasters from other parts of Mexico and Latin America. The result is that The Paths of Life has been broadcast by more than 20 radio stations in urban and rural areas of the region.

Expression and identity

The aim of the radio serials is to demonstrate and promote creative and transformative activities. Playful methods, guided by a desire for knowledge and expression and a desire to get to know and share one’s own world, are the essential conditions that make it possible to construct the tales about the interests, the needs and experiences of the audience itself.

After participating in radio production, parents, teachers, health promoters and researchers working in these communities have all agreed that children and youth show more personal confidence and have, as a result of the programme, visibly improved their reading and writing skills, their oral and written expression, and their levels of creativity and initiative as work team. Adult community members have more desire to actively participate in programme events and actual production. There is a strong feeling of ownership of the project as evidenced by the ease with which the majority can share key messages.
Parents, teachers, health promoters and researchers have all agreed that children and youth involved in *The Paths of Life* radio production show more personal confidence and have, as a result of the programme, visibly improved their reading and writing skills, their oral and written expression, and their levels of creativity and initiative.
Dramatic formats on radio enable communication practices that allow for self-identification within learning contexts. They also provide a means of expression for concerned social groups. Developing capacity for expression among individuals and groups (e.g., to narrate their own stories of being) is a necessary step in asserting identity. Supporting learners in their efforts to construct their own stories related to the topics and subjects of non-formal education — stories about the community and its desires and customs — helps us question and reinvent the relationship between sender and receiver, teacher and student, producer and listener.

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Veracruzana University Radio broadcasts 20 hours a day on the AM band with 10,000 watts of power. The station is an extension service of the university, promoting local culture and citizen participation through awareness-raising, education and social networking among listeners and the wider community.

For further reference, see:

- Audio transcripts of *Caminos de la Vida (The Paths of Life)*
  - www.archive.org/details/RadionovelaComunitarialosCaminosDeLaVidaParte1
15. Stories from the Bag of Life
   – Gladson Makowa

16. The Message Matrix: A Participatory Programme Design Tool
   – Charles Simbi

17. Building Partnerships in Educational Programming for Healthy Communities
   – Patrick Wade Prendergast

18. Community Learning Programme in Jamaica and Belize: Synergy and Divergence
   – Rosamond Brown

19. Leveraging Partnerships to Close the Feedback Loop
   – Gail White

20. Pausing to Plan at Kumaon Vani
   – Ramnath Bhat
Let’s start with the name of the programme …

The name of the programme is Phukusi la Moyo, which means “Bag of Life.”

What is the programme about?

It is about maternal and child health, with a focus on safe motherhood.

Tell us something about where it all happens

The programme takes place in Mchinji district, which is in the Central Region of Malawi. It is a rural area with a population of about 400,000. It is underdeveloped, with limited electricity and unpaved roads to the villages.

What sort of programme is Phukusi la Moyo?

Phukusi la Moyo is an educational programme, one that uses a behaviour change communication model. It addresses infant and maternal mortality and illness in the district. The programme is a combination of radio content, produced by the local community radio, and face-to-face discussed out by community-based discussion groups that are part of a larger maternal and child health network in the village. The programme is a collaborative effort between four different groups:

1. MaiMwana Trust is a six-year-old community health project that includes research and development activities. MaiMwana has established some 200 women’s groups to discuss problems and solutions relating to maternal and child health.
2. The MaiMwana groups, which function like an independent network. Women from these groups asked for a media programme that would address issues pertaining to maternal and infant mortality. They participated in all the activities through a district-wide structure of groups and committees, which comprises more than 10,000 women.

3. Mchinji District Hospital and Health Office are together responsible for the health of the district. Like the MaiMwana office, they are both located in Mchinji Bomba, the town area.

4. Mudzi Wathu Community Radio is a local station that operates under the umbrella of a Malawian non-governmental organisation (NGO) called Creative Centre for Community Mobilisation (CREECOM).

Technical inputs to the programme design process and training of the local broadcasters were provided by Story Workshop, a Malawian development communication group that works in behaviour change communication. The whole process was guided and supported financially by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL).

What was the process to develop the programme?

There was a one-week programme design workshop and media skills training with all of the groups collaborating in this process: MaiMwana, Mudzi Wathu, women’s groups and the Mchinji District Hospital. They were involved in making all sorts of decisions about the programme. It was designed by the group as a joint effort, and the group went on to manage it together as well. The design for the programme includes the following components:

- message matrix – a list of good and bad behaviours, and the consequences and benefits of those behaviours
- programme matrix – a table presenting the whole series of programmes, each listed with a communication objective, target audience and potential sources of information for each episode
- a format for the programme, including a name and the time and day of broadcast, together with a marketing strategy
- a plan for weekly group listening, discussion and feedback from the MaiMwana groups
Phukusi la Moyo (Bag of Life) is an educational radio programme that addresses infant and maternal mortality and illness in Mchinji district, central Malawi. The programme combines locally produced radio content (including interviews with experts) and follow-up face-to-face discussions with groups who are part of a larger maternal and child health network in the area.
What makes Phukusi la Moyo a participatory programme?

The first thing is that women themselves articulated a demand for such a programme. In other words, they decided that an educational radio programme would be a good addition to the work they were already doing.

The whole process has been participatory. The women’s group representatives were involved in the programme design, including the key messages, the format and the name of the programme. Then beyond these initial decisions, the women have been involved in the ongoing management through representation from the women’s district MaiMwana committee on what is called the core team, which meets once every two weeks. These women are the representatives of the community.

Another important way the women participate is by being part of the content for the programme, which is generated from real-life stories — basically, the women’s lived experiences of maternal and child health, both good and bad. Sixty to 80 per cent of the programme is the women’s own stories and experiences. Women take the initiative and share the problems they face through their real-life stories. For example, a woman who has delivered a still-born baby talks about the experience and how it came about. There is a 20 per cent role for health experts, who give facts and make sure that people know where to get accurate information on health-related facts. However, the real “experts” are the women themselves.

The programme producers go to the people in their villages and to their homes to make the programme: it is field-based. One very important part of the programme and a unique type of participation is the use of traditional songs and poems, adapted for specific shows, that help the local community relate to the content easily.

The women decide what the programme should be based on and there is a system for them to participate through feedback for each programme as well. Since women listen to the programme together, they also discuss the programme as a group and with their families.
Excerpt from Programme #3

DANGER SIGNS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

_Signature tune:_ Phukusi la Moyo

**Presenter:** Now it's time for the _Phukusi la Moyo_ [Bag of Life] programme which is produced by Mudzi Wathu Community Radio and brought to you by the MaiMwana project in collaboration with the Mchinji District Health Office with sponsorship from Commonwealth of Learning. You are with your usual presenters: me, Martha Suzyo Dzanja, and my friend Steven Chimutu.

_Signature tune:_ Phukusi la Moyo _fade out_

**Presenter:** Last week we heard about some of the MaiMwana project in Mchinji district. Now let us hear what is in today's programme.

**Vox pop #1:** I have done 11 deliveries so far and I found a maternal problem during my sixth pregnancy: I started losing water continuously.

**Vox pop #2:** I have had successful deliveries throughout my life but I faced problems during my third pregnancy. I lost a lot of water and I reached a point of death.

**Vox pop #3:** During my delivery, I faced a problem of blood shortage after delivery. And this made me very sick for one month. Now, I do go to hospital to collect iron tablets and the doctor advised me to take milk more frequently and to go to hospital to get more iron tablets when I am out of stock.

**Presenter:** Those are some hits we have in today's programme. Do not forget that in today's programme we are going to hear about danger signs for a pregnant woman. If you experience any of them, rush to hospital!

_Bridge:_ Phukusi la Moyo (shout)

**Presenter:** To call a spade a spade. Let us be together and listen from fellow women about their experiences during pregnancy.

**Community member #1:** I come from Ng'onomo village, Traditional Authority Nyoka. I have experienced 11 deliveries. During the sixth pregnancy, I faced a problem of losing water continuously. Then I went to hospital where I met a nurse who gave me treatment and then water stopped coming out. After the water stopped, I started bleeding heavily. The blood was all over my bed and on the floor. When the doctor saw this, he could not help me because it was not yet in my time of labour. Then he referred me from Ludzi to the district hospital.

When I arrived at the district hospital, I was welcomed by the nurses. They asked me what my problem was and I told them that I felt no pain and that I was not even close to labour but was bleeding heavily. The nurses took me to the operation theatre where they helped me through an operation. After the operation, I was put in bed and after some time I was back to my senses and realised that the problem was over, the bleeding had stopped.

*Continued next page*
Deliveries are very dangerous. I encourage you, my fellow women, to go to hospital. Do not waste your time visiting traditional birth attendants; they do not have the skills to assist you accordingly and they cannot tell you the exact time that you are due for delivery. Therefore, you should go to hospitals for better treatment. At the hospital, they will be able to do blood transfusion if you are diagnosed anemic or if you are dehydrated. A traditional birth attendant will not be able to do this. These things can only be managed at the hospital.

Gladson Makowa is a media producer and development communication specialist from Malawi. He was formerly the Media and Communications Manager for Story Workshop, a Malawian organisation specialising in social and behaviour change communication. Gladson is currently pursuing a degree in Rural Development and Extension at the University of Malawi.
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Listening and discussion groups are an important part of women’s participation in the Phukusi la Moyo maternal and child health programme. Discussion contributes to the learning process, allowing for questions and answers, interpretation of terminology, and feedback to the programme management team and the producers. Group decision-making and collective action are an essential part of sustained social and behavioural change.
The message matrix is a tool for developing participatory communication programmes that have social and behaviour change objectives. Developed by Charles Simbi, a behaviour change communication specialist from Malawi, the matrix was first used in a design workshop for the Phukusi la Moyo (Bag of Life) programme in Mchniji, Malawi. Commissioned by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the workshop was run by Joke van Kampen, Charles Simbi and Gladson Makowa from Story Workshop for local communication and development stakeholders. It was led by the MaiMwana Trust, including the District Hospital and Mudzi Wathu Community Radio.

Variations on the matrix tool have since been used in training and programme design workshops around the Commonwealth, with an overwhelmingly positive response from local groups, including community groups and district health officials — experts and lay people alike — media and policy workers.

Charles Simbi was interviewed in October 2011 for this publication.

What is the main purpose of the message matrix?

The message matrix facilitates local stakeholder groups and community members to take an active, empowered role in content development for an educational communication programme. The method enables active participation of target audiences and stakeholder groups in the identification, analysis and resolution of problems affecting the community.

Use of the matrix underscores the significance of proactively and vigorously involving all stakeholders and leveraging their wealth of knowledge and experience. The message matrix helps to ensure that key messages of the programme — its core learning objectives — originate from people themselves rather than from outside experts or policy makers. Likewise, it helps to ensure
that communication programmes are developed within proper
cultural frameworks and in ways that engage stakeholders
throughout and across the process of programme design, from
setting overall objectives to framing key messages.
The use of the matrix — for example, in a programme design
workshop — anchors a participatory and consultative process
that addresses existing and desired knowledge, attitudes and
practices. The matrix helps to identify, analyse and classify
audience behaviour, making it easier to provide relevant,
well-defined and practicable solutions in the form of positive
behaviours and demonstrable benefits that will motivate
listeners to take action.
The message matrix is inherently a two-way communication
tool. It serves to build trust while also facilitating the exchange
of perceptions and knowledge which can be used to achieve
mutual understanding and to encourage all stakeholders to
assess risks and opportunities together.

Who uses the message matrix tool?
The specific purpose of the message matrix is to enable a
variety of stakeholder groups involved in a behaviour change
communication programme — regardless of the medium they
plan to use — to agree on the issues that their communication
programme will tackle and to analyse the issues together
in order to ensure the content delivered will tackle the real
challenges facing targeted audiences.

Each stakeholder group brings something different and equally
important. Subject experts bring their technical expertise with
the issues at hand. Members of the target audience bring their
experiences of the issues. And the production team approaches
issues from the standpoint of instructional designers.
The overall process bridges the gap between subject experts and
programme producers, as well as between programme producers and
the target audience, as they all sit at one table to analyse problems
(negative behaviour) and propose solutions (positive behaviour).
Alongside delivering the necessary programme design elements,
the use of the matrix also facilitates an exchange of knowledge
among various stakeholder groups and functions to empower
members of the community to participate actively in processes
that affect their own lives.
What does the message matrix look like?

The matrix has five columns. The first column lists the issues (perhaps broken down into sub-issues) to be tackled. The second column lists negative behaviours (including practices, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions) that represent impediments or contribute negatively to the issue at hand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Negative behaviour, practice, perception, beliefs, information or information gaps, influence</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
<th>Positive behaviour, practice, perception, beliefs, information, influence</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The third column lists possible consequences of the negative behaviours listed, generally illustrating the status quo, including the problems and challenges associated with the prevailing negative environment, which the programme will seek to transform.

The fourth column lists specific positive behaviours (practices, perceptions, etc.) that the programme aims to promote. These are particular practices or attitudes that the target audience needs to learn, adopt and practise in order to bring about desired changes — for example, an improvement in women’s health.

The final column lists the benefits of learning, adopting and practising the positive behaviours listed in column four. This last column provides indicators of the change that will come about when members of the targeted audiences adopt the specified positive behaviours, attitudes and perceptions, and it illustrates the benefits that will motivate listeners to undertake change.

How are the various columns linked to produce results?

How the matrix functions in practical terms can be easily understood using the case of Phukusi la Moyo (Bag of Life), a community learning programme that deals with maternal and child health issues in Mchinji district, Malawi, a process I was involved with myself.

First, we needed to identify and unpack the maternal and child health issues in the community. In Mchinji, for example, one of the expected outcomes of the radio programme was that women should be checked by a skilled birth attendant, such as a doctor, nurse or trained midwife, at least four times during her pregnancy and that the same type of professional should assist at delivery.
The key behavioural issue was that most women did not attend antenatal clinics at least four times during pregnancy (as recommended by the Ministry of Health) nor did most women deliver their babies at government hospitals. The question of course is why.

The following negative behaviours, perceptions or beliefs of community members and other stakeholders may provide the answers:

- Some religions preach against the use of modern hospitals.
- Women have to seek permission from their husbands or their husbands’ relations to go to hospital when their time is due.
- There is a lack of available transport for women to go health facilities.
- Some women prefer delivering babies with traditional birth attendants.
- Some nurses ill-treat women during delivery.
- Women are not happy to be delivered by young nurses.
- There may be very long distances between women’s homes and health facilities.

A message matrix is an indispensible tool when it comes to designing a communication programme that will change harmful or otherwise negative community behaviour. The matrix is critical for (1) analysing the key issues of concern to a target audience and (2) developing the content that will ensure the audience understands the benefits of changing certain behaviours. Pictured here are participants working in Malawi to develop a message matrix for the Phukusi la Moyo (Bag of Life) community learning programme that deals with maternal and child health issues.
Configured into the message matrix, the above information would translate into something like the example shown in the table here.

**Message matrix addressing the issue: “Pregnant women not attending at least four antenatal clinics during pregnancy”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Negative behaviour, practice, perception, belief, information or information gaps, influence</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
<th>Positive behaviour, practice, perception, belief, information, influence</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant women not attending at least four antenatal clinics during pregnancy</td>
<td>Pregnant women not visiting health facility for antenatal clinic due to: Fear of being shouted at by the health workers Long distances needed to travel to health facilities Fear of testing for HIV Traditional and religious beliefs</td>
<td>The mother does not know about her health status and that of the baby. Both mother and baby cannot get the right treatment at the right time (e.g., all immunisations for the baby, malaria prevention treatment for the mother). Mothers miss important counselling and advice from the health workers. Complications may occur during pregnancy and labour. Mothers waste time visiting a witchdoctor for remedies that they can access free of charge at government health facilities.</td>
<td>Women visiting the health facility as soon they know they are pregnant. Women attending the antenatal clinic sessions in time. Women attending at least four antenatal clinic sessions. Women reporting all cases of abuses and abusive health workers to the District Nursing Ombudsman. Women learning the benefits and importance of attending antenatal clinics before they conceive.</td>
<td>Mothers receive counselling, tips and advice for maternal and child health. Mothers receive medicines to prevent malaria and worms. Women receive optimum medical attention. Possible danger signs are identified, and the women and medical personnel are well prepared to handle any problems. Mothers with HIV are able to protect their babies from HIV. Undernourished women are able to receive vitamin and food supplements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In short, negative behaviours (practices, perceptions, beliefs, information or information gaps, attitudes and influences) have consequences while positive behaviours have benefits. The fourth column (positive behaviour — what we want the audience to learn, practise and adopt) is essentially the opposite of the second column (negative behaviours — challenges, practices, etc. that are contributing to the problem and therefore behaviours that need to change). The fifth column (benefits) is the opposite of the third column (consequences).

Simply put, the matrix says to the intended audience: *You have been engaging in the negative behaviours and have suffered these consequences. Adopt the positive behaviours and enjoy the following benefits.*
What have been some of the challenges in using the message matrix?

One of the challenges has been turning the information from the message matrix into something practical for the programme management and production teams to use in getting programmes produced and delivered.

To help the local team to move from the unpacked issues (the practices behind problems and solutions) to a usable production and delivery plan, we came up with a second table, the **programme matrix**. It has six columns, as shown in the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue/sub-issue</th>
<th>Communication objective</th>
<th>Learning outcome</th>
<th>Target audience</th>
<th>Sources of information, interviews</th>
<th>Key message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complications during pregnancy result in serious illness and deaths among women and children</td>
<td>During and after the programme series, all pregnant women in our community will attend at least four antenatal clinics during their pregnancy so that all danger signs can be identified and the women and health staff can be prepared to deal with any problems.</td>
<td>All women in our community seek medical attention. All women attend at least four antenatal clinics during pregnancy</td>
<td>Pregnant women Husbands and boyfriends of pregnant women</td>
<td>Pregnant women Husband of a pregnant woman Traditional birth attendant</td>
<td>If you are pregnant, attend antenatal clinics to access free HIV counselling, tips and advice for maternal and child health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-issue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant women not attending at least four antenatal clinics during pregnancy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Programme managers and producers use the two matrices to guide their work throughout programme planning and production. A sample scenario, for example, would play out as follows:

**Producers:** The problem is that women and babies die in childbirth. What is the key behaviour contributing to the issue?

**Matrix:** Most women are not attending antenatal clinics at least four times during pregnancy.

**Producers:** What is the objective of the episode?

**Matrix:** That during and after this series of programmes:

1. pregnant women and their partners (primary and secondary target audiences) will be encouraged/persuaded (our appeal) to attend at least four antenatal clinics during pregnancy (the positive behaviour) so that possible danger signs can be identified and the women and medical personnel can be well prepared to handle any problems (the benefit); and
2. the community (primary and secondary target audiences) will discourage (our appeal) the tendency by some pregnant women (target audience) to attend antenatal clinics late (the negative behaviour) and miss receiving important advice and counsel from medical personnel (the consequence).

Producers: What is the key message?

Matrix: If you are pregnant (target audience), attend at least four antenatal clinics (positive behaviour) to access free counselling, tips and advice for maternal and child health (benefit).

For the production team, both matrices together help answer such questions as:

• What behaviours are we targeting?
• Can we find someone (a source) who has engaged in the negative behaviour and experienced the consequences?
• Can we find someone (a source) who engages in the positive behaviours and experienced the benefits?
• What other negative behaviours and consequences, positive behaviours and benefits from the message matrix do our potential sources not cover?
• Can we find other sources who have personal stories to do with these negative and positive behaviours and their associated consequences and benefits?
• Can we ask an expert in the subject to shed light on these behaviours and the potential outcomes?

How has the message matrix actually been used?

The message matrix has been used mostly in developing behaviour change communication programmes for rural and urban community radio stations. We have used it in Malawi and on two separate occasions in developing a community learning programme about maternal and child health in the Lebialem division of Cameroon. We’ve also trained South African groups in the method. Our experience is that it works well as a tool for designing radio magazines as well as radio dramas.

For a radio drama, the negative behaviours and the positive behaviours identified in the matrix help the script writers shape the characters and their actions, negative and positive. In a drama about the same antenatal care issue, for example, negative characters may see waiting until the last minute as “cool.” Or they may be intolerant or fearful of change, clinging to the
status quo of using traditional birth attendants. They might be irresponsible, impulsive or selfish, not wanting to lose time or spend money on travel to the clinic. Spouses might belittle them when women raise the issue and suggest solutions. Negative characters will, as a result, suffer consequences.

On the other hand, positive characters abhor inaction and lack of planning and preparation. They have good self-esteem and courage. They take action and even risks. They are self-reliant, accountable, responsible, thoughtful and loving. They empower women and protect children. As a result, they are rewarded with the benefits.

“Swing characters” move with the wind. They may be moved to change either because they are afraid of suffering the consequences illustrated by the negative characters, or because they want the benefits they see positive characters gaining by practising positive behaviours. Swing characters can relapse to the negative behaviours and suffer a consequence before picking up positive behaviours again.

For radio magazines, the characters are real people and the plot is their real-life experience. The matrices guide magazine producers in terms of which behaviours to address and promote. The producers then seek out people whose life experience and personal stories illustrate the negative behaviours identified. Through their real-life stories, the programme explores the problems and the consequences of particular practices. Likewise, the producers identify and record the stories of people who have practised the positive behaviours identified, and show how those people dealt with the challenges and reaped the benefits. For a member of the target audience, the struggle of their peers in moving towards change provides valuable lessons, making it easier to follow the same path.

One challenge in developing the message matrix is that it is a painstaking process. Given the purpose and nature of the programmes, there should be no shortcuts. It has to be done step by step.

Developing message and programme matrices for 26 weeks of 30-minute weekly programming typically takes two to three days. It is an intensive process and challenging to facilitate. It requires that you have the right people present in order to ensure that all the groups represented in the model have real opportunities to participate. Bringing together representatives
of the target audience and policy groups, community-based organisations working with the issue, technical experts and the producers — in total, about eight to ten in the group — may itself be a complex and difficult task.

**Are there other applications of the message matrix?**

The message matrix provides the programme team with a list of issues to tackle and ideas about how to go about doing that. It can therefore be used by managers and producers alike to monitor actual programme content against the original design, which was arrived at in a participatory fashion. The matrix functions like a guide in approaching what to do, and it also provides a way to check whether specific content or the programme overall is meeting the objectives that were agreed to during the design phase.

Steve Chimutu, producer of *Phukusi la Moyo*, frequently referred to the matrix to ensure that the episode at hand was covering all the behaviours, both negative and positive, that the group identified. The matrix helped him assess the content of the programme — for example, enabling him to check whether the sources had mentioned all the benefits or all the consequences listed, and whether more interviews or different sources were needed to illustrate, through personal experience, particular positive or negative behaviours, benefits, consequences and so on.

**Does the message matrix add value in other ways?**

In addition to generating the programme design that will guide the programme managers and producers, the message matrix is also an important impetus for dialogue. A good matrix will be the product of a passionate and honest interaction among stakeholders, including members of the target audience, subject specialists, the producers, local government line ministries, community-based and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), sponsor groups and researchers.

It is the diversity of the group — centred on the target learners whose life experience and cultural contexts are the real platform of the programme — that makes the matrix rich, inclusive and informative. Misconceptions, stereotypes and knowledge gaps amongst stakeholders will emerge during the process, which in turn helps promote understanding and respect among diverse actors in the community. Community members expect to learn from experts — although they often learn as much, if not more, from their peers.
However, what is often not expected but extremely relevant is the *reversal of learning*, from the audience to the experts.

In Mchinji, the dialogue between women and health workers eventually evolved into a series of programmes on the roles and responsibilities of health workers and patients, which was unique and badly needed. A co-operative relationship also emerged between the MaiMwana maternal and child health project and the community radio, wherein both groups came to a deeper understanding of the other’s mission, needs and circumstances.

It is worth mentioning that this sort of participatory process, which is so much about dialogue, also lends itself to tackling cross-cutting issues such as gender. We have done some work with the matrix, starting with separate groups of women and men. The women are asked to list the factors that lead them not to attend antenatal clinics, including men’s behaviours. The men are asked to list what they do to prevent women from attending antenatal clinics and how they think women’s behaviours, beliefs and misconceptions contribute to the situation. Then a plenary discussion involving both groups and other stakeholders can follow to put together a matrix that includes a degree of gender analysis.

Dialogue goes a long way in meeting the need for trust among the different stakeholder groups. Designing the programme should not be a finger-pointing exercise but rather a soul-searching one. All the collaborating groups should aim to be change agents. The facilitators need to create an atmosphere that encourages all participants to express their knowledge and ideas openly. There are some things that members of the target audience may want stakeholders to change, such as policies or procedures that have unintended yet adverse effects. This is not a time to be defensive but a time to look at issues objectively and critically, examining the role of each sector in perpetuating negative behaviours as well as looking for prospective actions to bring about positive change.

During the matrix development in Mchinji, for example, community members owned up to a practice that contributes directly to increased numbers of stillbirths: the secretive use of labour-inducing medicines. These traditional concoctions are believed to induce labour by causing contractions in the abdomen. Women in the district have generally denied taking
these medicines, but in reality their use is known to be a well-
guarded secret. During the matrix development sessions,
however, community members opened up about the practice
in order to ensure that the programme strategies were based in
local cultural contexts to the fullest and most accurate extent.
Community members even went beyond simple disclosure
to reveal how and where the concoctions are prepared and
smuggled into the labour wards.

Because of this open dialogue, content development for the
episodes was more relevant, accurate and appropriate.

What is the advantage of a local or community approach to message
development?

Media programmes have the power to influence attitudes and
behaviours at a broad level — for example, across all of Mchinji
district, which has a population of some 400,000. However,
influence can only be achieved if the communication process
fully considers the local context. This is best done at a local level
because both the target audience and other stakeholders must
be involved. The involvement of local and traditional leaders
and political and civic figures, as was the case in the Lebialem
division of Cameroon, ensures that the broader cultural, social
and political contexts are taken into account. Only then can a
communication process, especially one centred on behaviour
change, be successful.

What steps need to precede and follow the use of the message matrix?

The matrix is essentially a participatory design tool. Design in this
sense is preceded by formative and other research on the issues to
be tackled. Programme proponents need to assess what data and
information exists on the subject. Are there any case studies? Has
a situational analysis or any formative research been done? Are
there any relevant demographic surveys on the issues?

Having such information allows the design process to start on
the right footing, with a target audience and a comprehensive
list of issues to be tackled at the ready. In Mchinji, the
MaiMwana project had already done years of participatory
research with local women’s groups, which meant there was
already a list of possible issues to be covered.

Citizens and stakeholder groups need, of course, to be aware of
the intent to run a programme so that the process can make the
most of available resources and opportunities.
How can the message matrix lead to behaviour change?

The message matrix can play an important role in promoting specific changes in awareness, knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and practices by particular groups. Programme content based on the information summarised in a matrix will help the audience think twice about their behaviour, creating some cognitive dissonance. The feeling of discomfort caused by conflicts or inconsistencies between the audiences’ attitudes, knowledge and behaviour versus programme content can compel those audiences to change.

Awareness of HIV transmission in Malawi, for example, is almost 100 percent among youths and adults. However, HIV is still prevalent because behaviours have not really changed. Programming based on a matrix of behaviour and consequence, in which the full range of behaviours is explored and all the consequences or benefits are outlined, will help citizens consider the consequences of their actions on their lives as well as the lives of their loved ones. Such programming helps audiences evaluate their situation and make choices based on a range of factors, particularly negative consequences and positive benefits.
This tool and the process we weave around it promote voluntary changes in attitudes, beliefs, practices and behaviours based on informed choices. The audience is deterred by the consequences and inspired by the benefits experienced by role models — for example, good health, absent medical bills and sexual satisfaction within marriage — to learn, emulate, approve and practise behaviours that a range of local people and stakeholders have agreed are positive. Above all, the circumstances are real and directions are practical.

The programmes that result from this approach are attractive and appealing, primarily for one reason. Local voices exploring relevant risks and opportunities through stories — real or dramatised — that audiences can identify with make for inspired listening and for listeners who can be inspired to change.

Reference

Charles Simbi is a skilled curriculum designer and trainer working across different methods and media, including behaviour change and participatory communication, theatre, TV and radio. He has created over a thousand scripts for radio and TV serials, documentaries, feature movies and comic books on themes ranging from safe motherhood and children’s rights to democracy and food security. Charles Simbi is the former Head of Programs for Story Workshop Educational Trust, a development communication organisation in Malawi. He has been instrumental in the development of practical models of participatory learning for radio. He holds a BA in Education and a diploma in HIV-AIDS Behaviour Change Communication. Email: simbison@africa-online.net
Collaboration is central to the community learning programme model advanced by programme specialists and researchers from the Commonwealth of Learning and the Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication. Belize and Jamaica are two Caribbean countries in which community learning programmes are being implemented. Different sites in each country present different scenarios of how collaboration is critical to the success of local, non-formal education programme development.

The community learning programme model identifies four basic groups or levels of partners — learners and community networks representative of them, community media, policy groups, and experts — in the design, implementation and evaluation of non-formal education programmes. Full engagement of these groups strengthens the effectiveness of the process and the quality of the outcomes and underscores the value of the community directing its own efforts in development.

The real purpose of collaboration is to enable the programme to function as successfully as possible to meet the needs and circumstances of different stakeholders. This means a programme that is: a well-produced media product that attracts listeners and sponsors with limited demands on staff (the media outlet); a relevant and accessible learning opportunity that links to existing programmes and resources (target learners and the community associations); and an effective initiative that addresses priority issues and results in clear, measurable changes in health indicators (as reported by health authorities).

The experience in both Belize and Jamaica is one in which collaboration has evolved from leadership by the community media groups to a more broad-based collaboration with greater involvement of other groups identified in the programme model.
Collaboration among key stakeholders is an essential aspect of the community learning programme model, as has been shown in Belize and Jamaica.
The Belize experience in collaboration

In Belize, initial programme development was driven by Radio Ak’Kutan, an indigenous radio licensee based at an alternative school, and decision-making about programme production was largely determined by the station’s own operating circumstances, including a lack of structured operation procedures, a constant struggle for basic operational funding and the associated patchwork of paid and volunteer staffing. While the main product — a radio programme about healthy lifestyles broken down into distinct weekly episodes — met basic standards of radio production, it did not effectively capture critical learning objectives of the local health authority or engage members of the target audience in a dynamic fashion, either to identify problems or find solutions.

The gap between programme outputs and community needs narrowed as more active roles were taken by other stakeholder groups in the design and production of the second phase of the programme. With inputs from the Toledo Maya Women’s Council (a non-governmental organisation [NGO] dedicated to advancing the cause of indigenous Mayan women in Toledo) and local health authorities, the programme engaged more directly with women in the target learner group. As the programme began to investigate the lived experience of women in managing their healthcare (and that of their families), it led to a greater appreciation of cultural context and its role in healthcare delivery. Topics included problems, beliefs, the influence of gender, and economic relationships, and awareness of these in turn influenced the entire production process. As a result, radio content and dialogue have been enriched and more appropriate responses are being found to relevant problems.

The Jamaica experience in collaboration

In the rural Jamaican farming community of Jeffrey Town, the local farmers’ association, which owns and operates a local community media centre, led the process from the initial stages of programme planning and design. As in Belize, programme content met reasonable technical quality standards. However, largely independent management of the overall programme process resulted in big gaps between the educational value of the programmes and any learned knowledge or social actions of the target learners (mothers and parents and guardians more generally).

Me & Mi Baby and Me & Mi Baby Too, two series each comprising 13 half-hour episodes, promoted key messages around maternal and child care practices. Centred on a six-day workshop that combined collaborative message design and other decision-making about the programme (including format, name, etc.), the design process saw some active
participation from local stakeholder groups. However, active participation was limited in the production and delivery stages of the programme compared with what went on during the initial design and training.

Based on lessons learnt in phase one, planning for the second of the two series introduced a deliberate strategy to expand and deepen collaboration by enlisting the active involvement of several listener-learner groups (made up of members of the target audience, mostly new parents), community health educators, and staff from the regional health authorities (Ministry of Health). In the renewed configuration, the roles of different parties were made clearer (for example, local health authorities screened each episode prior to airing) and contributions by each party were equally valued. The participation of health authorities was regularised through a more active and critical role in the production and delivery of radio content and further through off-air support activities such as playing back programmes in local health centres and during support group meetings.

As Beverley Samuels, a senior registered nurse with the health authority and an active participant in the design and management of the *Me & Mi Baby Too* programme in Jeffrey Town, affirms, “Collaboration allows for sharing stories, whether based on positive or negative experience, which helps us look at means of improving the service we give.... We are hearing from people and other partners so we can plan with and for them. We tend to think that we can only get these sort of educational programmes produced overseas and most times we have to modify those because they are not culturally relevant to our situation; so this is a novel idea” (27 July 2011).

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The process of developing community learning programmes is turning up creative variations in Jamaica and Belize. This is as it should be, given that the different programmes are based on a model applied in different contexts, environments and circumstances.

The community learning programme model and the associated approach to programme design, training and delivery\(^\text{12}\) draw on theories of participatory communication and behavioural and social change communication. The foundational elements remain the same in the four locations in the two countries: a distinct district/parish level focus, participation of target audiences, and collaboration among stakeholders representing different constituencies (community networks, health/development experts, broadcasters, policy representatives) — all joined in a process to identify health messages and design and operationalise blended learning programmes that aim to increase knowledge and ultimately bring about behaviour change in priority areas.

What is different, however, is how various groups “unpack” and re-interpret the community learning programme development and implementation processes within their own contexts and means.

The most interesting space for variation among the different applications is participation: who participates, how participation evolves and what it means for programme relevance and potential impact. Jeffrey Town, in the hills of St. Mary, Jamaica, is a small, close-knit farming community that is home to about 3,000 people. Jobs are scarce for younger folk, and teen pregnancies are common.

Since producing 12 community learning programmes under the maternal and child health theme, the team of youth producers agrees that the most powerful programmes are those with strong community health and target

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\(^{12}\) The community learning programme model and approach have been developed by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in collaboration with national and regional partners throughout the Commonwealth, including the Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication (CARIMAC) based at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, in Kingston, Jamaica.
Community-based communication is a key ingredient of self-reliance and community-led development. In 2011, the Jeffrey Town Farmers’ Association won the Michael Manley Award for Community Self-Reliance, which recognised the association’s work with community media and participatory learning programmes about maternal and child health and the environment.

A central plank of CARIMAC’s work in community learning is the power of stories as a pedagogical tool. This photo shows a skills training session for producers on interviewing for stories and eliciting people’s life experiences to illustrate key health messages.
group participation. There is no doubt that learning has taken place. An average of 75 feedback telephone calls to the station per programme point to sharp increases in awareness of post-natal care (for instance, related to breast feeding, appropriate baby foods, and various cultural myths previously held as fact). But, significantly, the feedback also reflects that the target audience is most impacted when young mothers and fathers participate in the programmes and tell their own stories. It is the shared experiences of those affected by the issues — the health workers who care and support young mothers, the adolescent parents and the community broadcasters — that bring the richest content and deepest meaning to the listeners.

Punta Gorda is a seaport town of 6,000 people, mainly indigenous East Indian and Garifuna people. Most communities are remote and village life is steeped in traditional knowledge. The incidence of lifestyle diseases such as hypertension and diabetes is significantly rising across communities and maternal and child health knowledge is acknowledged by the Ministry of Health as deficient. Community learning programmes are now finding a space on the education and learning continuum, following experimental configurations with form. A “prescribed” participatory formula, outlined in an official Memorandum of Understanding, has paved the way to a more fluid process in which the Toledo Maya Women’s Council (TMWC) has emerged as the proactive facilitator of alliances with local private doctors and radio stations in support of healthy lifestyles knowledge-building in indigenous communities.

In this approach, it is the community group, representing the significant learners, that convenes the programme. Building on the community learning programme design workshops and field experiences, participation has meant that the women’s group and private health workers choose to equip themselves with basic equipment and the full range of radio production skills in order to create and stockpile programmes in the hopes of securing airtime through partnerships with local radio stations. It is worthy of note that since finding a home on the local Wamalali FM, the community learning programme design group has grown to include students at the University of Belize who now participate in a dynamic programme production process.

Participation also means that more learner-listeners will have greater opportunities to contribute to the programme output. The TMWC innovatively “rebroadcasts” the programme in the central bus park for those waiting for the morning bus, in a move to engage those who did not tune in on their own. The next step is to test the level of learning that takes place in this environment.
But, regardless of how community learning programme implementation unfolds in these Jamaican and Belizean groups, all agree that participation truly begins with the *message matrix tool* developed by those who contribute to the process. This is the groundwork from which the construct emerges. It identifies health issues that are of concern to the learner-listeners in the community and the related behaviours that lead to either negative consequences or positive health outcomes. The matrix promotes self-efficacy by focusing on doable personal steps that individuals can choose to take in order to achieve a positive outcome. One strong advantage of the message matrix is that it presents partner groups with an opportunity to think through why behaviour change is difficult, by focusing on cultural beliefs and inhibitors. In so doing, preventative conclusions are proposed contextually.

It has been demonstrated that the tool’s effectiveness is directly related to having the right people participating in the programme design, a process centred on a one-week design workshop facilitated by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). It is here that the groups merge, usually for the first time. Community groups, health workers and community media volunteers co-mingle to weave sectoral knowledge into a holistic programme of change through learning. This partnership allows the programme development and learning support channels to move beyond generic issues, to focus on what is real and what is necessary.

One other commonality across the divergent mix is the agreement that storytelling is the most powerful radio format to be incorporated in the community learning programme mix. Whether it is a story told during an interview or a story dramatised to include the main messages, feedback from Caribbean learners suggests that stories increase message attention and retention rate. Learner-listeners were more likely to relate to a story they were told or dialogue they heard during the programme that drove home a particular point. This has led facilitators of community learning programmes in the region to experiment increasingly with creating time-efficient, cost-effective story development models to empower community broadcasters in the use of this format.

In Jamaica’s capital city, Kingston, the urban context lends itself to yet other variations of the community learning programme approach. Community first responders — counsellors, health workers, teachers and youth leaders — gather at ROOTS FM to use the community learning programme framework to create programmes applicable in their own fields of development work. For example, a teacher works with a radio producer and a group of children in the community to develop children’s learning programmes based on themes and material from the Ministry of Education. A theatre arts development worker and a media producer
create a two-hour, on-air mentorship programme, *Weapons of Mass Instruction*, based on a collaborative message matrix.

As community learning programmes gather head, it will be interesting to track how the participatory channels evolve even further to create solutions for sustainability.

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**Rosamond Brown**, formerly the General Manager of ROOTS FM in Jamaica, is an independent consultant to community learning programme initiatives in Jamaica and Belize. Her writing has appeared in *Learning to Live Together: Using Distance Education for Community Peacebuilding* (Commonwealth of Learning 2009) and *Community Media: A Good Practice Handbook* (UNESCO 2011). She is currently an adjunct senior lecturer at the Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication, University of the West Indies, in Kingston, Jamaica. Email: brownrosamond@yahoo.com

**Local partners:**

The **Toledo Maya Women’s Council** is an indigenous, not-for-profit organisation that advocates for the economic and social advancement of Maya women through relevant education and skills development in Belize.

**Hamalali FM** is a not-for-profit radio station set up by the National Garifuna Council in Dangriga, Belize, to preserve the Garifuna culture.

**JET FM** is the first radio station to be owned and operated by a farmers’ group (the Jeffrey Town Farmers’ Association) in Jamaica. The station has a vibrant corps of young broadcasters in their teens and early 20s who are involved in producing environmental programming on topics such as recycling, climate change and maternal and child care.

**ROOTS FM**, the voice of the inner city in Kingston, is the only urban community radio station in the Caribbean. ROOTS is owned and operated by Mustard Seed Communities, a Catholic service organisation in Jamaica.
Leveraging Partnerships to Close the Feedback Loop

Gail White

The *Noord Kaap Vigs Forum* (Northern Cape AIDS Forum, or NKVF) is a church-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) located in Upington, South Africa. Its core activities include counselling and home-based palliative care for people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. It employs approximately 166 lay people who function as home-based caregivers in marginalised areas where patients cannot easily access the public health care system. The organisation is also supported by the provincial departments of Health and Social Development to assist with Food Provision programmes by providing daily meals to the elderly and the indigent at community centres. As part of their own HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, NKVF interacts with regular groups providing knowledge and information that could lead to behaviour change amongst the participants.

In 2009, NKVF joined a collaborative project to introduce a new educational programme about HIV/AIDS. The project was led by Radio Riverside, Upington’s community radio station, in association with a national media development agency, the Media and Training Centre for Health (MTC), based in Cape Town in Western Cape province, with technical and funding assistance from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL).

NKVF lived up to its reputation as a credible and accountable partner, participating actively in programme design and staying on through the programme delivery stages. For NKVF educational communication, using radio represents an innovative way to interact with their clients, with less reliance on lay counsellors who may not necessarily have prior training or always be in a position to provide accurate and up-to-date information and advice.

*Summer for All* is a one-hour biweekly radio programme that was born of a participatory design process. After a period of one year, although the technical and pedagogical quality of the programme were both solid, a gap persisted between media producers and target learner-listeners,
making any monitoring or assessment of learning and behaviour-change outcomes or impact on community health difficult. To address the issue, MTC contracted NKVF to assist with the co-ordination of listening and discussion sessions among target learner groups, and to provide content development input to programme producers at the broadcaster, Radio Riverside.

With NKVF effectively leading *Summer for All*'s learner support activities, producers were more easily able to engage with community members and other experts, ensuring that messaging is relevant, sensitive, accurate and appropriate to the real needs of community learners; and MTC was assured regular reporting on the numbers of learners actively listening to the radio programmes and on observations about behaviour and social change.

Such a strategy of local stakeholder involvement not only assists with the implementation of the community learning model in its present format; it also bodes well for the future sustainability of the project, because partners clearly understand the paradigm shift from passive listening to active learning and will be able to continue the project with minimal support from external donor parties.

As well, the NKVF lobbies other civil society organisations to become involved in the community learning programme, thus further growing the numbers of learners in each site who are able to benefit from the intervention.
In addition to promoting active collaboration between media and community groups in designing and delivering programming, MTC conducted a baseline study at the outset of the project to find out the knowledge, attitudes and practices learners had related to HIV/AIDS. With that information, MTC then used a participatory message development method\textsuperscript{13} that ensured the overall programme design was relevant and appropriate given the needs of learners. The baseline survey, for example, identified stigma and discrimination as two key factors inhibiting people from undertaking voluntarily testing for HIV. The project’s mid-term evaluation revealed that the radio programmes have helped normalise HIV testing and dispelled the myth that only promiscuous people need regular checks.

\textbf{Gail White} is the executive director of the Media and Training Centre for Health (MTC) in Cape Town, South Africa. Gail is a graduate of the University of Cape Town where she completed a BA in Drama and African History. She also holds a post-graduate certificate in Communication for Behavioural Impact from the University of New York. She has worked in the field of Health Communication since 1985 and has worked for MTC since 2001.

The \textbf{Media and Training Centre for Health} (MTC) was established in 1994 as an affiliate to the National Progressive Primary Health Care Network and has provided training to a majority of community radio stations in South Africa. MTC takes a collaborative approach to media development.

For further reference, see:

- Media and Training Centre for Health – www.mtcforhealth.co.za
- Northern Cape AIDS Forum (Afrikaans) – www.upington.co.za/sub_links/social_services/noord_kaap_vigs_forum
- Radio Riverside, Upington, South Africa – www.radio-riverside.co.za

\textsuperscript{13} The message matrix tool is part of a concise programme development approach. It was developed by Charles Simbi, Joke van Kampen and Gladson Makowa from Story Workshop for a programme design workshop in Mchinji district, Malawi, led by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). See Chapter 16 in this publication for a full discussion of the message matrix.
There is a tendency to see planning for assessment as extra work, additional activities on top of actual programme implementation. As a result, planning for assessment is often unwelcome by community radio groups. However, assessment is a critical process for every community station. Without it, how can stations and their stakeholders evaluate whether they are achieving results and, if they are, how effectively and at what cost?

Every community radio station must be able to plan and assess its own work in terms of relationships to, and benefits for, its local community. Understanding relationships — for example, between listeners, content and producers — is essential in framing the work that community radio stations do in terms of social impact, which in turn is a key determinant of sustainability. If radio services are shown to have a social value, the community will be more inclined to believe in the work the station does and more inclined to go the distance to keep the radio running and growing. If done well, assessment will also provide evidence of how things have changed locally as a result of particular programmes, thereby encouraging support (financial and otherwise) for the programme and the station more generally.

Kumaon Vani (KV) (Voice of Kumaon) is a community radio station in Uttarakhand state in India. Licensed to The Energy Resources Institute (TERI), a non-profit organisation working on energy and environmental issues, the radio station has been in operation since 2010. The station broadcasts in the local Kumaoni dialect as well as in Hindi. Hindi is one of India’s national languages and is well understood in the region, particularly among young people.

In 2011, Maraa, a media and arts collective based in Bangalore, organised a four-day workshop to build capacity in Kumaon Vani in two main areas: increasing community participation in programming; and planning for outcome assessment. This chapter discusses the latter area.
Recognising the need for carrying out an assessment

At the time of the intervention, Kumaon Vani had been running radio programmes for a little more than a year. While they felt the programmes were well appreciated by the target community, Kumaon Vani staff also felt apprehensive about doing an assessment. Firstly, they were worried that they could not accurately say what kinds of programmes they had produced over the previous year, including how many hours broadcast, the issues covered, and who had participated in these programmes as producers and guests. Secondly, they did not feel able to map out any tangible outcomes resulting from the programming. Most of the core team had strong feelings that the station’s work had benefited the community in some way, but they struggled to pinpoint how and with what issues.

The challenge for Maraa was to introduce ways to plan for assessment that could take place on a day-to-day basis. Strategies for monitoring and assessment needed to be easy enough to implement that a range of station staff and community stakeholders could contribute without the process taking too much time. At the same time, input had to be easily aggregated so that results could be quickly summarised and presented to community members and representatives as well as other stakeholders.

Maraa proposed to:

- initiate planning and assessment for one particular community issue; and
- start planning for a holistic assessment of the community radio.

Assessing community participation

Kumaon Vani broadcasts for two hours every day. To capture what really happens in those two hours as well as all the efforts made between the daily broadcasts, Maraa invited the station’s producers (community volunteers, reporters, etc.) to devise categories of participation in programming. For this purpose, Maraa created a template form with the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Above poverty line (APL)/Below poverty line (BPL)</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Programme</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Above poverty line (APL)/Below poverty line (BPL)</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


Kumaon Vani is a community radio station in Uttarakhand state, India. Broadcasting in the Kumaoni dialect as well as in Hindi, the station works closely with local volunteers, reporters and others from the public to promote improved community well-being and development.

The producers committed to filling out the form individually for each of their programmes. Aggregating this information over the year then made it possible to report on the radio station’s work according to:

- which topics had been covered;
- from which villages people participated;
- how many men and women participated;
- what castes had been represented in the programmes;
- how many people participating lived above the poverty line and how many below the poverty line; and
- how much time each person got on air.

After a full year of data collecting, the information can be accumulated and presented to the community in the form of a social audit. The aim is to show community stakeholders the volume and variety of broadcasting done (including the participation of community members themselves) and in the process demonstrate the station’s commitment to being accountable for its objectives and operations.

Although this simple effort at monitoring goes some way in tracking what the station is able to produce, it does not provide any evidence that things in the community are different, that behaviours are changing, that a particular situation has improved or that benefits have been accrued from a particular programme. The next step is therefore to demonstrate how
community media can impact, in concrete terms, community well-being and development. As a pilot, Maraa and Kumaon Vani together decided to take up the issue of public distribution systems.

Outcomes for community development

In India, for many people classified as living below the poverty line (BPL), the state subsidises essentials such as grains and cooking oil. Subsidised goods are made available through a network of distribution centres known as the public distribution system (PDS). The system is full of problems, with the poorest of the poor being the most to suffer. Food grains are often not available or, even when subsidised, fluctuate wildly in price and are often too costly for people to buy. There is also a high level of corruption. Food grains often end up being wasted, as do state resources.

After Maraa and Kumaon Vani conducted a participative mapping exercise with stakeholders in Kumaon, it was decided to focus on the following goals for a period of one year:

- All PDS shops will clearly display outside their shops a list of BPL families from within their service area.
- All PDS shops will remain open as per their scheduled times.
- The price list of commodities available at PDS shops will be clearly displayed outside each shop.

Although many problems with the PDS scheme were identified, the group decided to prioritise and focus on these three points, which they felt could be addressed, and to some degree achieved, through a communication intervention by the radio station.

Activity plans focused on: broadcasting a series of on-air announcements about the station’s plans to tackle PDS issues; mobilising villages in and around the station through public meetings; and inviting suggestions for a name for the campaign. The meetings were an opportunity to discuss and plan the campaign, including specific radio programmes for each objective.

At the end of 2012, Kumaon Vani will have mapped, and be in a position to assess, the degree of community participation in the station. Issues of attribution aside, the station will also be in a better position to judge whether targeted campaigns about adherence to public policy and community initiatives have seen any success in meeting the three goals set. The station plans to discuss the results with community stakeholders, the state agencies responsible for PDS, and the various departments responsible for health, family and welfare.
A model for other community media

As this brief account shows, simple, day-to-day, low-cost processes like the ones described here can enable the participatory monitoring and evaluation of educational and change communication pursued through community media. Assessment planning, monitoring and evaluation are all important means of underscoring adherence to ethics associated with accountability and public responsibility.

Knowing that programme quality and outcomes will be assessed encourages producers to be more careful and systematic in defining goals, setting targets, gathering content and producing programming. It all adds up to good value for the producers, the radio station, listeners and the wider community.

Ramnath Bhat is the co-founder of Maraa, a media and arts collective in Bangalore. He started working with community media initiatives in 2003 when he began with VOICES, a media advocacy group. He later helped start Maraa in 2007. Ram has experience in capacity building, research and policy advocacy for community media. He is currently the Vice-President of the Community Radio Forum of India. Email: ram@maraa.in

Maraa is a media and arts collective based in Bangalore. Maraa builds capacity for community media, does policy advocacy and conducts research, including work with wireless Internet, mobile telephony, de-licensed wi-fi, white spaces, frequency allocation and spectrum management.

For further reference, see:

- www.maraa.in

The Kumaon Vani radio station team.
PART FIVE:

Tools for Integrating Mobile Devices and Telephony

    – Bart Sullivan

22. Tools for Use in Integrating Mobile Phones into Local Educational Programming
    – Zahir Koradia

23. Facilitating Community Participation with Mobiles and Innovative Solutions
    – Zahir Koradia

24. Integrating Mobiles into Community Learning Programmes
    – Gail White
The mobile phone is becoming increasingly ubiquitous — the communication tool of choice for people around the world. Recently there has been a convergence between distance learning modalities and innovative uses of mobile phones.

The “m-learning” field is full of applications and initiatives to turn mobile phones into content-rich learning tools. However, which of the existing tools use the simplest communication media of all?

This chapter explores the potential of leveraging *voice*, the most basic function of a mobile phone, as a means to supporting learning, specifically using what is known as IVR and radio.

**What is IVR?**

Interactive voice response (IVR) has traditionally been used as a customer service tool by banks, government offices and other institutions to automate the process of making information accessible over the phone.

Since the 1990s, callers around the world have been greeted with the familiar: *Press 1 now to get information about X. Press 2 now to learn more about our office locations. Press 3 for....* Although many of us scramble to push 0 to speak to a customer service representative as quickly as possible, a well-designed IVR menu holds numerous other possibilities.

Farm Radio International, an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) working in communication for development, was interested in finding out whether an IVR system could be used to complement radio-based educational programming by enhancing the process of participatory learning among agricultural communities in Tanzania.
Freedom Fone set-up: What do I need?

In 2009, an open source and easily deployable IVR system called Freedom Fone was released and made available to the public as a free online download at www.freedomfone.org. The Freedom Fone website also features an online demonstration that allows the user to test out the system before committing to the install. Once the 1-GB Ubuntu iso image is downloaded, the operating system can be installed on a standard desktop computer. In contrast to a typical Windows-based piece of software, Freedom Fone is a complete Linux-based operating system. It is therefore recommended that the computer be configured and used as a server, one dedicated to running the Freedom Fone software exclusively.14

In addition to the desktop computer, a GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) modem/device is required to bridge the mobile service to the Freedom Fone server. These GSM devices are available in several vehicles, ranging from a Mobigater with one SIM card ($70 [US]) to the Office Route device with room for four SIM cards ($850 [US]). These can be ordered with help from the people at Freedom Fone.

Freedom Fone features: What can it do?

Freedom Fone has numerous features that make it well suited for community learning applications. Easy-to-design interactive audio voice menus help make information available to non-literate callers. All voice menus can be offered in multiple languages, making it a tool for serving a diverse group of users. Multiple voicemail boxes can be set up to allow callers to leave messages to specific people or departments or even to submit stories for broadcast. Short message service (SMS) polls can be designed and used to conduct surveys with a community — a useful tool for conducting quick community quizzes on a particular topic or for identifying a community’s interest areas. Finally, Freedom Fone software keeps track of detailed statistics on calls, voicemail and SMS made to the system.

Freedom Fone and radio: a perfect match

Radio remains one of the best tools for reaching communities on the margins of society. Radio sets are affordable, costing as little as $5 (US). Radios are portable: they can travel to the field, the kitchen or the neighbour’s house. Radios run on batteries: they don’t require electricity. Radios are great for groups: more than one person can listen to a radio together. And, most important of all, radios are for listening:

14 Dual booting is possible and instructions for putting Windows and Freedom Fone side by side exist on the Freedom Fone website.
those who cannot read or write can still understand and learn from a radio broadcast.

Freedom Fone presents the opportunity for radio to further develop another opportunity: interactivity. Mobile phones share many of the aforementioned features of radio (e.g., accessibility and portability). However, there are at least two essential differences:

- First, mobiles allow for two-way communication between parties.
- Second, mobiles feature primarily one-to-one voice communications (unlike radio, which is one-to-many).

Given the complementary attributes between radio and mobiles, integrated applications have the potential to be both far-reaching and two-way. Freedom Fone is a low-cost and practical opportunity to bridge the realm of radio and the mobile phone. Freedom Fone can be used to make summaries of programmes available for on-demand listening (that is, for repeat listening at a later time); it can be used to gather listener feedback and stories for incorporation into upcoming broadcasts; and it can be used to conduct real-time polls with listeners via SMS.

A case study: Kuku Hotline at Radio Maria

Between May and June 2010, Farm Radio International helped Radio Maria Tanzania integrate Freedom Fone into their radio campaign about improving local chicken management. The campaign was called “Heka Heka Vijijini” (Busy, Busy in the Village). As the final month of Radio Maria’s five-month participatory radio campaign\(^\text{15}\) approached, broadcasters and researchers were interested in how much knowledge had been absorbed by listeners, how attitudes towards chicken farming had changed, and whether farmers had altered their chicken management practices.

A small competition was created to help gather stories from the listening community. A radio jingle\(^\text{16}\) that invited listeners to call in and leave a voicemail message was produced and aired. It asked, *What knowledge has most impacted you and how do you plan to use it?* The Kuku Hotline,\(^\text{17}\) as it became known, received 1,448 unique calls and voicemail messages over the course of five weeks. A panel of broadcasters selected approximately 20 of the recorded messages to be re-broadcast each week. At the end of the campaign, callers who had had their message played on air\(^\text{18}\) were awarded with a Kuku Hotline t-shirt.

\(^{15}\) As defined by Farm Radio International, participatory radio campaigns are planned, radio-based activities conducted over a specific period of time and in which a broad population of farmers is encouraged to make an informed decision about adopting a specific improvement selected by their peers. See Chapter 1 in this publication for further information.

\(^{16}\) Visit http://bit.ly/farmradiokuku1 to see a video of the radio jingle and a translation.

\(^{17}\) Kuku is the Swahili word for chicken.

\(^{18}\) Visit http://bit.ly/farmradiokuku2 to see video example of winning stories.
Use and applicability

Using the Freedom Fone at Radio Maria presented several challenges. Although female listeners were, on average, twice as likely to be aware of the Kuku Hotline as male listeners, the same female listeners were half as likely as men to actually call the hotline. Most women cited lack of mobile phone credit as the main reason they didn’t call to participate in the hotline competition. An upcoming version of Freedom Fone features a call back function that could help improve participation by women and other financially marginalised community members.

The challenges that occurred at the radio station level were more operational. A computer hard-drive failure in a second-hand computer caused the hotline to go offline for three days during a peak time (which highlighted the importance of buying new and quality computers for use as the Freedom Fone server). Several software challenges were encountered when broadcasters and technicians did not know how to troubleshoot the system (resulting in more thorough two-day training sessions for future deployments at other radio stations19).

19 For more stories about how Farm Radio International has used Freedom Fone, including a case study from Ghana, visit http://to.pbs.org/FreedomFone.

Freedom Fone set-up.

Photo credit: Bart Sullivan/Farm Radio International
Freedom Fone as a participatory learning tool

Although FRI’s experiences using Freedom Fone aimed to enhance the interactivity of a radio campaign, the tool itself presents several opportunities to enhance participatory learning. Learning modules can be recorded and made available weekly, with previous archived modules being accessible through voice menu navigation. Learners can contribute to and collaborate on upcoming modules by leaving voicemail messages for the system’s facilitators. These comments can be re-incorporated into the following week’s modules.

Freedom Fone’s built-in contact manager functionality could also enable a rudimentary level of learner management by associating mobile phone numbers of particular learners with incoming calls, messages and SMS linked to learners. The SMS poll functionality has the potential to allow a community of learners to determine the direction of learning modules based on a voting system.

Conclusion

Freedom Fone is a mobile phone tool to be added to the repertoire of any community-based organisation interested in engaging citizens in non-formal learning. It is user friendly, low cost and global and it operates without Internet access—features that go a long way to maximising success in today’s high-tech world.

Bartholomew Sullivan works as Farm Radio International’s Radio and ICT Manager. Based in Arusha, Tanzania, Bart works with radio stations throughout Africa to train broadcasters and apply innovative new technology solutions to enhance the power of radio in the service of rural listeners. Combining his academic background in computer science and rural extension studies with his passion for radio and deejaying, Bart brings together three separate domains to help build on a tried and tested development communication technology in Africa — radio.

Email: bsullivan@farmradio.org

For further reference, see:

- Freedom Fone, a free, open source telephony platform directed at mobile phone users – www.freedomfone.org

20 DVD versions of Freedom Fone can be mailed to your address where downloading from the website is not possible.
Several technologies can help educational organisations integrate the use of mobile phones within local, media-based educational programmes. This chapter discusses four of those tools:

- Frontline SMS
- Freedom Fone
- GRINS
- vChannel

A brief introduction is provided to each of the four tools, followed by a table describing the capabilities of each tool. After that is a discussion on how each of the tools can be used in different activities related to educational communication programmes.

**The four tools**

**Frontline SMS** – Frontline SMS is a simple, easy-to-install and easy-to-use tool that enables an organisation to create and manage groups of mobile phone numbers and to send messages to and receive messages from these groups. In addition, it can automatically add a sender to a group by processing the text received in the SMS (short message service). Frontline SMS is often used to send reminders or spread information that can be delivered via SMS, or to collect information from a large group of people. For example, it has been used in providing farmers with information about good farming practices and in election monitoring. A new variant of Frontline SMS, called Frontline SMS: Radio, is specifically designed for radio groups. It is expected to be available in 2012. Frontline SMS is free and can be downloaded from www.Frontline SMS.com.

**Freedom Fone** – Freedom Fone is an easy-to-use interactive voice response (IVR) system designed specifically to enable community-based organisations to provide information to their communities over the phone.
Freedom Fone requires a dedicated computer, which then acts as the IVR server. It allows an organisation to put pre-recorded audio on the server, which can then be heard by individuals calling into the server (via a dedicated mobile phone number). Freedom Fone also allows an organisation to receive SMS and therefore to conduct polls and receive feedback from the community through an answering machine built into the system. An online demonstration of Freedom Fone is available at http://demo.freedomfone.org/. Freedom Fone is free and can be downloaded from www.freedomfone.org. However, it is more challenging to install than Frontline SMS.

GRINS – GRINS is a radio automation system designed specifically for community radio stations. While GRINS can carry out a number of different tasks, this article focuses on mobile-related aspects of the tool. In contrast to Freedom Fone, in which a caller talks to a computer, with GRINS the caller talks to a presenter/producer at a radio station. The conversation between the radio journalist and the caller can be put live on air or can be recorded for later use. Depending on the hardware in use, GRINS can enable conferencing between multiple callers, and the conference itself can be put live on air or recorded for later use. GRINS allows users to build a listener database by saving the name, number and location of the caller. It also allows categorisation of call-recordings to obtain statistics about the calls. Finally, GRINS allows users to set up an answering machine to receive feedback from callers. A demonstration video of GRINS is available at http://tinyurl.com/grinsdemovideo. GRINS is free and can be downloaded from http://gramvaani.org/community-radio/. However, using GRINS in a community radio station generally requires configuring the software with the station’s mixing console, which may require a technical resource person.

vChannel – vChannel is a specialised tool that allows an organisation to operate a phone-based channel similar to a TV channel. However, unlike a TV channel, vChannel is participatory. Community members can call in to the vChannel server to access it. They can leave questions or comments about radio programmes or even news about activities in their locality. These questions, comments and news can then be heard by other community members who can respond if they like. The user organisation can also listen and respond to the comments through a Web interface. The same Web interface allows the user organisation to moderate audio pieces heard over the phone and even to download items to use them in a radio programme.
Comparing the capabilities of each tool

The table below summarises what each of the above tools can and cannot do when it comes to integrating mobiles into community learning programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Advantages: Can …</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frontline SMS</td>
<td>• Send and receive group SMS messages</td>
<td>• Cannot handle voice calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Receive Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS)</td>
<td>• Does not support a pending messages list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Automatically create a database of numbers</td>
<td>• Does not allow more than 160 characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cannot handle voice calls</td>
<td>• Cannot cancel pending messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does not support a pending messages list</td>
<td>• Cannot conduct polls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does not allow more than 160 characters</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cannot cancel pending messages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cannot conduct polls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom Fone</td>
<td>• Receive SMS</td>
<td>• Cannot send SMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conduct polls</td>
<td>• Cannot make calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work as an answering machine</td>
<td>• Cannot enable conversation between two people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide multiple recorded audios over phone calls</td>
<td>• Depending on hardware, may not be able to handle parallel calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Export audio for editing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide call frequencies and caller database</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRINS</td>
<td>• Make and receive calls between two people</td>
<td>• Cannot send and receive SMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Export audio for editing</td>
<td>• Cannot make automated calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Record all phone conversations</td>
<td>• Cannot provide audio over incoming phone calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work as an answering machine</td>
<td>• Cannot conduct polls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Categorise recordings: caller, topic, location, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide a caller database</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Depending on hardware, conference multiple calls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vChannel</td>
<td>• Record audio messages</td>
<td>• Cannot do anything else that the other three tools do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enable callers to listen to others’ messages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enable moderation of messages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparative applications in a community learning context

How can the tools outlined above be used in different aspects of local media programming?

At the macro level, mobiles can be integrated into community-based education programmes in several important ways. For example, they can be used to:

1. Logistics:
   a) register or enrol and track learners as they join and leave the programme, using their distinct mobile phone number, with applications for tracking the number of programmes heard
   b) remind students to tune in at particular times and to mobilise specific groups as special target audiences
2. Learning materials:
   a) provide additional or complementary learning materials in the form of text or audio to the learners over the phone (e.g., key messages illustrated in micro-stories of learners’ own experiences of the issues at hand)

3. Learner support:
   a) provide a variety of avenues for learners to receive support (e.g., by asking questions, having discussions with other learners or facilitators, or being directed to a face-to-face discussion group)

4. Evaluation:
   a) test knowledge, attitude and behaviour changes in learners as a result of the exposure to the programme using quizzes and questionnaires

Mobile devices help community media to get out of the studios and into community spaces, both to play back content off air in small groups and to bring the voices and stories of citizens to programming. In this photo, producers “narrowcast” programmes in the Bundelkhand region of India as part of an initiative to use mobiles to increase participation in educational programming.
The table below provides examples of how Frontline SMS, Freedom Fone, GRINS and vChannel can be used in the above aspects of a community learning programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Ways the tools can be used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Learning materials**| • Put learning audio on Freedom Fone or vChannel  
• Use Frontline SMS to deliver key messages and links  
• Advertise on community radio to encourage listeners to use SMS or call in as a way of collecting feedback and material for learning materials |
| **Learner support**   | • Use Frontline SMS to send reminders  
• Use vChannel to receive questions and comments from learners and get them answered by experts  
• Use vChannel to enable discussion between learners  
• Receive questions and comments through the answering machine of GRINS or Freedom Fone, and broadcast the responses over radio |
| **Logistics**         | • Use Frontline SMS to register or unregister learners  
• Use GRINS to receive calls and record details of the callers  
• Use GRINS to obtain statistics about who calls and how often |
| **Evaluation**        | • Use “please call me” option or a “missed call” on an ordinary mobile phone, followed by call-outs, asking what the listeners learned  
• Ask listener groups to call in to the answering machine of GRINS or Freedom Fone, and collectively leave a message about what they learned |

The use of mobile telephony to complement work done by traditional broadcasters is still a relatively new field. The author welcomes any feedback, input and or suggestions in expanding and improving work in this area.

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Zahir Koradia is the Lead Developer at Gram Vaani Community Media Pvt Ltd and a PhD student at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay. He is part of the team that developed GRINS, a radio automation system designed especially for community radio stations. Zahir’s current work involves helping radio stations increase community participation through the innovative use of basic mobile phones. His research interests lie in exploring the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in socio-economic development. Email: zahir.koradia@gramvaani.org
Facilitating Community Participation with Mobiles and Innovative Solutions

Zahir Koradia

Anyone associated with community radio understands the importance of community participation in all aspects of the station, including participation in identifying and creating programme content. Not only should the community play a role in ultimately deciding what goes on air, but there is great value in airing the voices of people as part of bringing content to the airwaves. Participation as such enables stations to engage closely with their listeners.

In the context of programmes with educational and or developmental aims, engagement with community members provides an opportunity to convert passive listeners to active learners.

However, enabling a high degree of listener participation in communication of any kind (even without the compounding challenges of community media) is a difficult task. In order to address this challenge in a small but tangible way, Gram Vaani designed an automation system called GRINS. Stories of how GRINS has been used at radio stations to increase community participation are highlighted below.

**Radio Bundelkhand** is a community radio station located in central India. Before GRINS was installed at their station, the staff would record calls from listeners by putting their telephone in speaker mode and recording the conversation using a hand-held recorder. This was a good solution but with several problems, including: 1) poor quality recorded audio, and 2) a cumbersome process to manage the recorded audio (such as requiring careful logging of the caller’s name and phone number).

The off-air telephony feature of GRINS has now allowed Radio Bundelkhand to receive phone calls and record them by simply clicking a button on the computer screen. The audio recording is good quality and the recorded conversation is automatically available in the GRINS database for broadcasting.
Radio stations in India have greatly increased listener participation, thanks to the automation system GRINS. Among its many features: enabling staff to place and receive calls live on air and to make high-quality recordings of remote phone interviews; and functioning as an answering machine outside of station office hours.
Kumaon Vani, a community radio station in the Himalayan region of India, uses the off-air telephony feature of GRINS to record interviews with community members, experts and representatives of stakeholder groups. Facility to record high-quality interviews by phone instead of physically travelling to different locations in the community is a major advantage given the difficulty of travelling in mountainous terrain and the low-budget operations of the station.

The on-air telephony feature of GRINS also allows station to put callers live on air. A combination of the system’s off-air and on-air functions therefore allows station staff to execute high-quality programmes effectively. Gurgaon Ki Awaaz, a community radio station near New Delhi, runs a live phone-in programme every morning in which it asks listeners to call in and express their views about an issue chosen for the day. The station receives more than 10 calls during the half-hour programme. When a call comes in, the station first screens the caller using the off-air telephony feature to ensure the caller is going to discuss the topic chosen. Next, using the GRINS on-air feature — the click of a button — staff put the caller live on air. Soumya from Gurgaon Ki Awaaz says that this feature of GRINS is particularly useful when it is important to air a piece of content or a discussion as soon as possible. In 2011, for example, Gurgaon Ki Awaaz ran a full-day phone-in programme covering local municipal elections. Throughout the day, they encouraged listeners to call in and report on activities at different polling stations.

Barefoot Radio, a rural community radio station in western India, used the GRINS on-air telephony feature to put a speech by His Holiness the Dalai Lama live on air. They did this by calling the station from a mobile phone, putting the phone near His Holiness, and having the call put through live on-air using GRINS.

When GRINS is not being used to make and receive calls by station staff, it can be configured to work as an answering machine. This function has been used effectively by Jaago Mumbai, a Bombay-based community radio station, to run competitions. When callers phone in to the station, they hear a question that has been recorded by the radio staff. They can then leave an answer to the question. Answers are available as audio files on the computer. The station chooses the winner of the competition after listening to all the answers.
The answering machine system also allows listeners to reach the station outside office hours or when the office phone is busy. Gurgaon Ki Awaaz used the system in this way and has posted some of the responses they received on the system at http://124.124.247.5/phonepeti/.

In addition to all of these functions discussed above, GRINS also features teleconferencing between multiple callers, a caller management system, and Internet streaming to help stations improve their community engagement. The GRINS software solution is free to download and use.

More details about the GRINS features, hardware requirements and installation instructions are available at www.gramvaani.org/community-radio/.

References


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For further reference, see:

• Gram Vaani – www.gramvaani.org
Integrating Mobiles into Community Learning Programmes

Gail White

Research shows that more than 70 per cent of youth in marginalised communities in South Africa have access to a mobile phone (Donner and Gitau 2009). They place value on mobiles as a tool that allows them to communicate not only with their peers but also with others globally through the Internet. Furthermore, youth are willing to invest their own hard-earned resources in the purchase of branded handsets that enable access to both FM radio and the Internet (Hodgkinson-Williams and Ng’ambi 2009).

With mobiles so readily available, educators across all fields need to consider how best to integrate mobile devices into their work. For broadcasters, mobiles have particular relevance to discussions about identifying and understanding audiences, and about promoting increased interaction with, and participation by, learners.

The use of community radio as an educational tool is relatively well known. It is a cost-effective platform from which accurate information and learning opportunities can be provided to large numbers of people simultaneously. It is particularly effective in remote areas that have few other communication opportunities. One important challenge faced by educational and development-oriented radio programming is how to evaluate who is listening and how they are using programme content.

Knowing who is listening has proven a challenge for the Media and Training Centre for Health, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that supports the development of educational programming in South Africa. Uncertainty has made it difficult to track learners’ progress, assess learning achievements and engage with individuals directly (e.g., to get feedback or solicit further participation).

The advent of mobile telephony radio programming gives the radio educator an opportunity to: identify specific listeners, particularly members of the target audience; develop relationships with active learners;
and solicit immediate feedback to further guide content development. A database of learners with access to mobile phones also provides the educator with an effective monitoring tool, which in turn can contribute to an evaluation of learners’ ongoing involvement in specific learning campaigns. As well, the database can be used as a vehicle for logistical programme support — for example, to remind learners to tune into a specific episode at a given time and to information on the topic.

In many developing countries, cost-to-caller is an inhibiting factor in the use of mobiles. The onus is thus on the educator to provide an affordable yet easy-to-use mechanism for those learners who want to engage in further interaction using their mobile device but for whom costs are a barrier.

A flyer promoting the B the Future cellbook on HIV/AIDS, a project of the Metropolitan Foundation (South Africa) with support from the Media and Training Centre for Health.
As MTC continues to explore the use of mobiles, it is clear they can add value across many areas of educational media programming (e.g., to offer interaction with learners, provide additional learning materials and help organise the programmes more effectively). Various options exist through which communication is possible via mobile phones:

- SMS messaging allows the educator to send a text message that reinforces messaging related to a radio programme or reminds the learner to tune into the next programme.

- “Please call back system” allows the learner to communicate with the educator at no cost and, for example, to be registered for the whole series or particular campaign or episode.

- As it is commonly known in South Africa, *Please call me* is offered at no cost to the user by all mobile telephone service providers. A user is allowed a maximum of five *Please call me* messages per day and is able to use this service to communicate with anybody else who owns a mobile telephone. *Please call me* is generally used when callers do not have or do not want to use their own airtime but still need to communicate with a specific person. The onus is then on those receiving the message to respond (at their own cost) or not.

- If learners have access to and are willing to use their own airtime, they can leave voice messages or engage actively in a programme to add comments, make suggestions or voice concerns.

- Polls using software solutions such as Freedom Fone or GRINS can be conducted with groups of learners to determine their responses to a particular topic, or simply to determine how many listeners have tuned into a programme on a specific day.

- Mobile phones can also be used to access social networking sites, such as the popular Mxit site in South Africa, which allows learners to be part of a “community of learning” with such options as question and answer and peer sharing.

- Mobile phones can be used to access soft copies of additional reading materials. Mobiles allow learners to access and reference learning materials at convenient times. A good example is the *B the Future* cellbook, a manual about HIV/AIDS available for download for about 15 US cents to mobile phones in four languages.

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21 The *B the Future* cellbook, a product of the Metropolitan Foundation and the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), is available for browsing and downloading at www.btf.co.za/e/aknowledgement.php in Afrikaans, English, Sotho and Zulu.
References


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The Media and Training Centre for Health (MTC), established in 1994 as an affiliate of the National Progressive Primary Health Care Network, has provided training to a majority of community radio stations in South Africa. MTC takes a collaborative approach to media development.

For further references, see:

- www.mtcforhealth.co.za
Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education. – Paulo Freire

Community media, from conventional radio or video to new online or digital media forms, have unique, untapped potential for education. They are able to reach large numbers of people at low cost, and especially those who are typically hard to access because of location, age, education, gender, economic circumstance or social situation. However, the key to optimising the educational potential of community media is “participatory communication” — which, as Freire suggests, is centred on dialogue. If educational and developmental aims are to be well and truly met through community media, all stakeholders must engage in dialogue, not just “on the air” but throughout all aspects of the educational process.

*Learning with Community Media: Stories from the Commonwealth and Latin America* presents the experiences of a wide cross-section of education, development and community media groups in conceiving, designing, delivering and evaluating participatory communication programmes in more than a dozen developing countries of the Commonwealth and Latin America. The 24 chapters in this collection provide a well-rounded profile of educational participatory communication from the perspective of facilitators and trainers, stakeholder agencies and individuals, and the participants themselves — the latter ranging from farmers, social activists and indigenous groups to children and youth, expectant mothers, women combating domestic violence, and people at risk for HIV/AIDS.

Comparatively little has been written about community media as an educational tool, particularly with regard to its potential as a means of delivering non-formal education to citizen listeners and learners. *Learning with Community Media* helps fill this gap, summarising a wealth of practical experience, methods and techniques and offering invaluable “lessons learned.” At the same time, it shows how education might be placed more squarely on the agenda of community media groups — and how community media might be used by developmental agencies and organisations to achieve their education goals.