



SUMMARY 8 April 2014

Social media and community radio

As a former Station Manager at Ghetto FM, a community radio station in Nairobi, Abraham Mariita took part in the formulation of a social media interaction project that was aimed at harnessing the power of social media and mobile phones to increase revenue for the station. "Due to the overwhelming number of SMS based messages and interactions that the station received, they saw the need to incorporate a mobile premium number charging a few shillings (2 or 3) higher than normal SMS charging rates, to turn the interaction into income for the station. With this we sought to create a platform that would bring together our followers from Twitter and Facebook and the SMS based system, so that all conversations/interactions are visible to every 'participant'. The idea was to ensure that all SMS received, were also transmitted instantly into facebook; facebook was linked with Twitter, which therefore means that what appears on facebook also appears on Twitter. Therefore, we were able to reach all the audiences: Those listening Online (Facebook, Twitter) and those listening in Live (Interacting through Call-ins and mostly SMS). To enable the interaction on all platforms and at the same time generating some income. This is an idea that could be implemented in any community radio station."

Sofie Jannusch, Coordinator of media development, and Matongo Maumbi, Producer at Creative South Productions, request more details on that great model.

From the French stream, Michel Philippart, Project Research Africa Desk, CAMECO, mentioned that a few weeks ago a conference was held in Strasbourg on "Information and radio journalism in the digital age". There were many ideas that could inspire this debate Aude Jimenez, a researcher at the University of Quebec in Montreal talked about "Information and participation within the African community radio: what prospects for the "digital age" ? and wonders " how these radios who have the least money will make the transition to digital with all the financial constraints it poses priority?". Marie- Soleil Frère, social scientist of the Free University of Brussels, specializing in African media, talked about "Trainers, facilitators or saviors? Perception of journalists and radio listeners in the Great Lakes region." She argues that the switch to digital may be the opening of a very pluralistic radio, increasing the participation of listeners and profoundly changing the way journalists work – both their access to information, resource persons, witnesses and actors. Frère stresses that today citizens can use the internet-based radios to mobilise and many more can take part in the production of information, and share their views on what is happening in their country." Michel Philippart's question is whether these changes in participation have consequences also in the strategies, methods and ways to fund radios?

To read the full article on the website of the Media workshop and listen to the show as a podcast:

<http://tinyurl.com/nwnqxrj>



Better management for better income generation in community radio?

„REPOSITIONING COMMUNITY RADIO MANG'ELETE, STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2015“ is available now at the CAMECO website: http://www.cameco.org/files/radio_mangelete_strategic_plan_1.pdf Birgitte Jallo, Debate facilitator, stresses the importance of a strong board in community radios – also for income generation: „A board, representing as many different interests within the community as possible - communities within the community –, and at the same time, a board with capacity and willingness to mentor the community radio's staff: i.e. one person with a good financial management understanding, one with good coordination skills, one with knowledge about effective programme production, one with good community contacts (maybe a traditional leader) who can support the community mobilisation, one who has technical skills, etc.“Where I have seen this work, it has given a powerful balance – and taken the pressure off the station manager/coordinator and a few others to be the only 'champions'! And yes, with a strategic plan, developed with the involvement of all relevant groups, that is regularly updated and USED – then you have the basis for all the rest.“

Michael Arbirk shared an evaluation of Radio Karagwe FM to exemplifying some of the strengths and weaknesses of a community radio in the reality of Tanzania:

http://www.cameco.org/files/karagwe_radio_evaluation_report_and_annex.pdf

On-air income generation

Matongo Maumbi, Creative Producer at Creative South Productions, continues yesterday's discussion on on-air income generation, agreeing that "listeners in rural communities are very skeptic on their spending and being charged extra (when sending SMS' to the community radio station] without a good understanding of why, will find that it is a way to favour participation by those 'with money'!" Father Jose Victor Lobrigo, Philippines, reports about his radio's interfacing with a community social enterprise (MICROFINANCE OR MFI). „The MFI runs a programme with the radio with captive audience in the community, which then in turn contributes to the running of the radio itself. This also applies to other social development initiatives that need media exposure for other communities.“ [We have asked for details.]

Off-air income generation

Petra Stammen, Africa Desk, CAMECO, shares the experience of Radio Veritas in South Africa, which raises funds with a lottery for winning a pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi. Entry into the draw for the place on the pilgrimage is a certain amount (e.g. ZAR 200 / 19 USD), which will go to support South Africa's only Catholic radio station. Participants send an SMS to a given number beginning with, for instance, the word HOLY, the age of Pope Francis and their name. In return they receive an SMS from Radio Veritas indicating the bank account into which they should deposit the money and further simple instructions to follow. The deposit is a lottery ticket, the prize the place in the pilgrimage. "One person had bought thirty tickets but in the end did not want to be in the lucky draw. She wished only to support Radio Veritas. Others had bought up to ten tickets. People had been really considerate and generous in this fairly tight financial time" says Radio Veritas.



http://www.radioveritas.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1354:rome-and-assisi-draw&catid=47:news&Itemid=140

John Goslino, Internews, supports Michel Aarbirks earlier idea of selling community radio programmes and earn some income in this way, and stresses a rather "market economy" approach: "Most community radios are not substantially re-purposing/re-using their content and distributing it to increase awareness (get more listeners), better serve existing listeners (improve satisfaction) and make money (or get other resources, perhaps via barter). This limits radio effectiveness. It is understandable that many radios would be uncertain about the feasibility of producing, selling and distributing radio content especially in relatively poor communities but a proper situational analysis can identify the opportunities and challenges, and suggest possible strategies. Engaging people in the community including small retailers and listener club members to help deliver the strategy increases the level of community participation (and listeners) in the radio."

Collaboration between community radios & local or national governments

Geovanni Acate from Radio Oriente in Yurimaguas, Peru, tells about the "National Roundtable for the Recognition of Community Education Knowledge" which includes the Network of Urban and Rural Municipalities, the National Community and Environment Education Department (a state entity), the Community Education Collective and the community radio association CNR. The roundtable aims to coordinate common activities, in order to promote participative budgeting, public investment projects, and local development plans to be agreed among local governments and communities.

Humberto Vandebulcke, consultant, describes government support to educational radios in the Dominican Republic: the national planification office of the central government (ONAPLAN) supports radios with a monthly subsidy for their educational services. In 2013, the radio network UDECA and the Education Ministry signed a contract about a national alphabetization campaign. The radios animate students to participate, provide assistance to them and dedicate airspace to the campaigns. The government pays for these services with reasonable sums. In a similar way, the "Ministry of Women" (Ministerio de la Mujer) and UDECA collaborate in the development of a campaign for the prevention of gender violence.

Pedro Sánchez, Executive Director of ALER, tells about a national meeting of 30 communication cooperatives in Argentina on March 29, 2014, in Buenos Aires, where 50 participants discussed concrete ways to strengthen community communication. A web portal called "Colmena" (Beehive), aimed at sharing contents, will be launched in few weeks. The representative of the Federal Authority for Audiovisual Communication Services (Afsca) explained the different government support lines for community media (Fomeca), offered help when the radios presented their projects and manifested his interest to hear the proposals of the communication cooperatives and to establish common actions.

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