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## Hello All!

**We have gotten off to a great beginning in all 3 languages and new participants keep signing up!**

**Below you find 3 themes for today's debate inspired by your contributions, followed by a summary of contributions from all streams.**

**Looking forward to follow your contributions onwards!**

**- birgitte**

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Hello! This is your facilitator greeting you. We have gotten off to a great beginning! Thank you to all of you for important issues, experiences and suggestions. This first summary saw in all three language streams initial suggestions on how to look at income generation for community radio and a number of critical issues came up, which for the coming 24 hours will be separate themes for discussions in the three language streams. For now, April 1<sup>st</sup> (no April fool), let us try to concentrate on three different issues raised in all three languages. And you are welcome to use the examples presented here:

<http://www.cameco.org/english/resources/Radio-and-Participation/>

### **The three questions resulting from today's debate are:**

- Financial sustainability is intrinsically connected to social sustainability several debaters insisted. Some examples were given of how usefulness of the station and its programmes as well as its openness and accountability financially could attract listener support. More concrete examples from individual radio stations of how social sustainability can strengthen financial sustainability?
- Community participation in income generation can be done in many ways. If the community does not have money, they may have crops and other in-kind contributions to share. Please share concrete examples of this?
- From Niger, Uganda and India the challenge of externally initiated stations can make sustainability of a station complicated in the longer run. Inappropriate technical configuration, lack of 'true' community commitment are some of the problems mentioned for these potentially "white elephants" in our community radio world. Any concrete examples of both the problems, but also stories of how to turn this around?

### **Today's summary of the three language streams:**

**In the Spanish stream** Eduardo from Radio Oriente in the north eastern part of the Peruvian Amazonas. Eduardo stresses that when looking for financial sustainability, the need to have a strong social sustainability comes first. And as Arturo from Radio Viva in Asunción, Paraguay, agrees, stressing that all begins with the mobilisation and engagement of the community, which is the basis for both social and financial sustainability: without the community participation, the future will be very uncertain.

When asked to be very specific in terms of HOW financial sustainability – income – is generated, Eduardo tells that in Radio Oriente in Peru, they call a community meeting twice a year, where they ask the community to share important proposals and needs for the radio to ensure a dialogue with the authorities. They do the same with the communal authorities, the unions, associations, movements, associations. These meetings are the basis for an environment of open dialogue and participation. As Eduardo says: "We go to



them and they come to us". This is also the way to ensure their financial support. (We will need to ask Eduardo: How? For tomorrow!)

In a different discussion stream in the Spanish section, Ana Miriam, a consultant from El Salvador, stresses that the financial challenges were born with the notion of community radio and this challenge persists: she has still not been able to find the magic formula for sustainability, which is also the situation for most community radios in her country. Still, however, she is an eternal believer in the importance of the role of Community Radio.

Daniela, the Director of CAMECO comments that she does not believe that there is any one "magic formula", but that every radio has to find its own way. And Arturo from Radio Viva in Peru agrees that it would be great to share and read about the different strategies put in place in the different countries taking part in our debate, and along with Christoph from CAMECO asks: which strategies worked, and which did not? And why?

And from Colombia, University professor and advisor in communication, development and social change stresses that economic sustainability of community radio is closely linked with the quality of participation in and around the radio and its radio production. This is what he and his students from two universities have found in several research processes. Clemencia Rodrigues, University professor and community media specialist based at the University of Oklahoma agrees firmly: sustainability goes hand in hand with the community's level of appreciation of their station.

**In the French stream** Alymana agrees with the theme of the discussion, asking which conditions can favour a financial sustainability, and he calls for concrete examples. And Michel, CAMECO, answers that this is the reason for and theme of this debate, agreeing that there are different aspects which all contribute to success, or difficulty, or even for stations to fail, stressing that mobilization of the community is central to generate income for community stations.

Achille, college teacher in Niger proposes that there are three main aspects needed to make a community radio sustainable. He believes it is possible if: (i) The radio responds to a real need of the people. In many cases stations are started by some people who like the idea, and think that all that is needed is some outreach. He sees communities that are pushed into this direction without any understanding of what will then be required from them to keep it going, (ii) The radio is on a human scale. Today, with the evolution of technology, we still need community radio on a human scale, with material that fits well into the context and which can be taken over by the community. It is necessary that the community members master the entire chain. (iii) When the community can see that the radio is not an external 'thing', but of use in their lives, they can maybe not support with money, but in kind, through sharing of grain, cattle and poultry: the radio can see how much of that is needed for running costs for one year? In conclusion Achille stresses that many stations today live with 'the return of the boomerang' of those who have started a radio in a non-participatory way. If the community cannot support a radio: do not offer it! Even if we from the outside are convinced that it will bring a lot to the community.

Michel of CAMECO refers to Radio Salaki located in a rural area in Burkina Faso. This radio has established a department in charge of audience relations. The listeners are organised in the villages as a kind of fan clubs called "the faithful listeners of Radio Salaki" ("Fidèles Auditeurs de Radio Salaki" (FAURS)). In each village, there is a FAURS board; one person is specifically in charge of the marketing at the level of the village; the income generated from sale of listeners' cards and from music dedications are shared between the village FAURS group and the radio station.



**In the English stream,** John of Internews, Australia, proposes, just like our colleague from Niger above, to look at in-kind contribution from the community and the rationale for and experience with different funding (cash and in-kind) models from single-source to multi-source, then explore different variants (and components) of these models and why they have worked/not worked/not been adopted in different countries and contexts. And Alymana, Consultant and AMARC Africa Coordinator, stresses the important distinction of the background paper for this debate, highlighting both external and internal aspects of importance for sustainability. The lack of a clear vision of many stations which actually do not advance participation of the people of the community is an important reason for the lack of sustainability in many radios, considering it rather as a gift from foreign donors or from benevolent agents from the community.

And very much in the same line, Vinod, Professor & UNESCO Chair on Community Media, University of Hyderabad, raises the question of developing countries, especially in Africa and Asia, where the role of donor agencies has been very significant in supporting community radio, and he asks for experiences with such models, where much of the setting up costs and the initial capacity-building expenses in many cases are taken care of by national/international organisations. How sustainable is this model, he asks?

From Northern Uganda, the town of Lira, Ojok Moses, Managing Director at Genehen Broadcasting Services, raises four elements going into community radio sustainability from his experience and point of view: (i) First of all community and local radios should form local and regional network to help them stand a better chance to win support, as it is easier to fundraise as a group. The network can write a fundraising proposals jointly, and request partnerships from places like the local health sanitation, agriculture, human rights, HIV/AIDS, Child abuse etc. This can bring money in the network, which distributes to stations, (ii) Radios should inform their listeners and stakeholders about their financial situation to ensure financial accountability. Then it will be easier to also on air solicit support from listeners and stakeholders, when they understand well the financial situation of the station. (iii) The stations should scan their communities to know more about critical issues and look at raising money through social events like the "let's run for water" in northern Vietnam, where participants (who are the listeners) pay some amount of money to register for such events. Money raised should go to a good course and some percentage left to aid radio's operation. This can help radio to win respect from the community they serve and they will remain loyal and alert to keep supporting such events. (iv) Community and local radios should raise money through sales of branded promotional items like T-shirts, caps, Diaries with radio logo on them at affordable prices. "We do this in Northern Uganda", Ojok Moses says. The Catholic, Anglican churches always print t-shirts and caps for sale when they are commemorating days like martyrs, 100 years when gospel reached Uganda, believers from all walks of life always flock their offices to buy. This model can even work better for radio stations, listeners know that radio drives development and most of them like to be identified as staunch supporter/listener of a particular radio station."

Clemencia, Professor at the University of Oklahoma, tells that in Colombia community radios frequently receive government funds to establish the station. However, in order to sustain the station, they need to figure out their own financing. "I've see very creative initiatives, such as, for example, a radio station that sold "radio serenades" broadcasting with a mobile unit from the house of the person receiving the serenade".

A lot of experience, suggestions and open questions for further debate!

Warmest,

- birgitte