



SUMMARY April 10, 2014

In-kind contributions

Nyang'ori Ohenjo, Advisor at Baliti FM, Kenya, shared an example of barter trade, “an offer from a community member to print our stickers and do our website in exchange for advertising his taxi business.”

Jimmy Okello, Radio Apac, Uganda, reminds us that most of the in-kind contributions are people giving in their time to go on air. Another in kind contribution Radio Apac has is with the faith based/religious groups in the community. “These consist of about forty members who evangelize on the radio early in the morning free of charge and they have to contribute fuel to run the generator at that time. Under the Station Manager they have formed a loose association with their own chairperson and executive and radio anchor as an ex officio.” They raise funds among themselves for diesel for the generator.”

Social Media

Vinod Pavarala, Professor & UNESCO Chair on Community Media, University of Hyderabad, India, describes initiatives in India on the integration of mobile phone with community radio. [Also when not immediately referring to income generation through social media, we are pleased to share these examples.] The most prominent is called Mobile Vaani (Voice) initiated by Gram Vaani (Voice of the Village, a firm that describes itself as a “social tech” company based in New Delhi. Mobile Vaani is labelled as “our answer to building a social media platform equivalent to Facebook/YouTube/Twitter for rural areas.” “An intelligent IVR (interactive voice response) system was built that allows people to call into a number and leave a message about their community, or listen to messages left by others. Their initial deployment in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand apparently now gets over 100,000 users, discussing wide ranging issues on culture, local updates and announcements, and government schemes. Taking a social entrepreneurship approach, the company proposes to generate detailed analytics on reach and demographics, which they suggest can be monetized. For more information see, <http://www.gramvaani.org/>.

Maraa, a media and arts collective (maraa.in) based in Bangalore, recently conducted a small study on the use of Mobile Vaani by stations. With the support of Mobile Vaani, an IVR service was provided for each radio station for a continuous period of five weeks, during which all call costs were borne by the company, Maraa or the radio station, making the service essentially free for community members. They have collected aggregate data (compiled across four CR stations across five weeks) on how many calls were made by how many callers, how many audio items were created, how many published, how many heard, how many skipped and so on. I am not at liberty to share the actual findings yet. But, let me flag some key issues that came up for discussion when this study was presented recently. One was that IVR could be an extremely useful service if there was a way of managing the call costs involved as well as that of managing large amount of content generated by the IVR system (total calls exceeded 20,000 during the five weeks, with average call duration of nearly 8-10 minutes). Other questions raised include: How to manage the large volume of content generated by IVR for repurposing (back on IVR and/or on FM) – and subsequently, to address the volume question, should users pay for the call? Who should have control over the data as well as meta-data generated by IVR, and what privacy protocols are desirable in this situation?”

Prof. Paravala considers himself “still somewhat old-fashioned about community radio” and he is “not fully convinced about the role and potential of mobile phone or the Internet in community radio, especially in



poor, deprived, and disconnected regions of the world. A big question is: Would the interactive nature of telephony be in some sense a distraction or distortion of radio as we understand it today?"

Nyang'ori Ohenjo, Administrative and Programmes Advisor at Baliti FM, comments that "in Kenya we often operate amongst very poor populations, and hence it would be very challenging to even think about premium charges. In Isiolo County for instance, the poverty rate according to government statistics stands at about 73 per cent. Most of these people are the ones targeted by the radio. ... I must clarify that the success of such initiative will entirely be dependent on the various socio-economic factors prevailing at any given time, at a particular location."

John Goslino, Internews finds it "interesting that it is possible in Kenya to generate income from a share of telecom fees from text messaging ... but it may be difficult to get listeners to pay premium rates unless they feel they are getting more value or so strongly value the station that they would be willing to donate by paying a price premium."

Peter Erichs, Consultant, SIDA, getting back to the discussion about public funds, asks for experiences about Uganda's Rural Community Development Fund, and whether it is correct that this public fund is built from a small percentage of telecom operators earnings. Could a fund like this be used to pay costs for callers using a specific phone number to reach a local station through SMS, in order to contribute to the program? (<http://africanmediainitiative.org/content/2013/07/17/Mobile-Media-Services-at-Sub-Saharan-African-Newspapers-A-Guide.pdf>)

Peter Erichs and Sofie Jannusch share the information that "World Association of Newspapers WAN and African Media Initiative AMI, together with a number of African newspapers, carried out a pilot project, a few years ago, to promote narrow-casting of news using mobile and SMS. Results and conclusions were mixed. (see report: http://www.wan-ifra.org/system/files/field_article_file/Mobile_Media_Services_Sub-Saharan_African_Newspapers_R1.pdf)

Abraham Mariita, Media & Communication Enthusiast, shared further details about the Ghetto FM strategy, asked for by several members of the discussion forum.: "One thing that I failed to mention is that Ghetto FM also used to distribute and sell, greeting cards. These are cards purchased for a few shillings, about five times the amount of sending or receiving an SMS, the cards are filled by the buyers with greetings addressed to their friends families or relatives. They are then brought back to the station, usually in the evening, and will be read on air, this was popular but not generating much income. So with the use of ICTs, we thought the strategy I talked about, could be more efficient to convert the Greeting Card users, to use premium SMS services to send their greetings and much more, for slightly less, also considering the previous users of low cost SMS. It is therefore important to base this strategy to a previous experience/research that you may have had" "Remember that what may work here, does not necessarily mean will work for you. It is important to have a consultative and active participation planning of any idea or strategy with your stakeholders and generally audience."

"The cost implication is generally high, it is advisable to seek funding from other development partners if you intend to use such a strategy. ... Again, build that awareness, and if possible, consider doing a pilot first.!"

Abraham Mariita continues that just as David Omwoyo said earlier, the revenue is shared between the station and the mobile service provider, usually at a 70/30 basis in favour of the station. The Cost implication is significant, because it will depend on the premium number used, there are some that are unique ex. 4444, 2020 this may cost more (because of its ease to remember) approx. USD 5,000 and a number like 3423 or 4561 which will cost less approx. USD 1,700. The cost covers all the mobile service



providers in the country, so as to allow people with different subscribers to SMS the station on the same number. Revenue is collected monthly from all the service providers, who will subtract their rates before paying the station its dues.

Another cost to consider is the setup cost for a software platform for reading SMS and following statistics and data, which is approx. USD 300. You may need airtime, to sometimes send out messages to the audience who you usually interact with, or blast messages to promote a radio show. Some other budgeting areas are for acquiring a SIM card hub device, internet, phone handset, cabling with audio console and training need for radio staff. “

Off-air income generation

Several contributions were made in the Spanish stream:

Humberto Vandebulke shares an example of Radio Seybo in the Dominican Republic, running a farm and selling agricultural goods (directly and to a super market). To reduce energy costs, the radio decided to install a solar system for the transmitters – high investments right now, but a lot of savings later on!

Jose Rios tells that “to complement” the radio station, they are about to install a cable TV system, expecting some additional income for the radio.

Ana Miriam shares the observation that parallel enterprises also require professional management to be successful – “and this capacity is often missing. Somehow, these enterprises (aiming at generating additional income) suffer from the same lack of management/marketing etc. competence as the radio station itself.” Ana mentions positive examples from El Salvador, from the Radios Victoria, Izcanal and Segundo Montes. And she demands: “we need to be up-to-date with technological developments etc. and be faithful to our own mission/vision/(proyecto politico-comunicacional) (communication-political project) in order to really offer a strong and convincing alternative to commercial stations.”

Javier Espitia suggests that radio stations can also offer professional recording services, e.g. for local music; the example mentioned is "Verde Estereo" in Nariño, Colombia.

Radio networks to raise income

Christoph Dietz, CAMECO, informs that a Spanish translation of the article of Cecilia Valderrama on the advertising agency of the Coordinadora Nacional de Radio (CNR) in Peru is now available on the CAMECO website. The article describes strategies for community radio associations to get state and commercial advertisements <http://www.cameco.org/files/agencia-publicidad-cnr-2006.pdf>

Rigobert Malalako, Director and founder of Radio Bangu, Kimpense, Bas-Congo, DRC and also General Secretary of the 'Federation des Radios de Proximité du Congo' (RDC) and publisher of the Directory of the community radios in DRC ("Annuaire des Radios Communautaires de la RDC") shares his experience of collecting in-kind goods and money for the purchase of a diesel oil generation, with colleagues of the Radio. This is done by a team from the Local Development Committee visiting the villages accompanied by a facilitator – "flagship" of the radio – to raise the contribution of listeners. The communities were informed about the visit through radio announcements, where to deliver their products, like: maize, cassava, pineapple, vegetables and so on. “It is often a challenge to transport and preserve the products, so they need to be sold quickly to be able to buy the few litres of fuel to operate the radio. Other sources of income are rare, and the radio has important challenges.”



Fr. Maurice Milandou of Radio Magnificat, Brazzaville, Congo, tells that the contribution of the Christian community in the financing of Radio Magnificat has been a concern since its inception and the beginning of its activities in March 2005. “We involve the President of the Episcopal Conference of Congo, and several bishops to challenge Catholic Christians about their duty to participate in the life of this evangelical tool belonging to the Church. And the Church is not only the bishops, priests, monks or nuns. It is everybody!” “We know, we need to create awareness that having a radio requires support. At Radio Magnificat, we put spots on the radio, to call for help. We asked for in-kind support like reams of paper, a few litre of diesel, CDs, blank DVDs , supplies of all kinds. The operation was successful! It also helps, to have live programmes with listener participation. Furthermore we started a small audio-visual production unit: Recording, editing , CD duplication of choral works or religious groups (from Radio). “