Love Your Community Radio Training Manual

'Rallying Communities Behind Their Community Radio Stations'

CONTENTS

1 ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide seeks to inform and educate communities about community media its role in the development of communities. With this guide we envisage to work with communities to raise awareness of and encourage communities to claim their stake in the governance of community media and to actively advocate for sustainable funding models to ensure that community media remains an important cog in the dissemination of and education of society. We hope this guide will help communities to claim back this medium for its initial intended purposes.

2 BACKGROUND

The term communication embodies notions of access and participation through media. Communication reflects concerns about the individual's role in shaping their own socio-political, cultural and economic environment. Centralization was intended to free people of certain responsibilities - such as the onus of keeping law and order, providing water, sanitation, transport and education - and institutions were set up to carry out these tasks collectively. Where all areas of decision are removed, the individual becomes powerless and passive. The application of access and participation invariably involves communications. communication and media then become the vehicles through which practical participatory democracy might be applied.

Present day democracies operate at a remove from the community. We elect representatives once every three to five years, and during that time, the voice of the individual or group has little influence on government decision-making. Although most countries do provide routes of direct access to elected members, the procedure is cumbersome and difficult to pursue.

All community media embrace some or all of these principles, and apply them in different ways and degrees, depending on their local and national contexts. At the same time, if people have access to communications media, they can use them to request further information, and convey their views to others. The media, when placed in the hands of the community might become the machinery through which participation in the socio-political sphere is achieved.

The importance of community media

According to the African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights drawn up in 1981, "every individual shall have the right to receive information. Every individual shall have the right to disseminate his opinions within the law." (Ansah, 1988:14).

1. **Information dissemination:** Community media is an important tool to counter state propaganda.
2. **Education:** Educate the masses about their rights and facilitate the building of strong community organization and foster active citizenry (citizen participation in the democratic processes).
3. **Opportunities for community activism:** Community media affords the community an opportunity to inform, partake in decision making and contribute towards popular discourse in ensuring voices of the minority, interest groups and the disenfranchised

4. **Transformation (socially, governance and ownership):** Community media enables the community to consume media that is created for them by representatives who are interested in improving the well-being of the community.

3 DEFINING COMMUNITY MEDIA

Community media is:

- Media to which members of the community have access (for information, education, entertainment) when they want access.
- Media in which the community participates, as planners, producers, performers. They are the means of expression of the community (rather than for the community).
- Is an exchange of views and news, not a transmission from one source to another.

Community media are any form of media that function in service of a community. A community can refer to a geographical area, a cultural identity or another concept linking people together. Community media represent a separate entity and are fundamentally different from private and public media. This term can also be used to describe the grassroots movement of people to create their own local media initiatives.

Community media may be defined in terms of the opportunities available to the public to choose varied and relevant programmes, and to have a means of feedback to transmit its reactions and demands to production organizations. Participation implies a higher level of public involvement in the production process, and also in the management and planning of communication systems.

There are also many definitions in the growing number of charters, statements, and manuals that are emerging. However, there is agreement on four principles that are seen as pillars of community broadcasting:

1. Community ownership and control
2. Community service
3. Community participation
4. A nonprofit business model

4 DEFINING OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA

> *"Community media are becoming increasingly recognized for their value in connecting with hard-to-reach and marginalized populations. Because they are local and participatory, they reach people in a way that is sensitive to local cultures, and in local languages and dialects."*

The context that community radio stations exist in is that of Political restraints, stemming from ideological stances, access and participation that challenges traditional hierarchies. Resistance is likely from influential persons, 'leaders' and groups, such as those in the commercial sector, or in bureaucratic spheres. These 'leaders' see their status quo threatened both by the socio-political implications of access and participation

and the practice of these notions through an opening up of communication systems to the wider community. The closed doors of media institutions represent the means through which powerful groups retain their elite status.

Problems of defining exactly what access and participation would mean in practice arise from the constraints outlined above. In support Of the Much media notions, advocates cite the right of information section in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

> *"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".*

Important aspects of community media for communities

Access:

The most recent international discussion of how this right to information section related to communications access and participation took place in Belgrade in 1977.

(a) Access by definition, infers the ability of the public to come closer to communication systems, and in concrete terms it can be related to two levels: of choice and of feedback.

At the LEVEL OF CHOICE, access includes:
- The individual right to communication materials, the right to listen to or view desired programmes, when a person wants, where he/she wants.
- The availability of a wider range of materials, the choice of which is made by the public instead of being imposed by production organizations (informational and educational materials, services and alternative programmes).
- The transmission of materials requested by the public.

At the LEVEL OF FEEDBACK, access implies:
- The interaction between producers and receivers of messages
- Direct participation by the audience during the transmission of programmes
- The right to comment and criticise. (iv) means of keeping in touch with producers, administrators and the managers of communication organizations.

Participation:

Participation implies the involvement of the public in production and in the management of communication systems. of production, decision-making and planning.

At the PRODUCTION LEVEL, participation implies:
- Unrestricted opportunities for the public (indiIt also operates at different levels - individuals or groups) to produce programmes and to have access to professional help. ties and production resources (i. e. a more advanced level of participation).

At the DECISION-MAKING LEVEL, participation implies, involvement of the public in:

- Programming: content and duration of programmes; scheduling of programmes.
- The management, administration and financing of communication organizations.

At the PLANNING LEVEL, participation comprises the right of the public to contribute to:

- The formulation of plans and policies for communication enterprises : definition of objectives, principle of management and future programming.
- The formulation of national, regional and local communication plans.
- Making available to the public technical summary, access refers to the media for public service.

Background, Context and history of Community Media in SA

Community radio in South Africa

The birth of community radio in South Africa is a classic example of community radio being born in struggle and later becoming a part of the mainstream.

South Africa's community radio sector started small, in the 1980s, pioneered by a tiny resistance organization known as CASET (the Cassette Education Trust). CASET interviewed leaders and activists of the anti-apartheid struggle and recorded speeches and debates on cassette tapes. Activists distributed the tapes at meetings and rallies so that opponents of apartheid could hear resistance news and viewpoints and the voices of their leaders, who were then barred by state radio and the white-owned mainstream press. Despite repression, arrests, and bannings, resistance media persisted under apartheid.

CASET caught the imagination of student organizations, and a community radio movement took root. The movement learnt from international organizations like AMARC, said Edric Gorfinkel, founder of CASET and pioneer of community radio in South Africa: 'We had a lot of debate about the [term] community radio and what we wanted to call it and quite honestly at the time we thought we were inventing the [term].

We thought we'd invented the concept of community radio! It was only when AMARC got hold of our stuff somehow or other, and we got this thing inviting us to send something to the World Assembly of Community Radio. And we thought whoa, hey, man—there's other people out there doing it.[2] The new movement incorporated lessons learned in the international arena into proposals for a post-apartheid radio system".

The first law defining community radio was passed in 1993—and in 1995, after liberation and amid great joy and celebration, the first community radio stations went on air. The law states that a community radio station must have the following properties:

- Fully controlled by a nonprofit body and run for nonprofit purposes
- Serves a particular community

Footnote?

- Encourages community participation in selecting and running programs
- May be funded by donations, grants, sponsorships, advertising, or membership fees, or by a combination of these methods.

To be granted a license, the station must meet all four criteria. South Africa's legal definition sees the radio frequency spectrum as a public resource. Community radio licenses represent frequencies and are held by community representatives acting on behalf of the larger community.

Ownership of the license is open to challenge, and to keep the license, the community's representatives must ensure that programming consistently serves community needs and interests. More than 100 stations have been licensed in South Africa, serving a variety of geographic communities and ethnic, cultural, and religious groups.

Community radio is today an accepted part of the media landscape, and stations compete with commercial and public radio for listeners and advertisers. According to figures published in 2008 by the South African Advertising Research Bureau, 22.6% of all South Africans over age 18 listen to community radio. This is an impressive statistic and marks steady growth from 10%–11% of the same group since the launch of the sector in 1995.

Current Context and evolution of community media:

Over the years, this role has evolved and changed to that of being a **catalyst for development**. Therefore, it is expected that this study is a continuation of the debates surrounding the role and impact of community media in **development** projects taking place in South Africa as they provide an **alternative** to mainstream media.

According to South Africa's National Community Media Forum (NCMF), community media has been largely used as "a tool to **counter state propaganda, inform, mobilise and educate the masses about their rights and to facilitate the building of strong community organisations**" (1996:7).

Congruent with this purpose, the NCMF identifies the following as the features of community media:
- Ownership & control: (by "the community through its representatives"; according to Chris Gutuza, these are organisations like religious, youth, women, civic, labour, education, cultural and sporting (1996:3);
- Non-profit: (ownership and purpose should be non-profit; NOTE: this is not a ban on commercial viability);
- Accessibility: (to its community);
- Type of community: geographical, or interest group,
- Political criterion: to service disadvantaged communities (geographical or interest group).

Each parliamentarian speaks for thousands, and his main task is to work within the political manifesto agreed by his party beforehand, and upon which he/she was elected. So, for the term of office of each government, participation in government by citizens is virtually nonexistent.

Government today is carried out by representatives, through a process of delegation. We have evolved systems which, for convenience, are representative democracies, because of the political party system, our choice on election day is limited to a choice between several different 'packages' of government. Part of the reason for evolution along these lines lies in belief about the 'good of the realm' or the state versus the good of the individual. We have mortgaged some individual freedoms for the well-being of the state as a whole, the extent to which this has been done varying between countries. about the 'good of the state' versus the freedom of the individual which has led to current interest in the notions of access and participation.
- South Africa's Independent Broadcast Authority operates with a less restrictive definition: giving out "community radio" licences to groups that do not service the disadvantaged.

The NCMF distinguishes its community media from these media groups, and it further distinguishes its constituency from what it calls "independent media", which it says do not meet all the criteria, but must at least conform to the last. From this, it is clear that for a community medium to count as such for the NCMF, it has to meet all FIVE criteria. These are linked together, and while all are necessary conditions, it is only sufficient when there are all of them. In other words, a medium that meets all the conditions, except for instance, the one barring profit-making, does not count.

What is Community Radio?

Community radio is a service offering a third model of radio broadcasting in addition to commercial and public broadcasting. Community stations serve geographic communities and communities of interest. They broadcast content that is popular and relevant to a local, specific audience but is often overlooked by commercial or mass-media broadcasters. Community radio stations are operated, owned, and influenced by the communities they serve. They are generally nonprofit and provide a mechanism for enabling individuals, groups, and communities to tell their own stories, to share experiences and, in a media-rich world, to become creators and contributors of media.

In many parts of the world, community radio acts as a vehicle for the community and voluntary sector, civil society, agencies, NGOs and citizens to work in partnership to further community development aims, in addition to broadcasting.

Why community Radio?

The functions of community radio:

The earliest experiences of community radio go back more than half a century. Poverty and social injustice were the stimulus for that initiative.

This was the first recorded case of radio broadcasting being used by a sector of society to improve its socio-economic status. Since the early 1980s, UNESCO has been actively promoting community radio as an important agent for change and development.

Self-defined community radio. There is no simple definition of a community radio station.
The key values:

- Localism
- Encouraging collaboration
- Providing quality public service
- Diversity of media ownership and diversity in operations and programming
- Cultural preservation
- Empowering people with information
- Building community

The principal functions of community radio are:

- To reflect and promote local identity, character and culture by focusing principally on local content. Culture is how the people of a community talk about their past and their future. It is what they care about. Like life itself, culture is infinitely variable and constantly evolving. Community culture is also artistic expression through local music, dance, poetry, theatre and storytelling. Local performers are encouraged to go on air uninhibited by considerations of the 'professional standards' they may have acquired from mainstream media. Culture is also language, so programming includes the languages of any minority groups in the community.
- To create a diversity of voices and opinions on the air through its openness to participation from all sectors. Some discord is present in all communities, but the acknowledgement of conflict is necessary for democracy and for democratic communities. Community radio tries to air objectively all sides of a discussion without itself taking sides.

- To encourage open dialogue and democratic process by providing an independent platform for interactive discussion about matters and decisions of importance to the community. In essence, the core of democratic process is the ability of people to hear and make themselves heard. Community radio provides the forum for that to happen. This is consonant with the decentralization process in many countries that aims to bring democratic decision-making closer to the people concerned. And what is happening at the grassroots level – as portrayed by the community radio programming – can be heard by development local government and private institutions, as well as being relayed to policy makers, thus making it possible to design development initiatives that best meet the aspirations and needs of the people.

- To promote social change and development. In marginalized communities people all have their individual perceptions about their situation, but what is required for change and development is a collective perception of the local reality and of the options for improving it. This collective perception can only be achieved through internal discussions to analyse specific problems, identify possible solutions, and mobilize the appropriate people or groups for action. Community radio provides the perfect platform for this internal discussion.

- To promote good governance and civil society by playing a community watchdog role that makes local authorities and politicians more conscious of their public responsibilities. The marginalized and the oppressed normally have no way to complain when authorities take advantage of them, but community radio gives them a voice to air their grievances and obtain their due rights.

What different kinds of models of community radio are there?

Two philosophical approaches to community radio exist, although the models are not mutually exclusive. One emphasizes service and community-mindedness, focusing on what the station can do for the community. The other stresses involvement and participation by the listener.[citation needed]

In the service model locality is valued; community radio, as a third tier, can provide content focused on a more local or particular community than a larger operation. Sometimes, though, providing syndicated content not already available within the station's service area is viewed as public service.

In the access (or participatory) model, the participation of community members in producing content is viewed as a good in itself. While this model does not necessarily exclude a service approach, there is some disagreement between the two.

Purpose:

The main purpose of community radio is to provide marginalized communities with access to a voice through the broadcasting channel of radio so they can **express** their concerns, interests and needs, promote and protect their cultures, traditions and heritages and determine their own development. Community media organizations are increasingly being shaped and defined within mainstream systems, as a "third" tier of media, in relation to the "first" and "second" tiers of commercial and public media. This is a shift from the past, when community media developed in opposition to the mainstream, to represent and give voice to oppressed, marginalized, and excluded communities. One of the defining features of community media was its origins in people's struggles against oppressive regimes, poverty, and exploitation, and there are many examples of community media that have been shut down by repressive governments.

Community radio in South Africa began in 1994, when Icasa, the county's broadcasting authority, began the continuing process of assessing and granting licence applications from groups as diverse as rural women's cooperatives, Afrikaner communities and a variety of religious bodies.

Community radios play a particularly important and powerful role in community media because they are accessible to a wider audience and low-cost (from a production and consumption perspective).

Section on how community radio can be enhanced

Community newspapers

What are community newspapers?

Community newspapers are a form of print media that is written by and for the community.

The history of newspapers can be divided into two main phases: before apartheid and after apartheid. These two temporal categories define the fundamental changes that have reshaped South Africa. Under apartheid, laws were imposed that made it almost impossible to publish any information without government authorization, especially on political and national security issues.

When South Africa rejoined the community of nations after the end of apartheid, it had a new constitution that protected freedom of expression and of the press. However, it is important to note that even during the days of apartheid and since that time, alternative newspapers have made their appearance in South Africa to challenge the country's emergency, censorship and national security regulations.

Why community newspapers?

Community newspapers are a part of this resistance to government controlled media and like community radio, provides a platform for communities to publish stories and disseminate information that reflects the community it is serving. However, in order for a community newspaper to best serve the community, members of the community need to have an active voice in the type of content they want to consume.

Community Television

What is community television?

Community television is a form of mass media in which a television station is owned, operated or programmed by a community group to provide television programs of local interest known as local programming.

Community television stations are most commonly operated by non-profit groups or cooperatives. However, in some cases they may be operated by a local college or university, a cable company or a municipal government.

Why community TV?

What is community's stake on the ownership of community media?

What is it important for communities to be involved in the establishment of and life of the community media?

What does the law say about community participation?

1. Governance (appointment of the board and staff and manager)

2. Programming

3. Finances

Looking forward

How best can communitIes hold station management and the board accountable?

1. Legal mechanisms

2. Social mechanisms

How can community radio medium be transformed?

1. Enhancing community participation

2. Sustainability of the medium (funding model)

Most community media serve poor and marginalized communities and have at one time or another received grant support. Donors are especially concerned that the projects they fund should become sustainable. The managers, staff and volunteers of projects are equally concerned about sustainability—their livelihoods may depend on it. In communities without access to other forms of media, community media play life-saving roles

Nonprofit structure:

A nonprofit structure is an important way of distinguishing community media from other media forms. It also safeguards community media from pure commercial interests, which might favor cheaper that is not appealing to the public music and talk-show formats. As with ownership, nonprofit structures can be legislated. In countries where there is no community media legislation, however, some community media initiatives operate as businesses and nonetheless provide vibrant community services.

Being nonprofit does not mean that you have to be poor. The main difference between commercial and community media is that profit made by commercial media benefits individuals or investors, and profit made by community media is returned into service provision or used for the benefit of the community.

To fulfil the requirements of public accountability, community media must develop strong and effective financial planning and management systems, which are the foundation of financial sustainability.

Community service:

Community service is at the heart of community media. All community media must have a community and the intention to serve and build the community. In the community media environment, communities tend to be defined in terms of geography (a group of people living in a particular location) or interest (religion, politics, culture, hobby, or any other interest).

A quality community service is one that:

- Validates and strengthens communities
- Covers topics that are relevant to the community
- Encourages community discussion and debate
- Facilitates community participation in production and dissemination of content
- Ensures that voices of marginalized, stigmatized, and repressed sectors of communities are heard
- Provides spaces for perspectives and views that are alternative to those originating from mainstream media

Community participation: The key to community communications

Participation is the key defining feature of community media; it is what places community media outside of traditional media models, in which audiences are passive receivers of messages. In the community media model, senders and receivers together create messages and meaning through participatory processes. Community media theorists distinguish "meaningful" community participation from other forms of (less meaningful) participation seen in commercial and public media: writing letters; sending photographs; inviting people to call in.

Meaningful participation happens at all levels of community media, and will involve many activities, including ownership, consultation on topics and formats, training, production and distribution of messages, audience research, and finance. Participatory processes generate a strong sense of community ownership; media are demystified, and by participating, communities learn valuable communications and media literacy skills and understandings.

It's Not Just About the Money: Approaches to Sustainability

> *"At the heart of the definition of community media are community participation in the production and dissemination of messages and community service. What we want to sustain, therefore, is a valued and high quality community service, and community participation in producing the service".*

Sustainability as having three aspects:

1. Social

Social sustainability:

Refers to all the social processes that are needed to create sustainable community media, including community participation in governance, management, operations, content production, generation of income, and feedback.

- Community ownership of the communication process. As discussed previously, this includes both legal/official structure and the community's sense of owning the process.
- Development of local content, through community participation in the selection of topics, research, writing, filming, recording, and editing.
- Appropriate technology. Most community media need equipment. When planning and building community media, make sure that the equipment is affordable, durable, easy to use, and whenever possible, able to be maintained by local technicians.
- Networking and convergence. Community media associations and networks enable sharing of learning, pooling of expertise, sharing content, lobbying and advocating on behalf of members, and many other activities. Convergence refers to the ability of community media to use new digital technologies to diversify their services.

2. Institutional

Institutional sustainability:

Refers to the policies, governance structures, management structures and styles, staffing, internal relationships, and practices, as well as partnerships with organizations and the legal and regulatory environment

The important issues in achieving institutional sustainability are:

Asks listeners to donate to the station the equivalent of a handful of rice. "In-kind" support most often takes the form of volunteer labor—writers, editors, and producers can all be volunteers. Usually, volunteers are unpaid, but some community media pay volunteers stipends. Jozi FM pays 45 volunteers a monthly stipend; Radio Vwa Peyizan Abriko, on the other hand, has volunteers who contribute time and money. Other examples of community donations include food, stationary, and services such as equipment maintenance and accounting. There is wide recognition that participatory processes are the backbone of community media, but they are also time-consuming and expensive. Volunteers work hard, but they must also be organized and managed; they need space, sustenance, resources, and transportation. Yet these costs tend to remain hidden, and it is rare to find the benefits and costs of community participation reflected in business plans and budgets.

3. Financial sustainability

Financial sustainability

Is the organization's ongoing income-generating potential, and includes cash and donations of goods and services. Community media generate income in many different ways. There are two considerations that are fundamentally important. The first is independence— because of their reach, mass media of all kinds are vulnerable to control by powerful interests. The most obvious concern is state or political control, but media are also vulnerable to powerful commercial, religious and other interests. The second consideration is to ensure that that income-generation activities are consistent with the mission and goals of the organization.

To become sustainable, an organization must succeed in all three aspects

Sustainability in a shared development strategy

Achieving long-term sustainability of community media is the shared responsibility of all stakeholders, including international or national donors and communities.

To help us understand a comprehensive five-tier community radio development strategy developed by UNESCO.4 Each of the tiers comprises a set of activities, all of which circle back to institutional, social, and financial sustainability:

- Ensure that the project has strong community ownership. In order to realize this goal, the UNESCO project underwent a one- to two-year "mobilization and capacitation" phase before the arrival of the radio equipment. The aims were to create community structures to own the equipment, to build channels for community participation, and to instill a strong feeling of community ownership.

- Put in place systems for effective training and capacity building. External and internal training capacities are needed. External training can provide valuable leadership, management, and programming and technical skills. But to keep up, community participation stations need internal training systems to train new participants and volunteers all the time. Choose appropriate technology (equipment)—good-quality, sturdy equipment that is easy to understand and maintain, and that will hold up to use by inexperienced people.
- Develop a financial partnership strategy for community and development support. The ability to attract, establish, manage, and maintain partnerships is at the heart of financial sustainability. A financial partnership strategy is not about money—it is about attracting partnerships and managing and maintaining them.
- Impact assessment—it is through impact assessment research that community media can prove their worth to partners in the community and from outside.

Conclusion

Sustainability is often seen as a goal or end point, as something that organizations must achieve. However, communities are dynamic—they change all the time. Community media organizations that do not respond to changes in their communities' needs and contexts become irrelevant—and unsustainable, because they lose their value. What is sustainable today may very well not be sustainable tomorrow.

The models mentioned have similarities and differences. What they all agree on is that sustainability is not just about generating income and managing it efficiently. It is about mobilizing the right kinds of resources at the right time, to fit changing needs and contexts. It is about communities, institutions, and finance. It is about mission and ideology. It is not just about the money.

> *"It is fundamental that development is seen as a long-term process. It implies a gradual unfolding of people's latent capacity to innovate, to deal with setbacks or adversity, to take control over their lives, to hold onto a vision for a better future, to seize opportunities, to develop and nurture a variety of relationships, to learn from experiences and to be involved in civil and political life."*

We call for proper public funding for community radio!

An Annual Grant and Revenue Generation for Sustainability Community Radio Stations

> *"Open debate and transparency in government and society are crucial elements of reconstruction and development. This requires an information policy which guarantees active exchange of information and opinion among all members of society. Without the free flow of accurate and comprehensive information, the RDP will lack the mass input necessary for its success."* – **Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)**

1 CONTEXT FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA

South Africa's community media operate in a complex environment and before we can begin to chart a path forward we must examine some of the key trends shaping our terrain. More that 17 years after the collapse of formal Apartheid, South Africa still faces many challenges of entrenched and structural inequality and poverty. Massive unemployment, an impacting HIV/AIDS epidemic, high levels of rape and other gendered violence, limited agrarian reform leaving Apartheid era land ownership patterns intact, deepening rural poverty, and increased urbanization, under-investment in social services (eg education, health, and the criminal justice system), and environmental degradation are but some of the manifestations of Apartheid's legacy and the democratic state's perusal of neo-liberal economic policies.

Despite these considerable obstacles to South Africa's fight against inequality some gains have been made in the last two decades. The introduction of democratic dispensation has seen a transformation of institutions of governance to include all South Africans with an emphasis on participation and consultation. The 1996 Constitution offers South Africans' a framework to access basic human rights as well as socio-economic rights. The raft of progressive legislation intended to dismantle apartheid and create greater access to opportunities and forms of participation in governance and the allocation of resources have been undermined by the government's fixation with fiscal austerity and social cohesion. This has posed a challenge to a vast number of South Africans who remain trapped in exploitative gender relations, work relations, or under the rule of undemocratic 'traditional leaders' and conservative economic policies that seek to commodity public and private spaces and limit state expenditure on social services.

The democratic state has demonstrated limited capacity to respond to the demand for socio-economic justice. Attempts to transform and capacitate government have been restricted by fiscal austerity, dependence on apartheid era and private sector technocrats, low moral, and corruption. This has proven particularly true of Local Government who – in many cases – have been given the mandate to deliver key elements of social justice. The past 17 years have witnessed an erosion of the mass based and participatory traditions that the ANC inherited from the United Democratic Front. An electoral system of proportional representation, party lists, and the ANC's mechanism of List and Deployment Committees results in party power being centralized in the hands of a few. The post-apartheid era has also seen the demobilization of the organized civil society that were central to the collapse of apartheid. Progressive Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

– exemplified by some NGOs, CBOs, COSATU, and the SACC – have struggled to define their role in the post-apartheid dispensation in relation to the state and private sector. A leadership drain, reduced and constricted donor funding are often cited as reasons for their limited impact. Attempts to promote socio-economic justice though technocratic mechanisms of research, lobbying, and public relations have proved largely ineffectual.

Many organizations seeking a more just social order have prioritized lobbying the state over engaging with those affected by poverty through popular education and mobilization. Programmes that do declare an intention to engage the poor tend to underestimate the scale and complexity of required interventions and resort to piecemeal and small-scale (often unsustainable and symbolic) activities. R2K Discussion Doc on Community Media DRAFT 1 4. Recent years have seen an upsurge of popular 'service delivery' protests and widespread frustration and discontent amongst the majority of South Africans – evidenced perhaps best by the popular anger that the President Jacob Zuma was able to exploit in his bid for the Presidency. Sadly, Zuma's government has inherited the contradictions, limits, temptations, and challenges of its' predecessor.

The extent to which the government can defuse the popular anger will be determined by the extent to which it can address their historical demands for socio-economic justice. These trends confirm our historical lesson that social change requires grass roots and widespread popular mobilization. A robust community media – independent of the state and commercial interests - has an important role to play in this regard.

2 BACKGROUND

South Africa has over 200 community radio stations and five community TV stations. For those who live outside major cities, community media is the only alternative to the SABC and is often the only source of media that can focus on local issues that affect members of that community. By law, community media organisations should be non-profit, democratically controlled by their communities and most have a mandate to serve the information needs of the poor and working class.

There are also hundreds of small independent and community newspapers that – like the broadcasters – could give a voice to the voiceless, and hold local elites to account.

But most small and community media have failed to deliver on their democratising potential: instead they face a daily struggle to survive. They are largely dependent on advertising and must please their advertisers to maintain this trickle of income.

Government is the largest advertiser, meaning that many community media organisations will find it hard to take positions that are independent or critical of government. They survive on crumbs and dont have the funds to employ skilled and independent journalists, or hold discussions on the burning issues of the day.

Too many community media projects choose to play it safe by focusing on entertainment, doing 'public relations' for government

Community radio stations are unsustainable in the current regulatory environment as they are dependent on the discretion of advertisers, the limited resources available to the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), and discretionary funding from the Department of Communications that is tied to specific editorial objectives. As a result stations are compelled to adopt commercial operating models where advertisers and sponsors have an inappropriate influence on programming and stations cannot

produce the quality of programming that would serve the developmental needs of their communities or facilitate the meaningful community participation that community media requires.

A common finding is the struggle for legitimacy, financing, and professional capacity. Many community radio stations give in to influential bodies for survival or give up and move to something else. This is all the more worrying as community radio is an important vehicle for development in many regions of the world. It can improve awareness and knowledge of solutions to community problems ranging from rural development, culture, education, agriculture, hygiene and sanitation to local governance

The call for finding a sustainable funding model for the community media sector cannot be over-emphasized.

> *"Community broadcasting is broadcasting which is for, by and about the community, and whose ownership and management is representative of the community, which pursues a social development agenda, and which is nonprofit."* – **Windhoek Charter on Broadcasting in Africa**

Given the challenges that were acknowledged by the minister of communication regarding the funding model for sustainability of community media:

> *As important drivers of media pluralism and freedom of expression, community media are the heart-beat of the communities, often located in provinces with limited economic activities, high unemployment and social inequalities. In such circumstances, community media elevates voices from marginalised communities, serving as a powerful platform to raise awareness around grassroots issues. Such principles of active citizenship are critical to the achievement of the National Development Plan objectives of social cohesion and nation building.*

Case Study:

In April 2018, Sentech, the state-owned signal distribution company, has switched off 15 community radio stations that are in arrears. These operators owed Sentech R33m for signal distribution services.

This after claims that, the revenue shortfall caused by the non-payment of signal distribution fees could have a "negative effect in the legal and administrative functioning of Sentech".

With the community radio stations unable to afford to set up their own signal distribution infrastructure and that MDDA as the statutory development agency, provides funding for these indebted stations, although a meaningful portion of those funds ends up at Sentech.

We would reiterate our call that national and provincial government, including state departments, should direct 30% of their advertising spend towards community media — including radio, television, newspaper and digital outlets.

That would ensure the sustainability of these stations and would create jobs.

"After all, community media is the most transformed. It has the highest level of women ownership and youth ownership, and that's really where advertising revenue is needed."

We bemoan the lack the political will to support community radio.

We therefore call for the:

- Solutions and "a long-term and sustainable fiscal framework for community media" that would promote the sector's growth, its ability to generate revenues and sound governance.

- Need to develop "a public funding model" for the sector.

- Currently,the state spends less than 10% of its advertising budget on the community media sector, which is seen as an important source of information for many segments of the population. We call for the state to commit to spending 30% of its advertising budget on community media outlets (including radio, television, newspaper and digital outlets)

- For MDDA to aggregate the costs and reduce them pay such costs in an organised way between Sentech and MDDA".

- Community media should have access to sufficient resources to produce programming and facilitate participatory process that ensure meaningful freedom of expression, access to information and community ownership and control of projects.

- Invest in our democracy, If we want community media that serve the people, it must be paid for through the tax system.

- It would cost community stations about R3-million year to offer a basic quality service. We must invest in non-commercial media. A good place to start would be to ensure every local community radio and TV receives a grant R3-million a year.

- This investment in our democracy would be enough to give greater independence to media projects and let them employ skilled journalists to undertake investigations, hold those in power to account, and address the burning issues of the day. We must demand proper public funding for community media.

TOGETHER WE HAVE A STRONGER VOICE!