



## DEBATE SUMMARY 07 APRIL

### Highlights from the debate over the weekend

Welcome back to the second of two weeks of online debate on income generation. We will close the debate Thursday noon, April 10. So now is the time to share your inputs in the open debate fora!!!

#### On-air income generation

##### **From the English stream:**

Njuki Githethwa, Coordinator at Kenya Community Media Network(KCOMNET) mentions that advertising for community radio in Kenya is allowed by Kenya Communications (Broadcasting) Regulations, 2009, (5) The Commission shall allow community broadcasting licensees to advertise, on their stations, "adverts that are relevant and specific to that community within the broadcast area".

"This is further clarified in the Guidelines for Application of Community Broadcasting Service Licence (September 2011) where community radio stations are prohibited from carrying commercial advertising, but may broadcast sponsorship announcements not exceeding duration limits as may be specified in the licence. In a workshop last week for community radio stations and stakeholders, we discussed these clauses with our legal adviser and agreed to strengthen local advertising strategies among CRs as extra sources of revenue. As for now, a few are engaged in low-scale advertising of the businesses in their locations (salons, shops, private schools, etc) and program sponsorships."

Jimmy Okello, Station manager Radio APAC, Lango Subregion, Uganda, shares their experiences with on air income generation: one method we have tried and failed at our Radio Apac was to change from receiving payment for greetings cards to using SMS media for greetings and messages. This is where an SMS company assigns you a SMS short code and you use this for the listeners to send their messages. There is a markedup charge for the SMS, and the Radio station, the SMS provider and telecom company are supposed to share from this cost.

However there has been low uptake of this sms short code by the local audience because it is more expensive than sending the usual text sms message to the existing message line. However when a leading beverage company comes to run a campaign through the station, and uses its own short code for sending messages to win a car in a bottle top competition, the response is very high and we are ranked as one of the leading stations in that campaign. But we do not share in the proceeds of the short code though we earn some advertising fee from the beverage company for that one month campaign. Still, I think it is a good way to generate on air income especially for CRs in cities and big municipalities where the phone SMS culture is good and airtime spend is available and affordable.

For CRs in lower spending economies and smaller budgets perhaps using a smaller prize like Airtime winning or cell phone or use the short code and enter a draw to win a bicycle etc, may work. When we tried the gift offer of airtime, listeners insisted they want to win airtime using the old SMS system. Maybe we should upgrade our offer to a better appropriate attractive affordable gift? The short code is still there, but with little traffic. Some providers do not charge for it...

John Goslino, Internews Australia answers that Jimmy's experience (above) suggests an understanding of the market, audience wants and preferences. He proposes that perhaps the SMS code with sur-charge could have been promoted as a station fund-raiser to add to the value proposition? If people are made aware of the purpose of a campaign or service they may be more willing to support it.

Different aspects of on-air income generation were mentioned in different discussions in the Spanish stream without explaining mechanisms in-depth:



- Renting of airspace for other organisations (however, this should be done carefully. Radio Santa Clara, Costa Rica, does not rent airspace, but discusses with possible partners their programme concept, and if the proposal fits in the overall programming of the station, the partner gets the airspace free of charge, but part of his advertising income goes to the station)
- Advertising
- Radio production on behalf of other organisations (contract work)

### Off-air income generation

#### **From the Spanish stream:**

Arturo E. Bregaglio, Director of Radio VIVA, shares their experience with successful off-air income generation by cooperatively running a station – and then in parallel opening a "business unit" called MANGO Producción y Eventos (production and events). They generate 58% of the income required for the running of the station (more in the Spanish stream "Participación e ingresos para las radios...").

#### **From the English stream:**

Loli Martinez, IREX Mozambique, asks about experiences with listener clubs as fundraising tool. "The idea would be to make an assessment about likes or needs in the community related with any kind of services and after that use this information to design fundraising kits to go through the local advertisers. Something similar as advertisement agencies that select a group and ask them about the product and about spots?" IREX is right now working on development of such a tool.

Birgitte Jallof, the facilitator of this debate adds that "quite a number of community radio stations I know as a side activity record local bands in their studio! It was big in some of the community radios in Niger, in Mozambique, in Zimbabwe, in Zambia, South Africa... there are many. And then produce CDs that the groups can use to promote their music and for sale! Furthermore in Lao PDR with the advent of the small pilot stations emerging since 2007 (now there are 4, soon 6 on air) one of 'runners' is the recording of the music of the ethnic groups – traditional music. This is the favoured music by young and older alike, and one of the important reasons given for the popularity of the new, stations."

Michael Arbirk mentions experiences from Radio Karagwe in Tanzania. His vision is that radio broadcasts can be combined with other kinds of publishing: "First that broadcasts are sold. It could be an income generating tool for the listener clubs in the villages. The broadcasts could be sold in many ways: by burning on CDs, transfer to USB-flash or to memory cards and by podcasting to cell phones. Second: Reading of smaller books in the radio and hence sale of the books and sale of the reading as explained above. Third: Newsletters. A local newsletter could be a folded piece of paper printed on both sides, with important issues of the week, a short story, announcements etc. Listener clubs could again be the outlets giving them income. Printing could be done locally if the number of copies is low. Fourth: A book store selling relevant books, which can cited in the various programs. E.g. around agriculture. (Accounting may be a problem) Fifth: Book publishing. To copy relevant materials. Get local fairy tales printed. Print materials for tourists. and more."

Other aspects mentioned for off air income generation form different discussion in the Spanish stream:

- State funding
- International cooperation
- Festivals and cultural events
- Selling of other products (books, magazines)
- Internet cafés



- Libraries
- Radio bar
- Radio training workshops for others
- Membership fees (e.g. case of Radio Cuanquiera, Paraná, Argentina, and Radio Samad FM) or "Club of Friends" of Radio Enriquillo in Dominican Republic which organized a "Club de Amigos", but stopped this initiative because it lacked a person dedicated full time to it. But in Radio ABC in Santo Domingo, also in the Dominican Republic, the "Club de Amigos" is reported to work quite well).

### Using community radio networks to raise income

#### **From the English stream on this theme:**

Njuki Githethwa, Coordinator at Kenya Community Media Network (KCOMNET) describes the "tricky venture" when CR stations agree with government agencies on promotion of development issues or good governance and are considered "middle body". This is "a position which creates tensions/conflicts, especially with those radios which prefer to engage directly with the sponsors/donors".

"Our idea even as we explore engagements in collective marketing and advertising for community radio is to build partnerships with the willing for comparative advantage as we have done in other programme areas: Networking, capacity building, content development and policy advocacy. CRs willing to go alone are free to do so for as we put it, we are not a voice of the voiceless as none of our members has or should lose their voice. All what we do is to amplify community voices. The radios are the voices."

#### **From the French stream on this theme:**

Idrissa Ousseini, Station manager at the Niamey, Niger-based youth community radio station Boukoki, and coordinator of a network of rural community radios, joins the debate, stressing that financing is an internal challenge in Africa, not least in his country, Niger, one of the poorest African countries. "Primarily the funding of our radios comes from civil society and from international organisations working for development. This, however is hard to access as each partner has their specific areas of interest. We are therefore now presenting a proposal to the state, to provide access to a specific fund to support community radios. As something new, in Niger, community radios are also allowed now to use advertisement on air. We look forward to explore that!"

Pascal Chirhalwirwa, from Panos Central Africa, joins us: Even though populations and community radio networks really wanted to support the community radios, it is difficult when faced with the poverty in which these stations operate. Income generation is therefore one of the core objectives of many networks that have been established: In the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), we have RATECO (Réseau des Radios et Télévisions de l'Est de la RDC – the network of radio and TV in the east of DRC). This was created 2003/4 to strengthen solidarity and collaboration between the member radios and TV stations. And RATECO has, through international support, been able to support several stations with improved equipment and training of staff. In DRC's western provinces, it is RATEPROKA (Réseau des Radios et Télévisions de la Province Orientale – the network of radios and TV stations in the western provinces) that supports the stations. This was started in 2006/7. Similarly in Burundi it is the ABR (l'Association des Radios Burundaises – The association of radios in Burundi) and in the Central African Republic support comes via ARC (Association des Radios Communautaires de Centrafrique – the association of community radios in Central African Republic). This was created with Panos support in 2009. Programmes are taking place in collaboration and coordinated by the networks and supported by international NGOs which does, actually support also the financial situation of the member radios. Unfortunately I do not know of any studies documenting this all.

It would be my recommendation that the networks of community radios to document the situation and to identify new ways of mobilisation funding.



### **From the Spanish stream on this theme:**

One of the main strengths of community radios in Latin America has been their network activities, says Pedro Sánchez, executive secretary of the Latin American Radio Education Association ALER, be it in content production, educational campaigns, civil society mobilization, experience sharing or fundraising. Among the most common income generation activities of the national networks belonging to ALER are:

- \* common advertising salesman for all network stations
- \* advertising agency of the national network which not only looks for advertisements, but also produces spots and PR materials
- \* contracts with public or private entities and NGOs for the design, implementation and monitoring of educational campaigns
- \* participation in national or regional development programmes on issues like human rights, environmental protection, citizen participation etc.
- \* (paid) training of journalists on specific issues.

Marlon Hernández adds that income generated by the national network, together with support from friends and allies like Churches and political parties during election campaigns has been vital for financial sustainability. She states that the radios should - within the national association - commonly develop sustainability strategies.

The advantage of community radio networks or associations in comparison to huge commercial radios (with its headquarter in the capital city) are their ample, even national, coverage, and their "different" audiences (regarding their interests and needs), says Daniela Frank from CAMECO. Therefore they need personal dedicated to marketing and the selling of advertising.

Humberto Vandenbulcke explains that the 95 community radios in Dominican Republic face various limitations, e.g., they are not allowed to tackle political issues. They should create a collective or association in order to apply for public funds, but also to develop training activities for the member stations and to develop radio productions which could be used by the whole network. If the stations continue to work alone in their limited local environment, they will not reach the necessary level to be more appreciated, both by the public and private sectors.

### **Effective strategic management of Community Radios – for stable income generation**

#### **From the English stream:**

Njuki Githethwa, Coordinator at Kenya Community Media Network(KCOMNET): Radio Mang'elele(RM), the oldest community radio in Kenya, was on the verge of being taken over completely by feuding local politicians in 2011. "I stepped in through KCOMNET and with the support of a local funding agency known as Akiba Uhaki Foundation(AUF), undertook strategic planning for the station and capacity building sessions for the board of directors and staffs.

Njuki reports about concrete results in management and staffing, and positive developments, i.e. empowered board of directors took control and became independent from politicians, expenses could be covered.

"The roles and responsibilities between the board and staff were now clearer with each structure playing respective roles respectfully. Radio Mang'elele is not yet financially sufficient, but they are on that path with the support of all of us. "

" Lessons learnt:

1) A strategic plan is key to any community radio station. It's a new direction, a new way which provides a variety of alternatives. This new way is bound to rough up in a bad way some people who wants the status quo to remain or do not want the new way for their own reasons.



2) It all depends on appropriate and competent LEADERSHIP at the board and management levels.

The Strategic Planning document of Radio Mang'elete is available under <http://www.cameco.org/english/resources/Radio-and-Participation/>

### **Collaboration with local and national governments**

#### **From the Spanish stream**

The importance of participatory budgeting for community radios is highlighted by Asunta Montoya from Signis Latin America. Many local governments in countries like Argentina, Chile, Ecuador and Peru use participatory budget mechanisms to define and manage their investments in local development. However, few community radios have actively participated in participatory budgeting. Radios should actively participate in these debates to help local governments to develop and establish public communication policies and funds; a certain part of public budgets could be dedicated to communications. And active participation in participatory budgeting mechanisms is also a chance for community radios to become directly involved into the needs and interests of the community.

Pedro Sánchez, executive secretary of the Latin American Radio Education Association ALER, stresses the need to lobby for the democratization of communication. And he adds that the collaboration between local governments and radios could go beyond the support of educational or health campaigns and result in common activities which guarantee the economic and material support (or even support in staff) by the governments.